



# McGirr Elementary



Phone: 250-758-8946

Website: <http://schools.sd68.bc.ca/mcge>

**Principal:** Ms. J. Wilkie

**Vice-Principal:** Mrs. T. Collins

**Secretaries:** Mrs. V. Hiltz and Mrs. Lockhart

October 8, 2015

Newsletter # 2

## ***PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE***

We are getting settled into the school year as we approach the end of October. Students are adjusting well to the routines and challenges that the school year holds and settling in well to a promising school year. We finally have all of our teachers in place and next week we will have all of our support staff in place as well. We thank you for your patience as our school works through the sometimes complex process of staffing and adding new divisions. Things are settling down ☺

On a happy and sad note, I will soon be retiring from my career in education and my term as Principal at McGirr. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the McGirr community, students, parents, guardians and of course our great staff for making these years in education some of my most exciting and enjoyable ones.

McGirr is a special place and you become a part of that specialness the minute you walk in our doors. It is a diverse and colorful community which makes for a positive, productive and rewarding school. It has been an incredible experience and I have so enjoyed working in an environment where we all strive to work together for children. It has been a special seven years and I thank you.

Ms. Wilkie

## ***WELCOME TO OUR NEW PRINCIPAL, MR GREGG HALFYARD ☺***

Mr. Halfyard has been in the Nanaimo School District for several years. He has been the Principal of North Cedar Intermediate School, Fairview Community School, Randerson Ridge, and Seaview Elementary School. Mr. Halfyard was Principal in the Northern School Districts and New Hazelton before coming to Nanaimo.

He has also worked at the District level and been active in a number of areas, and committees in NLPS. Most recently he has been leading and coordinating the new assessment program for our district. Mr. Halfyard will be starting at McGirr on November 2.

We welcome him to our school and wish him well. ☺

## ***STAFF UPDATES***

We would like to welcome all of our new staff members and welcome the following people to our school;

Ms. Kiala Silverton - Grade 5/6

Ms. Currin Windecker - Grade 6 for Mr. Sinclair

Mrs. Dana Heese - Grade 2/3 with Mrs. Mark

Ms. Andrea Wellwood - Grade 3 with Mrs. Barber

Ms. Lauren Baetz - Student Support

## ***FEDERAL ELECTION DAY - OCTOBER 19 - POLLING STATION AT MCGIRR***

### ***DON'T FORGET TO VOTE ☺***

Monday, October 19 is our Federal Election Day and once again, McGirr will be the polling station for this area. This means that our parking lot and the area around McGirr will be extremely busy. During an election day, we take extra security measures to keep students away from the front of the building and the gym. We also take special measures to keep the public away from our learning environment so as not to disrupt students during the school day. That said, it is also a tremendous learning opportunity for our students to see Democracy in action and we will have student election activities going on at the same time in many classrooms.

We ask that for this day Parents and drivers exercise caution when driving and walking students to school due to all of the additional activity and traffic. Thanks and don't forget to vote ☺

## ***DATES TO REMEMBER***

October 12	Thanksgiving Holiday
October 19	Federal Election Day - Polling Station at McGirr PAC Meeting - 6:30 pm - In the Library
Oct. 19 - 22	Parent - Teacher Conferences
October 23	Pro D Day - Provincial
October 29	PAC - Monster Mash - 6:30 - 8:30 pm
October 30	Halloween Parade and Stations
November 4	Retake Day (am)
November 10	Remembrance Assembly - 10:45 am
November 11	Remembrance Day
December 16	Christmas Concert
December 18	Last day of classes - Winter Holidays
January 4	School back in
February 8	Family Day Holiday
February 22, 23	District Pro D Day
March 11	Last Day of Classes - Spring Break
March 29	School Back in
May 13	Pro D Day
May 23	Victoria Day
June 29	Last day of classes - Summer Holidays

## ***NEW SCHOOL HOURS***

### **Monday**

8:25	Warning Bell
8:30	School starts
10 - 10:15	Recess
11:45 - 12:20	Big Recess
1:22	Dismissal

### **Tuesday - Friday**

8:25	Warning Bell
8:30	School starts
10 - 10:15	Recess
11:45 - 12:20	Big Recess
2:22	Dismissal

### ***MONDAY IS EARLY DISMISSAL - 1:22 pm***

For all of our families at McGirr, please note that on **Mondays students are dismissed at 1:22 pm**. We also encourage students to leave the school through their classroom door not the front door, leaving that open and available for special needs students, parents and visiting adults.

