

PWS UPDATE

Park West School Newsletter

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Annual Park West PTA “Welcome Back” Family BBQ: The Park West School Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is celebrating the new school year by hosting a family barbeque here at our school on **Thursday, September 14, 5:30 – 7 pm**. There will be lots of good things to eat at minimal prices, including: hamburgers (\$3), veggie burgers (\$2), hot dogs (\$1), cold beverages (\$1), popcorn (\$1), and frozen treats (\$1). Bring your family, friends, and neighbours. *We are in urgent need of volunteers to help with set up, ticket sales & serving.* If you are able to help please message our PTA Facebook page or contact the PTA at pwspta@gmail.com. All proceeds from this PTA event will support teaching and learning here at PWS.

Pink T-Shirt / Bully Awareness Day: Several years ago an article appeared in the Chronicle Herald regarding a bullying incident at a high school in the Annapolis Valley. The victim was a grade 9 male student who was mocked and threatened by his peers for simply wearing a pink t-shirt to school. In response, other students in the school, who found this to be unacceptable, organized a school-wide ‘wear pink to school day’. Students at that high school wore pink clothing to school on that designated day to send out a strong message that bullying of any kind for any reason is not acceptable. The pink phenomenon has spread internationally! As a result of this bold move by students the Premier of Nova Scotia, at the time, declared the second Thursday of each new school year to be “Anti Bullying Day”. On **Thursday, September 14** it will be **Pink Day and Bully Awareness Day** at Park West School. Students, staff and visitors are encouraged to wear pink clothing, jewelry, hats, footwear, arm bands, temporary hair dye, etc. Teachers will be taking this opportunity to discuss bullying with their students and the significance of ‘pink’ for this occasion. Although bullying is not a major issue here at our school, it does exist. Some of our students (and even parents) have participated in bullying. Some of our students have been the victims of bullying. We want to continue to be proactive. Many teachers will be planning for their students to participate in some kind of lesson or activity in their classrooms with a focus on bullying. Our goal is to make our students more bully-aware by presenting information about bullying to them in a meaningful way. We are hoping this day, with a focus on bullying, will have a positive impact on our students and our community. At Park West we will continue to address bullying throughout the year by being proactive: educating our students and their parents, striving to provide a supportive, safe and respectful environment, and addressing incidents of bullying in the most appropriate manner. Together we can change the world!

Coming and Going: What you and our students need to know about **entering and exiting our building.**

- This year we have over 800 students (in grades primary to nine) entering and exiting our school.
- All students in grades P – 9 are now dismissed at 2:45 PM. At that time over 800 students are exiting the building through **four** doors.
- Parents who choose to meet students at the exit doors at dismissal times are asked to please refrain from crowding around the doors. Please remain back from the doors at a respectable distance to allow our students room to exit safely.
- Students must always use their designated entrance/exit doors to avoid congestion and chaos. The doors are designated as follows:

Grades	Designated Door
Grades primary and 1	Primary playground doors
Grades 2 and 3	Main doors
Grades 4, 5, and 6	South doors (to the left of main doors)
Grades 7, 8, and 9	Back doors
Grades in chalets	Use appropriate chalet doors

- If students arrive **late** for school (i.e. after 8:35 am) they should enter the building via the main doors and report to the office.
- If students are *permitted* by school staff to enter the building **early** in the morning (beginning at 8:15 am) due to inclement weather (i.e. rain or excessive cold) they may **enter** using their designated doors or the main door.

Scooter/Skateboard/Bicycle Policy for Park West School:

- Bicycles are **never permitted** to be used on school grounds during school hours.
- Scooters and skateboards should not be used on the school grounds in the morning as students are arriving for school (8:00 – 8:25 am) due to congestion caused by pedestrians and vehicular traffic.
- Students in **grades P – 3** may not use scooters or skateboards on school grounds at recess or lunch time due to lack of space.
- Students in **grades 4 – 6** may use scooters and skateboards during recess at the back corner of the parking lot on the south side of the building (i.e. music room side)
- Students in **grades 4 – 9** may use scooters and skateboards during the lunch period at the back corner of the parking lot on the south side of the building (i.e. music room side)
- Scooters and skateboards may not be used at the front of the building (traffic loop, etc.)
- **Helmets** must be worn at all times if using scooters or skateboards.

