

PWS UPDATE

Park West School Newsletter

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February 1, 2018

Registration for 2018-2019 School Year: We're getting ready to prepare for the next school year already! Registration for students entering grade primary in September 2018 is being held during the **month of February**. New primary students must be five years old on or before December 31, 2018, and live within our school boundaries. Parents must provide a birth certificate, N.S. health card number, and proof of address (egs. utility bill, lease/rental agreement) when registering. Registration can be done at the school office Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. Contact Ms. Johnston or Ms. Landers (our admin assistants in the school office) or Mr. Cobean (our Guidance Counselor) at 457-7800 for more information or to make an appointment. Please pass the word around the community so everyone gets registered on time. Our staffing allotment for next year depends on the number of students registered. PLEASE NOTE: *only students who live within the Park West School boundaries are eligible to attend this school*. As our school and class sizes continue to grow we will be monitoring this situation VERY carefully. If any of our students are found to be living outside our boundaries it may be necessary for them to leave Park West and register at the school serving the neighbourhood in which they live. Parents may apply to have out-of-area students attend Park West by first registering at their neighbourhood school, obtaining an HRSB "Out-of-Area" form from that school, and submitting the completed form to Park West on or after April 1, 2018, at 8:00 am. Decisions regarding acceptance of out-of-area students at Park West for the 2018-2019 school year will not be made until the end of June.

A Canadian Winter: The Halifax Regional School Board does not have an official policy on wind chill/cold weather with regards to students being sent outside for recess and lunch breaks, or whether or not students are kept outside in the morning prior to the first bell. However, schools are provided with information to assist them in making decisions at individual school sites. Generally speaking, when the temperature reaches -10C or below we assess the appropriateness of sending children outside. We also consider wind chill factors. Wind chill is the cooling sensation caused by the combined effect of temperature and wind. Environment Canada advises there is an "increased risk" of frostbite and hypothermia with a wind chill below -27C. School administration consults the Environment Canada weather website frequently and uses common sense in determining whether or not students should be outside on a given day. We also consider the length of time students will be outside, their activity level (heat generation), and exposure to wind and sun (the sun does have a warming affect, even during the winter months). Whenever possible we do like to see our students being given the opportunity to get outside at some point during the day to get some exercise, fresh air, and have the opportunity to socialize with friends, rather than being confined to their classrooms for extended periods of time. Student safety, health, and well-being are always paramount. **Parents should ensure their children are sent to school dressed appropriately for the weather and possible outdoor play.**

Special Joint Meeting: A special joint meeting of our SAC (School Advisory Council) and PTA (Parent-Teacher Association) will be held here at Park West School on **Wednesday, February 21, at 6:00 PM** in the school cafeteria. Last fall the Nova Scotia Government commissioned Dr. Avis Glaze to review, report, and make recommendations regarding the education administrative model currently utilized to operate the schools in our province. Dr. Glaze publicly presented her report (titled *Raise the Bar: A Coherent and Responsive Education Administrative System for Nova Scotia*) last week; which includes 22 recommendations for change. These recommendations will have a significant impact on the education system of Nova Scotia. The Government responded to her report, and has identified 11 of the recommendations for immediate implementation. These include elimination of most elected school boards. The stated intent of the provincial government in making these changes is to ensure our school system focuses on student learning and achievement. The purpose of this special joint meeting is to review and discuss the report (with a focus on the recommendations), and to conduct a question & answer session. All members of the Park West School Community are invited to attend. The meeting will be hosted by Mr. Craig Poirier (PTA Chair), Ms. Karen Saweczko (SAC Chair), and Mr. Carter (PWS principal).

Parent Concern Protocol:

- If you have a question or concern regarding your child, the channel of communication begins with your child's teacher, or the teacher with whom you have the concern. When issues arise at school sometimes the facts get lost or the "truth" gets embellished when shared at home by students. Students may present to their parents their 'unique' perspectives and interpretations. This is common for children and youth. Before assuming, parents are encouraged to be fair and get the facts about the issue. Contact a teacher to discuss it. Ask questions. A teacher deserves the first opportunity to address your concerns. Communication can be done via telephone or email, or make an appointment to meet in person. We want to work together. Communication can be very effective in clarifying the facts, promoting understanding, resolving issues, and addressing concerns.
- If an issue cannot be resolved to your satisfaction with the teacher, please contact the Principal or Vice Principal.
- Parent concerns related to school administration/operation issues should be addressed with the Principal or Vice Principal. Mr. Carter, Ms. Masih and Mr. Melanson are very approachable and are happy to address your concerns.
- Email, telephone calls (we have voicemail), and meetings by appointment work best for effective communication. If you drop by the school office unexpectedly we cannot guarantee we will be instantly available to meet with you.
- **Matters of Discipline:** Minor discipline issues are handled by teachers. Discipline issues of a more serious nature are addressed namely by our Vice Principals. Ms. Masih is responsible for grades **primary – four**, and Mr. Melanson is responsible for **grades five – nine**. Fortunately major discipline issues at Park West are rare. We have awesome students.

