



Happy New Year!

Sincerely,

Mair Ann Gault – Principal ☺

Starting the Year Mindfully

Starting a new year, coming off of a two week school break, new resolutions and on-going challenges are a few of the things we have on our plates in January. There is a lot of research that has shown the power of mindfulness in reducing stress and anxiety, increasing mental well-being, helping with sleep patterns, and also overall emotional regulation.

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is a way to turn off auto-pilot and bring awareness to the present. It may seem easy but in a world full of schedules, appointments, deadlines and other daily stressors it can be a challenge to disconnect ourselves from auto pilot. Daniel J. Siegel defines mindfulness:

“Mindfulness in its most general sense is about waking up from a life on automatic, and being sensitive to novelty in our everyday experiences...Instead of being on automatic and mindless, mindfulness helps us to awaken, and by reflecting on the mind we are enabled to make choices and thus change becomes possible.”

Mindfulness is not only turning off auto pilot and staying aware but doing so non-judgmentally – of yourself, of others, of your experience. In the age of social media likes, followers, and commentaries this non-judgmental stance is something we could all benefit from doing. Jon Katat-Zinn writes:

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally.”

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

Research in the area of mindfulness shows benefits in the following areas:

- Improved working memory
- Lowered anxiety levels
- Reduced emotional reactivity
- Reduced stress
- Regulating emotions
- Less distractible
- Enhancing sleep

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

There are many ways to bring mindfulness into your life from a regular time every day to finding opportunities for mindfulness skills in daily life.

- Bring mindfulness to a walk by focusing on what you see, hear, feel. Listen to the sound of your steps, notice the feeling of your legs, notice what you smell.
- Try listening to someone mindfully by not crafting what you are going to respond and thinking ahead but rather listen fully to what the other person is saying – sounds easy but you will be surprised!
- When you or your child are having a difficult time take a moment and focus just on breathing, in and out. Notice what your body feels like. Notice thoughts that pop into your head – AND LET THEM GO. Just “be” for even 2 minutes. It can be very powerful to take even just one or two minutes! And a great example to set for your children.

So perhaps you can find some time in your day, your week, your month to turn off auto pilot and practice a little mindfulness!

-Jenny Marino, Mental Health Lead, Upper Grand District School Board

Protect you and your family from cold and flu viruses (A note from Public Health)

Wash hands often with soap and water. Carry an alcohol-based hand rub in your purse and car to use if soap and water are not available.

[Hand-washing](#)

Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

Avoid close contact with sick people.

If you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw it out after use. If a tissue is unavailable, cough or sneeze into your elbow -never into your hands.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs like the flu.

Get a flu shot. People at high risk of serious flu complications include young children and infants, pregnant women, people with certain chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease and people 65 years and older. Children younger than 6 months are too young to be vaccinated so people who care for infants should be vaccinated instead.

Source:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevent/actions-prevent-flu.htm>

School Council

Thank you to all families who supported our gift card fundraiser! We were able to raise \$1485.23 which will be put towards supporting a playground project as well as Scientist in the Classroom.

We'd like to thank the following people for their contribution to the fundraiser:

- Ms. Horn and Ms. Rimkus for all their help collecting orders, fielding questions, making announcements and lending a hand whenever needed.
- Stephanie Sambells, Joan Moynihan and Sheila Thomson for helping to count up the orders and input the orders.
- Ezra Dawson, and Addison & Hayden Sambells for making our morning announcements fun and informative.
- Joan Moynihan, Stacey Murphy and Layla El-Ayoubi for baking the cupcakes for the classes with the highest percentage of involvement in the fundraiser. The winning classes were: KA, 1/2B, 5B, and 8B

On January 30 we will be hosting our Annual **Family Games Night** in the Mitchell Woods Gym. There will be board games, life size games, ping-pong, foosball and an area to drive your remote-control cars/vehicles (please NO DRONES). There will also be a light snack

provided. Doors will open at 6. Hope to see you and your family there!

School Council is a great way for families to get involved in their student's school. Meetings are held monthly and this year are scheduled to start at 6:15pm in the library on the following Mondays:

- January 13
- February 3
- April 6
- May 4
- June 1

For more information please contact Amanda Dawson at scritchellwoods@gmail.com or call the school to leave a message for Amanda, who will follow-up with you.

School Arrival

Please discourage your children from arriving before 8:30 a.m. There is no supervision on the school yard until 8:30 a.m. and no one to supervise students inside before the bell rings.