There May Be Changes: Parents and students should be aware that class lists are **tentative**. It is highly likely many students will be moved to other classes, and teacher assignments at some grade levels will change at anytime *after September 7th*. These changes may be necessary due to unexpected increased enrollment at some grade levels, and in order to comply with class size caps mandated by the *Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD)*. At this time our final enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year is unpredictable. Traditionally we have some students move away over the summer months. We receive many new students at late registration at the end of August, and well into September. When we have more definite enrollment numbers it may be necessary to reconfigure classes and assign teachers to new grades/classes. **Class lists will not be finalized until early October.** Parents should also be aware that portable classrooms and combined grade classes are unavoidable realities here at Park West.

Safety First: Park West is a “walking school”. Everyone who attends this school lives within walking distance. However, many parents choose to drive their children to school. We have over 800 students attending our school on a daily basis, so this creates a lot of vehicle congestion on our grounds. We have one access point to our school grounds. With that much traffic all heading to the same destination in a confined area there will undoubtedly be congestion issues at certain times during the school day. Drivers/parents must realize this and be prepared for delays, and exercise caution and patience. When the weather is inclement (rain or snow) or road conditions are not ideal (ice and snow creating slippery driving conditions) the situation worsens. However, this does not excuse our students for being late for school. **Our school grounds are especially congested at 2:45 PM dismissal (when over 800 students are departing school for home) and on days when it is raining.** We are closely monitoring vehicular traffic at these times. If we find drivers are not exercising caution, obeying posted traffic signs (such as ‘no parking’, 15 km/hr speed limit, etc.), and following school guidelines for vehicular traffic (such as do not drive through or park in the staff parking lot) then we will seriously consider **closing the school grounds to vehicular traffic** on those

occasions (that means the gate at the entrance to our school would be closed). We need to ensure our students are safe. That's our priority. Several years ago we created safety guidelines (and installed various traffic signs and painted road markings) for those who drive vehicles on our school grounds. They were created to ensure our students and staff are safe, and to minimize traffic congestion. These have been widely publicized to our parents and community. These are the "Safety First" guidelines we expect all drivers to follow:

- **NO PARKING in the traffic loop, except in the designated visitor parking spots.**
- **NO PARKING in Fire Lanes.**
- **A "Drop Off" zone is provided in the traffic loop for a QUICK drop-off or pick-up of students. Do not stay stopped or parked in the Drop Off zone. Move to the front of the Drop Off zone as far as possible when dropping off or picking up.**
- **Drop off and pick up students at curbside in the Drop Off zone, not in the middle of the traffic loop.**
- **Drive slowly. The maximum speed posted is 15 km per hour.**
- **Be aware of the marked cross walks. Stop when necessary for pedestrians to cross. Student should use crosswalks.**
- **Do not park in or drive through the staff parking lot.**
- **Visitor parking is available at the south end of the building (adjacent to the garbage compound).**
- **School buses always have the right-of-way in the traffic loop. At no time should vehicles impede the movement and parking of school buses on school property.**

Unfortunately, some drivers (and parents) do not feel these guidelines apply to them, and jeopardize the safety of students, and others, and compromise the orderly operation of our school. Some parent drivers still choose to ignore these guidelines (including traffic signs and speed limits) which have been implemented to protect their children, and others. Some parent drivers have chosen to argue with and verbally assault school personnel who have attempted to address safety concerns on our grounds. When school personnel (i.e. principal, vice principal, teacher, staff member) are outside directing traffic, monitoring, and enforcing our safety guidelines please be respectful; do not abuse them. If you are speeding (driving over 15 km/hour), parked in the Drop-Off zone, parked in fire lanes, blocking school buses and entrances to parking lots, driving through or parked in the staff parking lot, then you may be approached by school personnel. They are only trying to keep everyone safe, and prevent traffic congestion. **Those being kept safe are your children.**

