

PWS UPDATE

Park West School Newsletter

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March 12, 2021

Traffic at PWS: As you now know, this year our school grounds is closed to outside vehicular traffic every school day between the hours of 8:00 AM and 3:00 PM. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in staying off the school grounds with your vehicles, and helping make our school a safe place for all. However, this new measure has caused traffic congestion, and other issues, on Langbrae Drive, and surrounding streets in our neighbourhood. Some of these concerning issues include: cars blocking driveways, parking in front of fire hydrants, unsafe driving, speeding in a school zone, blocking school driveway entrance (to school buses and authorized vehicles) when dropping off students, stopping in the middle of the street to drop off students/blocking traffic, and stopping and parking in restricted zones (with signage). Drivers are encouraged to be thoughtful, considerate and vigilant, obey posted traffic signs, and make student and community safety a priority. As a result of complaints from our community there will be an increased presence of HRM Parking Enforcement officers in the immediate future. They may be issuing tickets. *A reminder:* students are encouraged to use crosswalks and sidewalks, especially in the extremely busy area on Langbrae Drive in front of our school.

March Break Next Week: March Break is **Monday, March 15 - Friday, March 19**. Schools are closed that week. Students return to school on Monday, March 22.

Coming Soon: Park West School will be closed on **Wednesday, March 24** (assessment and evaluation day). There is no school for students on that day.

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).

We're Happy to Assist You: Parents who are dropping off lunches and other belongings to their children during the school day must do so with assistance from our admin assistants in our main office. Due to COVID restrictions parents, and other visitors, are still not permitted inside the school building. There is a silver intercom box mounted to the far right of our main doors, with a button to press for service from the office. This procedure includes when delivering items to students in the chalets. Parents should not go directly to the chalets for drop-offs or pick-ups.

Good News: Recently Ms. Jewel Ross (grade 4 teacher) applied for a \$500 grant from *Brilliant Labs* to purchase technology items for her classroom. We are excited to announce....she was awarded the grant. She has used the funds to purchase equipment to do some stop motion animation with her students. She will use it particularly to teach addition and subtraction. Next year she plans to apply for more funding to be able to purchase a green screen and some lighting so her students can produce movies. Congratulations Ms. Ross. Thank you for your innovation and initiative, and for taking the time to apply for this grant so our students can benefit.

More Good News: Ms. Kelsie Boyd (one of our physical education teachers) recently applied for a Program Development Assistance Fund grant (PDAF) from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU). And....she got it! Ms. Boyd and Park West School have been awarded a grant of \$4000.00 to purchase outdoor equipment for our phys. ed. program. Cross country skis, snowshoes, etc. will be purchased for our students to use. Congratulations Ms. Boyd. We all appreciate your efforts to provide these resources for our students and school.

Re-Setting Our Culture: At Park West School we pride ourselves on our high academic standards, respectful and engaged students, our rich diversity, and for being a place that is safe, respectful, and welcoming, with a "culture of acceptance". This culture did not happen by accident. Many have collaborated and played a part in creating it, including: students, parents, families, teachers, support staff, administrators, and community members. We all continue to have an important part to play in creating and maintaining a positive and safe learning environment here at Park West. Recently some concerns surfaced at the junior high level that threatened this distinguished and cherished culture. In response, school administration (the principal and two vice principals) supported by teachers, met with some individual students, and entire classes to address some undesirable and irresponsible behaviours. This intervention was needed to re-set our culture, and to establish expectations and boundaries. At this time our focus was our grade nine students. In the near future we will be meeting with students in grades 4 - 8 to address these concerns, and discuss our school culture. It is essential our students are aware of their rights, and also their responsibilities, and our expectations. These include:

- Students are expected to be on time for school (morning and after lunch).
- Disruptive behaviour in class is not acceptable.
- Students are expected to be compliant with teacher requests and classroom/school rules.
- Students are expected to sit in their assigned seats at ALL times (including when substitute teachers are supervising).
- Harassment, intimidation, discrimination, and disrespect of other students for any reason is not acceptable. This includes misogyny, body shaming, racism (and racist slurs), homophobia (and homophobic slurs), sexism, etc.
- Swearing and vulgar language is not appropriate in our learning environment.
- Leaving the classroom without teacher permission (for any reason, including the washroom) is not acceptable.
- Students (particularly junior high students) must only use **cell phones** responsibly and respectfully within our school. These are amazing devices that have permeated society, and our lives. However, they can be the cause of much disruption and concern in the school environment if not used respectfully and responsibly. They must only be used at designated times during the school day (i.e. for a few minutes between classes for junior high students) and/or when invited to do so by their teachers (for educational purposes during class time; listening to music while working). They must not be a distraction or disruptive to the learning environment. They must not be used at school to take photos or make video recordings of anyone without their authorization. Students should practice good digital citizenship. There will be consequences for students who choose to not use their cell phones responsibly and respectfully when at school.
- Hoods should not be worn indoors at school. Visibility of the face is significant to:
 - Identification of individuals (faces are already partially hidden by masks)
 - Communication (i.e. facial expressions, eye contact)
 - Well-being (hoods can isolate students)
 - Student engagement (hoods can hide ear buds and impact student engagement with teachers)

Our older and more mature students (especially in grades 7 - 9) need to know they are free to make choices, but every choice comes with a consequence. We expect them to make mature and responsible choices to respect and protect our learning environment and the people in it. We are appealing to them to make the right decisions. We are encouraging our parents/guardians to review these expectations with their children/our students. We appreciate your support in maintaining the high standards and expectations of our school. We're proud of our students and school.

Let's Talk About Student Progress: Virtual (via telephone) Parent-Teacher Interviews will be held the week of April 6 - 9. More information will be coming to you soon. Term 2 report cards will be issued to parents electronically on Tuesday, April 6.

Something to think about...

- Best thing we can do for kids...instead of teaching them how to always be successful....teach them how to respond when they are not successful.
- Popcorn is prepared in the same pot, in the same heat, in the same oil, and yet....the kernels do not all pop at the same time. Don't compare your child to others. *Their turn to pop is coming!*

