

# École John McCrae School

## NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2017

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Principal: Leslie Newman

Vice Principal: Olivier Cutz

Office Co-ordinator: Kathy Lambkin

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### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

As I sit here and write this month's newsletter, I am thinking about the many experiences that the students at John McCrae have available to them. Just today, our junior (boys and girls) volleyball teams went to participate in a day-long tournament at John F Ross and a group of intermediate students went to take part in cardboard boat races at Centennial. During the past week, we have had students walk to the public library and attend performances at the River Run Centre. All week long our intermediate basketball teams have been practicing either at 7:30 every morning or after school. Every week seems to be similar; students can choose to take part in intramurals, try out for school teams, volunteer in the library, help out in a classroom at lunch or if they prefer, they can go outside and play with their friends at nutrition break. We do encourage our students to find something that they enjoy. I am thankful to the staff members who provide these experiences.

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, term one report cards will come home. As a parent, it's easy to focus on how many As, Bs, or Cs our children receive. It is really important to remember that when a student receives a B, they are achieving at the provincial standard. An A means that a student has surpassed the standard and expectations for their grade. Equally important to look at are the learning skills. Students who develop good work habits (e.g. organization / work completion / cooperation) usually find that they are more able to succeed at school. Most teachers will have called home if there are many Cs on the report card or if there are other concerns. If you have any questions, please give your child's teacher a call. Working together (and letting our students and your children know that we are partners) is really beneficial.

Please join us if you can for the first of our two Speaker Series on February 13. For more information, check out the School Council section of the newsletter.

Enjoy February. Next month is spring!

*Leslie Newman*

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### TERM 1 REPORT CARDS

Report cards will be sent home on Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>. How you interpret and respond to your child's report card is important. Listed below are some suggestions to help you read, understand, and celebrate your child's report card.

1. Read the learning skills on the first page of the document first. Celebrate and acknowledge your child's efforts, improvements, and strengths and who they are as a person. Pay particular attention to the comments regarding Strengths, Areas of Need, and Next Steps.
2. Pay attention to the section that deals with "days absent" and "times late." Sometimes this is an area that surprises parents and offers insights into why your child may be struggling.
3. Talk about the report card together and seek your child's opinion about their accomplishments.
4. Look at the grades that your child is getting in areas that he/she is interested in; this could suggest some new areas of interests and talents of your child.
5. Set some goals with your child in areas that you both agree would benefit from improvement. Look for key phrases like "organizational skills", "focusing", "non-completion of work", and "lack of preparation" to track down what is going wrong in a particular subject area.
6. Make a plan on how to meet these goals and share in the responsibility of helping support your child achieve these next steps.
7. Request a meeting with your child's teacher if you need clarification, want more information, or need ideas and resources to support your child's learning goals.
8. Remember that the term one report card is a checkpoint. There are five more months of work ahead and a lot can change during that time. Hard work and effort do pay off.

If you have questions or want to meet with a teacher, just call or email them.

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## SCHOOL COUNCIL CORNER

\*School Council meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of each month in the school library. The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> 6:30** (note that this is a change). Please join us!

If you require childcare during the School Council meeting, please contact Mme Newman at [leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca) by Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> if you would like to be on the School Council mailing list, please write to [johnmcraeschoolcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:johnmcraeschoolcouncil@gmail.com)

\*Thanks to everyone who attended School Council's annual Movie Night! Not only did the event bring us together as a community, but we also raised some money for playground improvements and repairs. We wish to extend a big thanks to our hard-working volunteers for all their efforts!

\*Parents Reaching Out Speaker Series – Monday, February 13, 5:30-7:30p.m. Two amazing speakers are lined up to engage us on the topic of “Nutrition and Physical Literacy”. Please take a moment to RSVP to this event at <https://goo.gl/forms/1kQONydeYiibiAWH2> Order forms to pre-order a Freshii wrap or bowl are being sent home for those who would like to order a meal to enjoy at this event.