Digital Citizenship: As a 21st century educational institution Park West School promotes the appropriate and meaningful use of pocket technologies (such as cell phones, iPhones, iPods, iPads, etc.) to support curriculum and learning activities. It is at the discretion of each individual teacher to determine if and how she/he wishes to incorporate the use of these technologies into their classrooms. Integration of such technologies into teaching and learning is encouraged. It is not acceptable for students to use these devices during instructional time for non-academic purposes (such as texting, placing or receiving phone calls, using social media, games, etc.). Students may use these

devices during non-instructional time for such purposes. **Unauthorized video recording and taking of photos is prohibited. Non-academic use of pocket technologies by students at inappropriate times may result in consequences.**

Safety First: Due to the large population of our school (almost 900 students) and the number of parents who choose to drive their children to school (rather than allowing them to walk) we experience a high volume of vehicle traffic on our school grounds on a daily basis; particularly at 8:15 – 8:40 AM and 2:30 – 2:50 PM. We have only one vehicle access point. 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. However, this does not excuse our students for being late for school. When the weather is inclement (rain or snow) or road conditions are not ideal (ice and snow creating slippery driving conditions) the situation worsens. Several years ago we created safety guidelines 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:

- Drive slowly. The maximum speed posted is **15 km per hour**.
- **No parking** in the traffic loop, except in the designated visitor parking spots.
- **No parking** in Fire Lanes.
- **No parking** in the driveway leading up to the school.
- **No parking** in or driving through the staff parking lot.
- 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.
- Be aware of the marked **crosswalks**. Stop when necessary for pedestrians to cross. Walkers are encouraged to use sidewalks and crosswalks. Students should not be cutting 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. **HRM Parking Enforcement officers** will be on site randomly over the next few weeks at high traffic times in the morning and afternoon. They will be issuing tickets to vehicles parked illegally in areas designated ‘no parking’ and ‘fire lanes’. You are encouraged to obey signs to avoid being ticketed.

Be On Time For School: Too many of our students (mostly at the elementary level) are arriving late for school. When students arrive late for school they are disrupting school and classroom routines, missing out on receiving classroom instruction and important information. Arriving on time allows them the opportunity to prepare for learning (getting their materials organized, removing outdoor wear, going to lockers, etc.). Entrance bells ring at **8:25 am** and **12:35 pm**. Students should be on school grounds and ready to enter the building at those times. We are striving to teach our students the value of time management, punctuality, respect for others, and good citizenship. We are preparing them for life. Successful people are on time and value punctuality. Successful students are on time for school. Students who arrive late for school (without an excuse from parents/guardians) will serve a detention at recess (elementary) or after school (junior high). Parents may also receive a phone call from teachers. Parents of students who are chronically late for school will be contacted by school administration. In accordance with the new Attendance Policy for Nova Scotia Schools **parents have a responsibility to ensure their children are at school on time.**

Enhancements: There are many extra-curricular opportunities being offered to our students here at PWS. These experiences are not required, but are offered due to the generosity of our staff (teachers and support staff) who are willing to volunteer their time. Some new opportunities now available are: chess club (Thursdays at lunch time); and ukulele club. Some others coming up are: junior high basketball tournament; winter walk to school day; and a musical presentation (for grades 4 – 6 students).

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.**

Dates to Remember:

February		
1-28	Registration month – register new primary students for the 2018-2019 school year	
1-28	African Heritage Month	
1	Junior high Ski Club (trip #1 to Martock)	Evening
6	Junior High Student Forum (with school admin)	
15	Junior High Dance (\$6.00 admission)	6:30 – 8:30 PM
15	Junior High Ski Club (trip #2 to Martock)	Evening
16	Chinese / Lunar New Year	
19	"Mona Louise Parsons" Heritage Day (provincial holiday – schools closed)	
21	Special Joint Meeting of SAC and PTA	6:00 PM
23	PTA Popcorn sale (\$1 a bag)	
26	Grade 9 Trip Payment #4 due (\$210.00)	