School Fees: The following school fees are suggested for 2017-2018:

Grade:	Fees cover:
Grade P - 1 \$10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidy towards class trips and/or in-class activities (egs. Guest speaker, Mad Science workshop, special craft project) • School presentations: guest speakers and performances (egs. Neptune Theatre, Symphony Nova Scotia, Mermaid Theatre, Terry Kelly) • School Activities: Field Day, Multicultural Festival, etc. • Personalized items: desk plate, name tags, labels for school supplies, photos for classroom activities.
Grades 2 - 6 \$10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidy towards class trips and/or in-class activities (egs. Guest speaker, Mad Science workshop, special craft project). • School presentations: guest speakers and performances (egs. Neptune Theatre, Symphony Nova Scotia, Mermaid Theatre, Terry Kelly) • School Activities: Field Day, Multicultural Festival, etc. • School agenda for each student
Grades 7 - 9 \$10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidy towards class trips and/or in-class activities (egs. Guest speaker, Mad Science workshop, special craft project). • School presentations: guest speakers and performances (egs. Neptune Theatre, Symphony Nova Scotia, Mermaid Theatre, Terry Kelly) • Junior High Special Events (eg. outdoor activities at the skating oval)
Athletic Fees *fee will be based on the team sport	Athletic fees for team members will be determined based on the expenses associated with each sport. Students chosen to play on school teams will each be responsible to pay the fee to cover these expenses for the team. Athletic fees will pay for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referee fees • Subsidize transportation expenses • School athletic association memberships • Venue rental expenses • Tournament and event fees
Band Fees \$20	Band fees will be charged to each band student in grades 6 - 9. Band fees will pay for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrance fees for festivals and events • Subsidize transportation expenses • Enhancements (eg. special musical arrangements) • Guest clinicians or presenters

During the school year our students participate in many extra-curricular activities to enhance learning and their overall school experience. We promote and provide these learning experiences and opportunities because we believe they are important for intellectual, emotional and social development. They enhance the learning experience, and are often fun. Many of these activities can only be provided at an extra cost to the school and our students. Therefore, we are requesting funds (school fees) from parents to help defray the costs so we can provide these opportunities and experiences for our students. In most cases student fees will only partially cover the cost associated with certain activities; in particular the class trips in which your child may participate during the course of school year. School fees will be used to subsidize class trips. Sometimes it will be necessary to charge additional fees to cover the entire cost of trips. Some classes take more trips than others. Some trips cost more than others. Bus charters (even when using Stock Transportation, the school board bus provider) have become extremely expensive. For instance, to charter one bus to go from our school to a downtown Halifax location **costs over \$250**. This does not include entrance fees. We are requesting school and band fees be paid in September by the end of the month, if possible. Athletic fees may be paid throughout the year as team participants are selected. It is not our intention to cause any of our families undue hardship. **In September homeroom teachers will be collecting fees and issuing receipts.** Fees may be paid by cash or cheque. Please submit fees in an envelope with the name and class of the student. Student fees are due by September 28.

Dates to Remember:

September		
14	Pink T-Shirt / Bully Awareness Day (wear a pink t-shirt and anything pink to school that day)	
14	PTA "Welcome Back" Family Barbecue	5:30 - 7:00 PM
20	SAC Meeting and PTA Meeting	6:00 and 7:00 PM
28	Curriculum and Meet the Teacher Night	6:30 - 8:00 PM
28	School Fees due (\$10 per student)	
29	Professional Development (PD) for school staff - no school for students	