\*Family Fun Night – After a resounding success of last year's Family Fun Night, many of us are looking forward to June 2<sup>nd</sup> for this year's event. Lots of help is needed. Please contact Brenda MacDonald at [brendacmacd@gmail.com](mailto:brendacmacd@gmail.com) if you can help in any way!

\*Pizza Days – As you know, many kids at JMC enjoy a Friday pizza treat. Help is needed on these days to divide and distribute the slices according to what is ordered. Please review our Volunteer Spot site, <http://vols.pt/8AUSKZ>, to sign up for Fridays that you might be able to offer some assistance. Alternatively, you can contact Sheryl Gamble at [sherylinguelph@gmail.com](mailto:sherylinguelph@gmail.com).

\*Remember to use Volunteer Spot <http://signup.com/go/ikyG91> to volunteer in support of school activities and events.

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## INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

In case of severe winter weather, with poor driving conditions and bus cancellations and delays, please listen for announcements on radio stations 1460 AM CJOY, 106.1 Magic FM, 900 AM CHML, 107.9 FM CJXY (Y108), Oldies 1090 AM, 105.3 Kool FM, News Talk 570 AM, 96.7 FM CHYM, 1150 AM CKOC, 102.9 FM CKLH, 820 AM CHAM and ,CKCO-TV. Announcements for John McCrae PS are included in “**South Wellington and the City of Guelph**”.

**Please note:** *If buses do not operate in the morning, they will not operate in the afternoon. If you elect to drive your student to school, you must make arrangements for them to be picked up at the end of the day (please communicate the arrangement with your student, or leave a note in their agenda, prior to drop-off). Likewise, if you choose to keep your “walking” student at home on an inclement weather day, you must notify the office (Attendance line #100) of the student's absence, otherwise the office will contact you to confirm your student's absence.*

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## GRADE 8 GRAD PHOTOS

Get those smiles ready! Lifetouch will be taking our Grade 8 Grad Photos on Wednesday, February 15<sup>th</sup>.

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## MOVING IN? MOVING OUT?

If you are planning a move to another school this summer, or know of someone moving into our school area for the 2017-2018 school year, please notify the office as soon as possible.

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## COLD & FLU SEASON

Winter is far from over and so are the illnesses and contagious bugs that come with it! If your child has flu-like symptoms, cold, coughs, fever, or rashes, please keep them home to rest and recuperate before returning to school. When our students come to school ill they do not work well and they pass on their illnesses to others. When we are sick, we all feel better at home in a warm bed with our favorite things.

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## SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

86% of our school population is registered to use this convenient and secure online payment method! Not everyone, however, is using the system on a regular basis. Please make use of School Cash Online to pay



for school trips, pizza and milk, and so much more. We would love to eliminate paper altogether as we strive to be a more eco-friendly school. Let's see 100% of John McCrae families signing up and USING this method of payment! You will receive email notifications when items are available to purchase, and reminder emails before an item expires. Please visit [www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc) and follow the prompts through the following link to sign up:

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## **FAMILY DAY**

The Upper Grand District School Board will be observing Family Day on Monday, February 20<sup>th</sup> and our school will be closed. We hope you enjoy the day with your family.

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## **YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNIZATION DURING A DISEASE OUTBREAK**

For school attendance, parents are required by law to provide proof of their child's immunization to Public Health. To find out what vaccines are required and if your child's immunization records are up-to-date, please call 1-800-265-7293, ext. 4396. You can also book an appointment for your child's immunization at any Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health location.

If you've chosen not to immunize your child, you must have a notarized statement of medical exemption or a statement of conscious or religious belief on file with Public Health. Please contact Public health at 1-800-265-7293, ext. 4396 to arrange for your child's exemption to be on file if you have not already done so.

If the Medical Office of Health declares an outbreak of a disease in your child's school and his/her immunization record is not up-to-date with Public Health, or you have an exemption on file, your child will not be allowed to attend school for the entire duration of the outbreak.

