

PWS UPDATE

Park West School Newsletter

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Receive the *PWS Update* electronically! You can receive the *PWS Update* electronically via e-mail. If you wish to be among the first to receive the latest editions of our school newsletters by having it sent to your e-mail address simply e-mail your request to Mr. Carter at dcarter@hrce.ca The *PWS Update* is published **approximately every two weeks**.

How You Can Support Your Child's Learning: An analysis of 37 studies that included over 80,000 students from grades primary to 12 in *Educational Research Review* found parent participation in school activities had the least effect on student achievement. What had the most? **Parental expectations of their children, discussions about school activities with children, and helping with reading topped the list.**

Something to Think About: "Don't become preoccupied with your child's academic ability, but instead teach them to sit with those sitting alone. Teach them to be kind. Teach them to offer help. Teach them to be a friend to the lonely. Teach them to encourage others. Teach them to think about other people. Teach them to share. Teach them to look for the good. This is how they will change the world."

School Closed for the Holidays: The last day of school before we close for Christmas vacation is **Friday, December 21**. Students return to school on **Thursday, January 3, at 8:25 AM**.

Keep Your Head Warm: Limited edition "Park West School" wool toques (in our school colours) are now for sale. They are \$10.00 each. They fit adults and children. Purchase them from our school office (cash or cheque) **while supplies last**.

Happy Kwanzaa: **Kwanzaa** is an African American holiday. It was founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga with the hope of educating his people about the African-American struggles and their rich cultural heritage. The holiday lasts for seven days beginning on **December 26**. It binds the African harvest customs and the social history of African North Americans. The word Kwanzaa is derived from the East African Swahili phrase "Mantunde ya kwanza" which means "the first fruits." The second "a" was added to give the word seven letters which corresponds to the seven symbols, the seven principles and the seven days of Kwanzaa. Each day Kwanzaa concentrates on one of these principles: unity (Dec. 26); self determination (Dec. 27); collective work and responsibility (Dec. 28); cooperative economics (Dec. 29); purpose (Dec. 30); creativity (Dec. 31); and faith (Jan. 1). The celebration is organized around five fundamental activities: ingathering of the people, a special reverence for the Creator and creations, commemoration of the past, re-commitment to one's highest ideals, and celebration of the good around and within each other. Happy Kwanzaa to all those in the Park West community who will be celebrating this special holiday.

Merry Christmas: **Christmas** is an annual commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ. It is a widely observed holiday, celebrated generally on December 25, by billions of people around the world; both Christians and non-Christians. Christmas Day is a civil holiday in many of the world's nations. It is celebrated as a major festival in countries around the world, including many whose populations are mostly non-Christian. Among countries with a strong Christian tradition, a variety of Christmas celebrations have developed that incorporate regional and local cultures. Popular modern customs of the holiday include gift giving, Christmas music and caroling, an exchange of Christmas cards, church celebrations, visiting with family and friends, a special meal, food and treats, and the display of various Christmas decorations, including Christmas trees, Christmas lights, nativity scenes, garlands, wreaths, mistletoe, and holly. In addition, several closely related and often interchangeable figures, known as Santa Claus, Father Christmas, Saint Nicholas, and Christkind are associated with bringing gifts to children during the Christmas season and have their own body of traditions and lore. (Source: Wikipedia)

"Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays": Here at Park West School we are not timid about acknowledging and celebrating Christmas and wishing others "*Merry Christmas*". Christmas can be celebrated by anyone....both those belonging to the Christmas faith, and those who are non-Christians. However, we are sensitive to the fact that some students, and their families, do not celebrate Christmas, or share the Christian beliefs of Christmas. That doesn't mean we all can't celebrate together in our very diverse and accepting environment. We are an inclusive school and encourage all to respect and celebrate holidays and special occasions together.

A Park West Christmas:

- Christmas concerts were presented earlier this week by our grades primary to three classes, our junior and senior choirs, and string ensembles. They were hugely successful, and enjoyed by many family members and friends. Our students worked hard to prepare, under the direction of our music teachers (Ms. Kerr and Ms. Moen). We're proud of all our students who participated. We appreciate the time, effort, and care Ms. Kerr and Ms. Moen devoted to preparing and presenting this year's concerts for us all to enjoy.