### ***EARLY DETECTION - PHONING IN ABSENCES***

The early detection system is for the safety of all students at McGirr. The answering machine is turned on each evening so parents can call before 8 am to report students who will be absent or late. This program is for the safety of your child. **All absences and lates should be called in.** When leaving a message please state your child's name, division and if they are ill, at an appointment, or on vacation.

### ***PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES - OCTOBER 19 - 22***

These one-on-one meetings are a great way for parents to learn more about their child's strengths and challenges, and to get a better idea about the year ahead. We are booking times for the conferences, so please check with your child's teacher to see how they will be running their conferences as some teachers do conferences differently. Give the office a call to ensure that you get a chance to connect or if you need to change times or if it looks like you cannot make a conference

To get the most out of this conference, it helps to do some preparation. Here are some pointers to assist you in this regard:

1. Talk to your child. Ask them to tell you what they think are their best and weakest subjects - and why. Ask them if they have any questions they would like you to ask.
2. Write down your questions. Ask things such as:
  - Does my child participate in class discussions and activities?

- ☐ Is my child working to their ability level?
  - ☐ How well does my child get along with others?
  - ☐ How are my child's work habits? Do they use their time productively in the class.
  - ☐ Does my child read and do math at the level you would expect for a student in this grade?
3. Think of things the teacher needs to know. You know your child better than anyone else.
  4. Sharing some of what you know with the teacher will make it easier to meet your child's needs.
  5. Arrive on time. Teachers usually have many conferences scheduled during a single day. Arriving on time will allow you to take full advantage of the time the teacher has available.
  6. Create an action plan. Ask the teacher what you can do at home to reinforce what's happening at school. Try to get at least one or two specific suggestions.

Looking forward to seeing all of our parents and guardians soon. ☺

***PLEASE NOTE EARLY DISMISSAL TIMES FOR PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCE WEEK !!***

Monday, October 19 - dismiss at 1:22

Tuesday - Thursday - dismiss at 1:00

**Friday, October 23 - Pro D Day - School is not in session**

***NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBIC SCHOOLS UPDATED FACILITY PLAN CONSULTATION MEETINGS***

Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools will be holding consultation meetings over the next several weeks. These are important meetings for parents and community member to give input on the Updated Facilities plan for schools in our school district.

Check out the School District website for the complete Facilities plan. As well;

- **INFORMATION PACKAGES** – As you know the Board of Education is currently consulting parents, students and the public about its Facilities Plan Update. During the next several weeks, the Board will be holding public forums to discuss the proposals in the plan. The format of these forums has been designed to encourage dialogue and discussion.
- The meetings scheduled for school zones are as follows:
- **South Zone - Cedar Area Elementary Schools**
- *Tuesday, October 6: 7 to 9 p.m. – North Cedar Intermediate*  
Discussion group topics will include the amalgamation of North Cedar Intermediate and Woodbank Primary schools, with the proposed closure of one of the two schools in June 2016.
- **North Zone - Rutherford Elementary**
- *Thursday, October 8: 7 to 9 p.m. – Rutherford Elementary*  
Discussion group topics will include the proposed closure of Rutherford Elementary in June 2017, as well as the future plans to relocate the district's Skills for Life Program.
- *Tuesday, October 13: 7 to 9 p.m. - Frank J. Ney Elementary*  
Discussion group topics will include the construction of a new wing at Frank J. Ney Elementary as well as the relocation of students from Rutherford Elementary to Frank J. Ney, McGirr and Randerson Ridge elementary schools.
- **Central Zone - Woodlands Secondary**
- *Tuesday, October 20: 7 to 9 p.m. – Woodlands Secondary*  
Discussion group topics include the proposed closure of Woodlands Secondary in June 2016, with the relocation of students into Wellington Secondary and Nanaimo District Secondary schools.
- **District Programs**
- *Tuesday, October 27: 7 to 9 p.m. - Nanaimo District Secondary*  
Discussion of the possible relocation of Learn@Home programs (K-7 and 8-12) to one location.
- Discussion group topics will include the proposed relocation of the following district programs:
- French Immersion, VAST, RAVENS, CTC, OWL, ABOUT, Secondary Academies, Secondary Skills for Life
- For more information, visit the Facilities Plan Update section on the district website [www.sd68.bc.ca](http://www.sd68.bc.ca). Detailed information packages for the public consultation information evenings will be updated and posted as available.