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## **ENGAGING YOUR CHILD IN SCIENCE AT HOME**

As parents, we have the wonderful opportunity and responsibility for nurturing our children's growth. Parents play a key role in the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of their child. As parents, we can usually find time to read a story to our children, thereby instilling a love of literature, but we are often at a loss as to how to instill a love and appreciation for Science. Science encourages problem solving skills, curiosity and questioning, creative and critical thinking, observational skills, and reinforces both literacy and math skills...and it's FUN! Here are some ideas for fostering Scientific skills in your children.

### **6 Tips to foster Scientific Thinking at Home:**

**1-See science everywhere.** Parents can take opportunities to ask "What would happen if ...?" questions or present brainteasers to encourage children to be curious and seek out answers. Children need to know that science isn't just a subject, but it is a way of understanding the world around us.

**2-Lead family discussions on science-related topics.** Dinnertime might be an ideal time for your family to have discussions about news stories that are science based, like space shuttle missions, severe weather conditions, or new medical breakthroughs. Over time, children will develop a better understanding of science and how it affects many facets of our lives. Movies and TV shows with science-related storylines are also great topics for discussion.

**3-Encourage girls and boys equally.** Many girls are left out of challenging activities simply because of their gender. Be aware that both girls and boys need to be encouraged and exposed to a variety of subjects at a very early age.

**4-Do science together.** Children, especially elementary-age children, learn better by investigating and experimenting. Simple investigations done together in the home can bolster what your child is learning in the classroom. Check with your child's teacher on what your child is currently learning in class and what activities you can explore at home.

**5-Connect science with a family vacation.** Family vacations are a great way to explore science. It could be a hiking trip where you explore nature or a discussion on tides during a beach vacation.

### **6-Show excitement for Science!**

Reference: "NSTA Science Matters: Tips for Busy Parents - National Science ...." <http://www.nsta.org/sciencematters/tips.aspx>.

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## **TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH – TESTS AND STRESS**

Taking tests is stressful for most students. However, there are lots of ways that your child and youth (and you!) can decrease the stress related to tests.

### **Anticipate stress and be ready for it.**

Practice relaxing activities every day so during stressful times you already know how to cope.

### **Eat well**

Learning and remembering takes a lot of energy. Keep healthy snacks close by so you can refuel easily with what your body needs to feel good and think clearly

### **Sleep**

During sleep, our brains make connections and consolidate our learning. Research has shown that during sleep, our brain cleans out toxins to allow for more learning to occur the next day.

### **Drink lots of water**

Hydration is very important for good brain function. Cut down on caffeine, which contributes to the stress response and to poor sleep.

### **Move**

Activity increases energy, stimulates brain growth and increases mood. Take regular active breaks; even 5 minutes of walking outdoors can make a difference.

### **Pause and relax**

Take time to relax. Do some deep breathing. Listen to music. Meditate. Go outside. Write in a journal. Do some stretches. Go for a walk. Draw or doodle. <http://youth.anxietybc.com/relaxation> has some great examples of how to relax.

### **Connect**

Talk to your friends.

Talk to your parent or a caring adult about how you are feeling.

At school, you can talk to your teacher, principal or CYC for support.

### **Laugh!**

Laughter is a great release and allows our brains to recharge and reset.

*Dr. Lynn Woodford is the Mental Health Lead for the Upper Grand District School Board. Follow me on Twitter @drlynnwoodford.*

Grow your own fresh food!  
Learn about composting and organic gardening!  
Meet neighbours and building community!

**All this (and more) happens at the  
John McCrae Community Garden!**



We are looking for new families to join the John McCrae Community Garden for the 2017 season. There are several vacant plots available. Each plot is approx 12' x 12' in well-drained quality pesticide-free soil in full sunlight.

If you are interested in applying for a garden plot,  
please contact us at

***[johnmccraecommunitygarden@gmail.com](mailto:johnmccraecommunitygarden@gmail.com)***