



December 1st, 2021

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Wildcat Weekly

School Council and Fundraising Committee Meetings

Our next school council meeting will be **December 7th** at 7:00 PM via Zoom. On the [agenda](#) will be a discussion on how we can best improve our engagement with our community. How can we better involve parents in the school?

Our next fundraising committee meeting is on **December 13th** at 3:05 PM and will take place in the Learning Commons of the school. In it we will discuss the plans for our playground revitalization, and our next steps forward.

Extended Break?

If families are withdrawing their children for an extended holiday during the school year, they should inform their teacher and the school Admin Team. Staff will not provide daily homework assignments for students while they are on holiday, but teachers will suggest activities such as daily readings, journaling or math games.

Please note that replicating educational experiences in the classroom is very difficult and worksheets are not common practice in our classrooms.



REMINDERS

- December 10th – PD Day
- December 17th – Half day before break!

HELP NEEDED!

Our Hot Lunch program needs help on December 8th from 10-2 – if you are able to lend a hand, please email Natasha at ngrusendorf@hotmail.com.

Last week I was speaking with some parents and the question came up about how the school works with students to understand conflict and bullying. It got me thinking about how sometimes our systems change in education, and it will look like we no longer do something when in fact we just do it differently.

In the past, the approach was often to hold a school wide assembly and give students the same message, often delivered by an external program. In our experience, while this communicated the message out, it was not an effective way to educate students. It would even sometimes result in students making dismissive or flippant comments about the content of the assembly. As a result, schools began to look at different and better ways to address students on this topic.

Our efforts have shifted to a two-fold approach. The first piece is in working with school staff to better help students develop the social-emotional competencies they need: self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision making, social awareness and relationship building. Our teachers help students to discover how to recognize and express feelings and thoughts as well as to listen to and respect others thoughts and feelings. We help students recognize how their emotional state is going to influence them and to work to make good decisions even when they feel frustrated and angry. We help students understand the multitude of different experiences and backgrounds people come from, and how we can respond positively to the differences we see in others. And finally, we work to instill a feeling of community, where relationships can be built and strengthened through trust and honesty.

The second piece is to move to a well-researched and tested school model that helps students learn and grow even when they have made poor choices. The two models we use are Positive Behaviour Support and Restorative Practices. Positive Behaviour Support is a collection of ideas that will set conditions for students to be their best socially and emotionally. These include everything from positive reinforcement to setting clear expectations to having fair and predictable consequences when things go awry. Restorative Practices is part of that “consequence” piece – it is both an expectation and a process by which students work to understand their actions and how they affect others when they have done something hurtful. This is an incredibly powerful process that can be quite emotional, and through it we see lasting and positive change that we never saw with suspensions or detentions. Often the end result of the Restorative process is the healing of a relationship, which is valuable to both the person committing the wrong and the wronged.

Our view is that there are no “bad” kids, and students who hurt others often are feeling low themselves. We aim to address issues in a way that they don’t occur again and that all students come away with valuable learning and growth.

As always, thank you for your support,

Tim Hasiuk