## **FOOTBALL HAS STARTED ! CROSS COUNTRY TOO !**

Football season is in full swing and our Boys Football team is up and running. We lost a tough one last week in the final minutes, but the boys played great and are really ready for their next game. We would like to thank Tyson Williams for coaching the boys this year. Tyson is a former McGirr and recent Dover Bay graduate ☺

Our Cross country team is also out running and training for the upcoming Cross Country meet. Our thanks to Mrs. Dyce for coaching once again ☺

## **NUT FREE AT MCGIRR - Thanks ☺**

In addition to being Fragrance Free, we have a significant number of children at our school who have severe, life threatening allergies to peanuts and other nuts. An anaphylactic reaction means that when these children come into contact with peanut products either by eating them or touching them, their throats will close up and they will be unable to breathe. If someone nearby the child has a peanut product and touches the child, this can cause an anaphylactic reaction. We therefore respectfully ask parents to refrain from sending anything with peanuts or peanut products or nuts to school in lunches or snacks. Be assured that parents and teachers work together to educate children with severe allergies, but until students are old enough to take responsibility for their health, we need to do all that we can to ensure their safety here at school. Thank - you for your cooperation in this matter, it is such a relief for parents and children to know that every precaution is taken to ensure the safety of our children.

## **FRAGRANCE - FREE AT MCGIRR - Thanks ☺**

We would like to thank our McGirr community for their positive response to our need to continue to implement a Fragrance Free environment here at McGirr. We have had a number of parents report back to us that they have seen an improvement in their child's asthma since we began our fragrance free campaign. Our Staff members are also reporting success and satisfaction using fragrance free laundry products and personal items. Eliminating the use of fragrance in our school has definitely had a positive effect in many areas that we were not expecting.

Scented products are full of chemicals that can aggravate extreme allergic and anaphylactic reactions and health problems for people with asthma, allergies and other medical conditions. Using fragrance free products ensures a healthier situation for our whole community. We will continue asking our staff, students and parents to avoid the use of scent in products such as fabric softener sheets, laundry soap and products, cologne, perfume, hair spray, shampoo, as well as many other products.

**Our school district policy and our school policy is to encourage a Fragrance Free and Nut Free environment at our school.** Several of our students and staff members have severe anaphylactic reactions to the chemicals in fragrances, dryer sheets and nuts. We all need to be aware that peanuts, peanut butter, almonds, ground nuts and products which have peanut butter or peanuts or other nuts in them can be fatal for some of our students who have nut allergies. We ask that, you not send or bring any of these products to school. This may seem like a lot to ask of families, but imagine if you had a child or a family member who could be hospitalized or have a fatal allergic reaction because someone chose to ignore this request.

Adults or students using such products must take responsibility for washing their hands, desks, books and equipment as necessary, to ensure that we limit the chance that allergic students will come into contact with the dangerous products.

We also ask that families refrain from using products with fragrances or chemicals that are scented. In particular, laundry products and dryer sheets that are not fragrance free as well as perfumes and hair product cause severe allergic reactions for some of our staff and students that can be debilitating. We realize that what we are asking can cause families to be inconvenienced while you choose new products, please be assured that research has shown that we can all benefit from few or no chemicals in the products we use.

Our "nut free" and "fragrance free" approach offers no absolute guarantees of safety but is our sincere attempt to do everything possible to ensure the health and safety for our students, staff and our school community.

