

FEBRUARY 2017 NEWSLETTER

February is here and that means we are at the half way point of our school year. First Term report cards will go home on Thursday, February 16th. Please take the time to go over the report with your child(ren) and help them to set some learning goals for Term 2.

Kindergarten registration is on-going. Any child who will turn 4 this year is eligible to register for Junior Kindergarten. If you have friends or neighbours who have a child that would be eligible to register, please let them know that our registration will take place this month. Having accurate numbers of students helps us in the planning process for staffing our school for the 2016-2017 school year.

Our Grade 8 students are also thinking about graduation and moving on to secondary school. Course selection sheets for next year have been handed out and are due back to teachers by Friday, February 3rd, 2017. If your student is in grade 8 and you have questions about this process, please contact the school.

February is Black History Month! Every year Canadians are invited to take part in the festivities and events that honour the legacy of black Canadians, past and present, during Black History Month. Black History Month exists to remind us all of the rich contributions within our society from people of African and Caribbean descent, and of their ongoing struggle for equity and social justice. This is a time to celebrate the many achievements and contributions of black Canadians who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous nation we know today.

It is also an opportunity for the majority of Canadians to learn about the experiences of black Canadians in our society, and the vital role this community has played throughout our shared history.

Winter Safety

Please remind your child(ren) to stay off the roads as they walk to and from school each day. The icy weather makes it difficult for cars and trucks to stop quickly. Bus students in particular are reminded to stay off the snow banks and the roads as they wait for their bus to arrive each morning.

Our New Sign

Please take a look at our new sign that has recently been installed. A big thank you to School Council, and their fundraising efforts, that have made this possible.

Grade 8 Graduation

The Grade 8 Graduation celebration is scheduled for Monday, June 26th 2017. Traditionally, this event is held at the Grand Valley Community Centre. Parent volunteers are always needed in various places. Several parents are required to sit on the committee as parent representatives, along with staff and school administration. Other parents may assist with various committees such as Decorations, Invitations, Food, Entertainment and Setup & Cleanup Crews. Please contact the School Office if you are interested in helping out with this! The committee works at organizing the event along with some financial assistance from School Council.

Update from the Eco Team

February 1st - Winter Walk Day. Students will be walking at school for some physical activity and to enjoy the outdoors.

February 2nd - National Sweater Day. Grand Valley students and staff will be wearing sweaters on February 2nd to mark National Sweater Day. We will be saving energy by lowering our temperature by 2 degrees that day to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Please turn down your own heat by two degrees as well.

Waste Audit: Our annual Waste Audit was conducted in late December. We generate approximately 2.5kg of garbage per student, per year. Most of that waste is from food packaging from lunches. We recycle 6.5kg per student, per year. We are diverting 72.6% of our waste by properly recycling, composting, and reusing. We have saved 18 trees.

At home please consider “Buy big, pack small” to help cut down on food packaging waste. We are seeing more students using reusable containers and water bottles. Keep up the great green earth habits.

Stay Well Month

Reduce the risk of serious infections - proper hand-washing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick. Stay home when you are sick and limit contact with others -Children should not be in school with a fever, undiagnosed rashes, vomiting, or diarrhea and should stay at home at least 24 hours following the end of symptoms. Cover your mouth and nose - when you sneeze or cough; use a tissue or the bend of your elbow. You can prevent many serious illnesses by keeping immunizations up-to-date for you and your children. Call 1-800-265-7293 for more information.

Talking About Mental Health – Let’s Keep Talking! February 2017

Bell Let’s Talk is a nationwide campaign to increase awareness and decrease stigma around mental illness. I am sure that you heard the ads and hopefully participated in Let’s Talk Day on Jan 25th. What a great way to get the conversation going on mental illness! However, mental illness does not just occur in January and the discussion should not end there either. Here are some tips and ideas to keep the conversation going so that each one of us can do our part to increase awareness, decrease stigma and improve the lives of children, youth and adults with mental illness. Bell Let’s Talk’s 5 Ways to Help (from <http://letstalk.bell.ca/en/end-the-stigma/>)

1. Language Matters

Words matter...but they can also hurt. Pay attention to the words you use. Explain to friends and colleagues who use words like “psycho” or “nut” without thinking that their comments may be hurtful and provide an alternate view. <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2013/04/29/9-things-not-to-say-to-someone-with-mental-illness/> 2 out of 3 people with mental illness suffer in silence, fearing judgment and rejection. Canadian Medical Association

2. Educate yourself.

Myths exist about mental illness that contribute to stigma. Learn the facts. Learn more, know more. Be knowledgeable and help fight the stigma with facts. <http://www.cmha.ca/mental-health/understanding-mental-illness/> On any given week, more than 500,000 Canadians will not go to work because of mental illness. Mental Health Commission of Canada

3. Be Kind

Small acts of kindness speak volumes. Don’t stand by if someone is being labeled or bullied. Treat a person who has a mental illness with the kindness and care you give to people with other illnesses through a friendly smile, a helping hand, a phone call or a visit.

<http://mindyourmind.ca/wellness/random-acts-kindness> Only 49% of Canadians said they would socialize with a friend who has a serious mental illness. Canadian Medical Association

4. Listen and Ask

Sometimes it is just best to listen. Don't trivialize someone's illness. Instead, say: "I'm sorry to hear that, it must be a difficult time. Is there anything I can do to help?" <http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/talk-about-mental-health/tips> Once depression is recognized, help can make a difference for 80% of people who are affected, allowing them to get back to their regular activities. Canadian Mental Health Association

5. Talk About It

Start a dialogue, not a debate. Break the silence. Talk about how mental health touches us all in some way directly or through a friend, family member or colleague. Stories of lived experience are the best way to eradicate stigma. Support mental health and anti-stigma programs in your community. <http://letstalk.bell.ca/en/toolkit/>

1 in 5 Canadians will experience a form of mental illness at some point in their life. Canadian Institute of Health Research. For more information go to our board website: www.ugdsb.on.ca/parents click on the Mental Health tab. For all our mental health, let's keep talking and listening and caring and connecting. Dr. Lynn Woodford is the Mental Health and Addiction Lead for Upper Grand District School Board. Follow her on twitter: @drlynnwoodford

Hot Lunch No Bus Days

Please remember that if a no-bus day falls on a Hot Lunch Day (Thursday), pizza will not be delivered to the school. You will need to send a lunch with your child if they attend school that day. The Hot Lunch Day will be rescheduled for a later date and a reminder will be sent home. If a no bus day falls on a Pita Pit day the Pita Day will be the following day. Thank you for your understanding.

Live Free Campaign

Grand Valley & District Public School is participating in the 8th annual Live Free Campaign and we are looking for your help. On March 3rd, 2017, the students at our school are being challenged to Live Free for one day of something they take for granted, like their computer or candy for example. Students are asked to donate a toonie to symbolize what they are "living free" of. 100% of the money raised through our campaign comes back to our breakfast club program.

We are asking you to help our campaign by making a donation to our school. Thank you for your time. We look forward to working with you to help ensure these children and youth hunger for knowledge and not for food. If you would like further information about the Live Free Campaign or the Children's Foundation Food and Friends Program, please visit www.livefreewdg.ca.

Community Corner

Family Day Family Free Skate

Monday, February 20th, 2017 at the Grand Valley Arena 2:30pm – 5:30pm sponsored by the Mayberry Hill Community Association. Come out and enjoy family skating!

Grand Valley Minor Hockey Bottle Drive

Sunday, February 5, 2017, 9am – 12pm. Visit www.gvmh.ca or email gvtwisters@gmail.com for more information.