- Our school is adorned with Christmas decorations and student artwork. Come see our 10 foot school Christmas tree in our main lobby. It's decorated with 100's of colourful lights and an assortment of beautiful ornaments handmade by our students.
- Many students and their classes have been reading Christmas themed stories, creating festive art projects, and learning about the customs and traditions of Christmas.
- It's **Pyjama Day** (for staff and students) on **Tuesday, December 18**, at Park West. Everyone is encouraged to wear PJ's to school that day.
- **Friday, December 21st**, has been declared **Red and Green Day** here at Park West School. Students, staff and visitors to our school are invited to wear red and green clothing to celebrate the season...or anything festive, including sweaters, socks, t-shirts, hats, reindeer antlers, Santa hats, jewelry, etc.

We're Scent-Aware! Did you know that perfume is made of toxic chemicals that can be detrimental to your health? Many of the chemicals in perfume are the same chemicals in cigarette smoke, and yet there is no regulation of the fragrance industry. Most perfume is not made from flowers, but from chemicals. More than 4000 chemicals are used in fragrances. Of these 95% are made from petroleum. Many of us are bothered by perfumes; causing headaches, sinus problems, and even provoking asthma. Other affects may include exhaustion, weakness, dizziness, difficulty concentrating, rashes, muscle ache, nausea, and stomach cramps. Many of us get sick from wearing or being exposed to it. The result here at school is that learning and health are affected. Park West School is a scent-aware environment. **Parents and students: please do not wear perfumes, colognes, and heavily scented products to school.**

Not Feeling Well? This is the time of year when many children (and adults) get sick. If your child is sick, for the comfort and good health of him/her and everyone here at school, you should keep him/her home for the day. If your child has been diagnosed with a contagious condition (egs. lice, chicken pox, scarlet fever, strep, etc.) please notify the school immediately. Teachers are increasingly being asked by parents to keep children indoors at recess and lunchtime because of illness. We do not make a practice of keeping students indoors due to illness. Children benefit from getting outside during a long day at school for much needed fresh air, play, exercise, socialization, and a change of scenery. **If your child is too sick to go outside then they should be kept at home until well.**

Updated Information: Have you moved and have a new address? Changed jobs? New cell or phone number? Please let us know so we can update our records. It's important we always have the most up to date contact information. Contact Ms. Johnston or Ms. Landers in our school office (902-457-7800).

News from the Gym:

- A reminder to parents and students that **winter boots are not permissible** in the gym because they create unsafe conditions. Students are asked to pack a pair of sneakers on the days they have physical education class. Students with boots on will not be permitted to participate, as it's a safety concern. Sock feet are also unacceptable.
- We are soon starting our **social games unit** with our students. This is a unit with a focus on students developing their social skills by interacting with others through a variety of sports and games. We are looking for the following items that might be collecting dust at home that you might want to donate/loan to us for this unit: **board games, Nintendo Wii (any games, controllers or consoles), air hockey tables, and foosball tables.** Mr. Regan and Mr. Piercey (Phys. Ed. Teachers) can arrange pick up if necessary. Thank you in advance for any help you can provide.

Order Your Yearbook Soon: Only one book helps you capture this year's incredible events and experiences at Park West School...and that is your 2018-2019 Yearbook. Remember all the friends, trends, fashion, fun, favourite teachers and classes, music, art, teams, clubs, events, and everything in between. Our professionally produced full-colour Yearbook includes **all students and all grade levels** (primary to nine). Preserve your child's memories for the 2018-2019 school year at Park West by purchasing a Yearbook for **only \$30**. Order forms have been sent home with students, and are also available in the school office. You can place your order by dropping by our school office (Monday to Friday - 8:00 am to 3:30 pm) or sending your completed order form and payment to school with your child. Make cheques payable to *Park West School*. You may also order online at: <https://ybstore.friesens.com/stores/774507> A free Canadian memory capsule by MacLean's Magazine will be included if your order is placed by February 3, 2019. **Only a limited quantity will be produced, so place your order now before it's too late.**

Lost & Found: Are you missing something from your life? Our school's Lost & Found station is overflowing. You might find it there. Come check it out in our main lobby. Any remaining items **after December 20** will be discarded or donated to charity.

Dates to Remember:

December	
14	PTA Popcorn Sale (\$1 a bag)
18	PJ Day at PWS – wear your pyjamas to school today
21	"Red & Green" Day at PWS – wear red & green and festive clothes and accessories to school today
21	Last day of school before

Mr. Carter, Ms. Olsen, Mr. Melanson, and the entire staff of Park West School wish you and your family a Merry Christmas, Happy Kwanzaa, Happy New Year, and all the best of the holiday season.