We all share the same air, so please take care with scent you wear ☺

**Please refrain from using any perfume or fragranced products of any kind. Of Real concern are scented laundry products such as dryer sheets and detergents which contain many harmful chemicals. Thank - you for your cooperation ☺**

## **TRAFFIC REMINDERS**



Once again we are reminding parents of our parking lot traffic patterns designed to help keep our students safe as they come to and leave our school grounds. **The area in front of the school is clearly marked no parking and no stopping. It is a drop off area only. This**

implies that you must stay in the driver's seat of your car. If you choose to leave your car or go into the school, for any reason, you must move your car to a designated parking spot. We are also reminding everyone to please slow down as we enter and exit the school zone!

School District vehicles, Emergency vehicles and School Busses take priority in the drop off zone in front of the school at all times.

We need to remind parents and drivers that if we have a bus arriving at the school for or from a field trip, that the bus takes priority in the drop off zone. On those days, our volunteer Wendy, or our staff will use cones to redirect traffic into the parking lot and out of the drop off zone.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in keeping the front area of the school safe for our students.

**PLEASE BE SURE TO SIGN UP FOR OUR LISTSERVE TO BE ABLE TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTERS VIA EMAIL !** To subscribe to newsletters, please send an email to: [subscribe-mcgirrelementary-news@listsrv.sd68.bc.ca](mailto:subscribe-mcgirrelementary-news@listsrv.sd68.bc.ca) **WE WANT TO GO GREEN ! THANKS ☺**

### ***CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS AND VOLUNTEERS***

All volunteers working in the schools and all volunteer drivers must complete a criminal record check in order to be permitted to work with students or drive students on field trips.

#### **New Online Criminal Record Check Process for NLPS School Volunteers September 2015**

The Ministry of Justice, through their Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP) will conduct a vulnerable sector check **at no cost to you** through a streamlined online format. Vulnerable sector checks are used by prospective volunteers who are requesting clearance to work with children and/or vulnerable adults in the school district. This online process is to determine if you have any record suspensions (formerly known as pardons) for sexual offences. Once you are provided clearance through the CRRP, ***the criminal record check clearance is good for a period of five (5) consecutive years*** from the date of issue, unless a criminal offence should occur. We must inform you that if you happen to have the same combination of gender and date-of-birth as a known sex offender whose record has been suspended, you must then be fingerprinted to confirm your identity. This is a federal RCMP requirement that applies to all Canadians. Most people who are fingerprinted in a vulnerable sector check do not have a sexual offence record. However, fingerprinting is necessary to eliminate the possibility that an offender has changed their name in order to pass a criminal record check. Therefore, if you happen to have the same combination of gender and date-of-birth as a known sex offender, you will receive a letter from the CRRP informing you that your fingerprints are required. The letter will include forms and instructions on what to do. You will be required to visit your local police agency for fingerprinting. Your fingerprints will then be submitted to the RCMP's Canadian Criminal Real Time Identification Services to confirm whether or not they match those of a person with a record suspension for a sexual offence. The fee for this process will be your responsibility. By completing the online application you agree to the terms and conditions for the CRRP Applicant Based Online Service to facilitate a criminal record check and to share the completed criminal record check information with the Nanaimo Ladysmith Public School district.

Please use the following web address to complete and submit the form for your criminal record check to become a school volunteer: <https://justice.gov.bc.ca/eCRC/home.htm> You will be prompted for the NLPS access code which is as follows: **Access Code: UQ4T7XXBHE**

Once you have completed and submitted the form for the online criminal record check, **please provide your school principal with your full name and date of birth**. Your results, once approved will be added to the district's database of volunteers. The district will then inform the school principal of your approved criminal record check and he/she will inform you.

**Please note:** Additional information about the CRRP is available on their website at [www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/criminalrecords-review/index.htm](http://www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/criminalrecords-review/index.htm) or by contacting a client services representative at 1-855-587-0185.

Thank you, on behalf of Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS), for supporting your school and the district through your volunteerism. It is with your support that district schools are able to expand curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for children.