



# 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

September 4, 2015

Newsletter # 1

## **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

### **ADMINISTRATORS' COMMENTS**

Welcome Back To School!

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our staff, students and families as well as all of our new students, and wish you well as you start school this year.

I hope you had a memorable summer holiday and are looking forward to all of the new experiences and adventures that the new school year holds.

We welcome Ms. Tonia Collins to our school as our new Vice Principal. Ms. Collins brings a diverse background of experience in education. She has worked as a teacher and administrator in several schools here in Nanaimo. We are very pleased to have her join our school community and look forward to working with her as we welcome her to McGirr.

We have a number of changes and a number of new teachers are joining our staff this year and we warmly welcome them to McGirr.

We are very much looking forward to working with our school community, we believe in keeping the communication lines open, with a view to best meeting the educational needs of all of our students. If you ever feel a need to talk to Ms. Collins or Ms. Wilkie, please come on in, our doors are always open.

This week will be busy and eventful. Students will be in grade groupings this week and we will do class placements as soon as we get the go ahead from our Board Office. Students should know who their teacher is by Monday. We have had a number of new registrations and we appreciate your patience and support as we organize our students into their class placements for the year.

We look forward to a wonderful year of great learning and great experiences at McGirr, Welcome Back!

Ms. Wilkie and Ms. Collins

### **STAFF UPDATES**

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

Ms. Tonia Collins, our new Vice Principal, also teaching grade 5 and FSL.

Ms. Sophia Francescutti - Grade 6 with Mr. Green

Ms. Dallas Knight - TOC, Grade 6 for Mr. Sinclair until that position is filled

Mrs. Jennifer Jones - Grade 1 - returning from Maternity Leave

Mrs. Jane Lauzier - Grade 1 with Mrs. Jones

Mrs. Cynthia Virtanen - Grade 1

Ms. Christina Eivindson - Kindergarten - On medical leave

Ms. Aimee Blow - TOC, Kindergarten for Ms. Eivindson until that position is filled

Ms. Joanne Allair - Kindergarten, with Ms. Blow (Fridays)

We have had to make a number of staff changes due to unforeseen medical leaves and circumstances. This means that we still need to hire some teachers in Grade 6, Grade 3 and Kindergarten. This is not an ideal situation to start the year, but our Human Resources Department is working hard to fill these positions and we do have some excellent Teachers on Call who have done a wonderful job in getting our classes ready for students on the first day of school.

Mr. Sinclair, Grade 6, will be on leave until November at the earliest.

Ms. Eivindson, Kindergarten will be on leave until after Christmas at the earliest.

Grade 3, opposite Mrs. Mark still needs to be filled, until that time, Mrs. Mark will teach full time for the first week or two.

One of our two Student Support Teacher positions still needs to be filled due to a retirement over the summer.

If you have any questions or concerns, please come in and we will be happy to address them.

## **SAD NEWS**

We are very sad to tell you that one of our teachers, Mrs. Lauzier lost her husband Ray last week. Ray passed away from congestive heart failure.

We send our deepest sympathies to our dear friend and colleague and to the Lauzier family.

A service will be held on Saturday, September 12 at 1:30 pm at Trinity Catholic Church on Spartan Rd.

## **DATES TO REMEMBER**

September 8	First day of School, Students attend from 11 -12 noon
September 9	First full day of classes - School Starts at 8:30 - Dismissal - 2:22
September 16	Terry Fox Run
Sept. 21 - 25	Book Fair
September 22	Picture Day
September 24	Open House, Meet the Teacher Night, 6 - 7 pm
September 28	Pro - D Day
October 12	Thanksgiving Holiday
October 19	PAC Meeting - 6:30 pm - In the Library
October 24	Pro D Day - Provincial
Oct. 27 - 30	Parent - Teacher Conferences
November 10	Remembrance Assembly - 10:45 am
November 10	Pro - D Day
November 11	Remembrance Day
December 1	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

## **FIRST DAY AND WEEK ROUTINE**

### **First day of school - Tuesday, September 8, 11- 12 noon**

Tuesday, all students (except Kindergarten) will attend school for the one hour only, 11 am - 12 noon. We will begin the day with all students meeting in the gym in their grade groups. We will introduce all of our staff and then teachers will take students to a grade level classroom where they will go over introductions and the opening week routines. Students will be in grade level classes all week. This gives the Board Office a chance to confirm enrollment at all of the schools. Once the Board office gives us permission, we will organize students into their permanent classes. This usually happens by Friday, but could happen as late as Monday.