Outdoor Recess

In the past, we have had a number of parents requesting that their child remain inside at recess time as (s)he is still getting over being ill. It is not possible to supervise these children during break time. All students are expected to participate in outdoor recess, as this is an important activity. Active breaks aid concentration and success in the classroom.

Please consider keeping your child home an extra day so (s)he can recover and return prepared for the full school day.

It is getting chilly out and snow has begun to fly! Please remember to assist your child(ren) in wearing proper clothing to school. This includes a warm jacket, hat, mitts and waterproof footwear. Thanks for sending labeled extra socks and pants in your child's backpack just in case the first pair gets wet. Twenty minutes can be a very long time if you are not dressed properly.

No Dogs on the Schoolyard

A reminder to parents and visitors that dogs are not allowed on the school yard during the school day. As much as we like and trust our own dogs, when they are on school property and encounter fast moving and often unpredictable children, they can become stressed and a dog's natural reaction is to bite. Please help us to

safeguard our students by keeping your dog(s) off school property during school hours.

Parking and Student Safety

Our safety patrols have been doing an excellent job safeguarding our students and parents as they cross onto and off school property. Although we encourage our students and families to walk to school, we do understand that, in certain instances, students arrive by car, and visitors to our school drive. We would like to remind parents and visitors of the following:

Parking on school property is reserved for staff. Those requiring accessible parking may use one of the two designated spaces, provided a valid permit is displayed.

- Please come to a full stop at stop signs
- Please do not stop to let your children off at the crosswalk or wave to students to cross.
- Please take care in attending to our patrols and be patient.
- Please do not park/stop in a no parking/no stopping areas. This blocks the line of view for our patrols.
- U-Turns are not permitted on Willow Road

Walking on to school property:

- Please use the designated crosswalks for crossing on to school property.
- As a safety precaution, we ask that all parents and older siblings, who are coming to the school to pick up students, please meet at an outside meeting place at the end of the day.
- Students are asked to independently enter and exit through their assigned doors.

Students (except bus students) are not to use the front doors for entry/exit.

Your support in keeping your children safe is greatly appreciated.

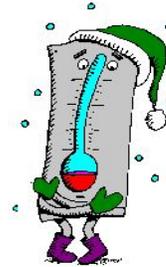
For more information about walking/parking/drop-off/pick-up, please refer to our traffic management plan that is posted on our website: <https://www.ugdsb.ca/mwoods/resources/traffic-management-plan/>



Safety Patrollers and -25c or Below

On extremely cold mornings, patrollers and parents should listen to the radio for an announcement regarding altered patrol post coverage times: If no announcement is made, carry on as usual.

- At -25c (including the wind chill factor) an announcement will be made on air indicating that patrollers will be on duty for only the last five minutes of their scheduled morning time.
- At afternoon dismissal, usually the temperature has warmed up above -25c. If not, then the patrollers would also shorten their time on duty to 10 minutes.



Monthly environmental activities to help celebrate our planet



JANUARY is the time to carry out your Eco Resolutions!

There will be more waste plastic in the sea than fish by 2050" Dame Ellen MacArthur

It's a brand new year and the perfect time for positive change. For example, let's end plastic pollution.

Based on the daily news, it's never been more critical to increase your environmental efforts. The *Earth Day Network* is calling to end plastic pollution. Imagine a future free from harmful plastic garbage! Single-use plastics are especially wasteful and many plastics are also not properly recycled and take up precious landfill space or pollute our oceans, killing marine life and washing up on pristine beaches. Plastic garbage 'islands' are appearing in seas and oceans all over the world.

<https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/great-pacific-garbage-patch/>

Tips on how to reduce single-use plastics:

- Extend your use of cloth shopping bags beyond the grocery store. Use them at all other retail stores too.
- Avoid buying over-packaged food. The choice is yours. Do you need to buy the carrots that are shrink wrapped on a Styrofoam tray?
- Let the restaurants you frequent know that you would them to join the growing movement to ban the use of straws. Many have implemented a 'serve-straws-upon-request' policy.
- Tap water is best. Bottled water can deplete our precious groundwater resources and produce unnecessary green house gas emissions through the production and transport of plastic bottles. Carry a reusable water bottle instead.
- Lug a travel mug to your local coffee shop. (The plastic lining makes coffee cups not recyclable, and they all end up in the garbage and in our overflowing landfills.)
- Write letters to the government asking them to fix a problem that you are concerned about such as: mandating the reduction of plastic packaging, banning Styrofoam, or promoting research for recyclable coffee cups or coffee pods, etc.