Wednesday, September 9 students will be in for a full day - **REMEMBER ! - NEW HOURS - 8:30 - 2:22 pm**

## **CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS**

Elementary Schools in Nanaimo-Ladysmith do not place students in permanent classes during the first week of school. This is a process that involves looking at first week attendance, waitlisted registrations, and new families who have moved into our area over the summer. Carefully working through this process ensures that there is as little upheaval as possible once classes are set. It is our sincere hope that we can establish permanent classes as soon as possible. Thank - you in advance for your patience and understanding as we work to do what is best for all.

Also, please keep the bulk of the school supplies home until Monday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. Pencil boxes would be helpful starting Wednesday, September 24<sup>th</sup>.

## **SEPTEMBER 2015 CLASSES**

### **Educational Criteria for Assigning Students to Classes**

**When considering placing students into classes for the year, the following criteria are followed:**

- Instructional groupings that are best suited to the learning needs of all students.
- Class composition including students with special needs.
- Social and cultural issues including student independence, interactions with other students, leadership etc.
- Behavioral issues.
- Gender - even numbers of boys and girls.
- Groupings from previous years.
- Dominant grade composition.
- Cultural balance.
- Physical and social maturation.
- Learning styles.
- Social groups

Class composition will honor homogeneous instructional groups within a heterogeneous class. We do not have "High and Low achieving classes", nor do we have classes based on friendship or social groupings. The goal is to have balanced classes that work well together and bring out the educational best in all individual students. The learning environment must be a manageable working group to ensure that individual learning needs are addressed.

**Parent Requests for specific teachers, cannot be considered as we cannot guarantee placement of student's without using educationally based criteria.**

We have tentatively set 16 divisions for classes in the 2015-2016 school year. The class organization can change, depending on enrollment over the summer. If we add or lose a division, it could make a big difference in how the school organizes classes.

The placement of students is based on the best educational fit for the student, the class and for the school. Our teachers work together with the Principal and Vice Principal and the counselor to put classes together using the above criteria.

Our tentative organization and some of our new teachers will be as follows: (always subject to change ☺)

### **2015 -2016 Staff Assignments**

Div. 1	Grade 7	Mrs. Peace	SST	Mrs. Cornthwaite
Div. 2	Grade 7	Mrs. MacDonald	SST	TBA
Div. 3	Grade 6	Mr. Green/Ms. Francescutti	Library	Mrs. McDaniel
Div. 4	Grade 6	TBA/Mrs. Knight, until position is filled	Counselor	TBA
Div. 5	Grade 5/6	Mrs. Olsen/Ms. Collins	EAs	Brea Forell
Div. 6	Grade 4/5	Mrs. Dawson		Karen Lawrence
Div. 7	Grade 4	Mrs. Dyce		Kerri French
Div. 8	Grade 3,4	Mrs. Barber		Lori Tyce
Div. 9	Grade 3	Mrs. Mark/TBA		TBA
Div. 10	Grade 3	Mr. Raines	AbEd EA	Debra Logan
Div. 11	Grade 2	Mrs. Kraft	CYSW	Rita George
Div. 12	Grade 2	Mrs. Cyr	Custodians	Blaine Griffiths
Div. 13	Grade 1	Mrs. Jones/Mrs. Lauzier		Pam Skelton
Div. 14	Grade 1	Mrs. Virtanen		
Div. 15	Kindergarten	TBA/Ms. Blow, until position is filled/Mrs. Allair (Fridays)		
Div. 16	Kindergarten	Mr. Bamford		

In all of the cases where the teacher is 'TBA', the position has been posted and the school is awaiting the successful applicant.

### **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.

### **PARKING - DO NOT PARK IN THE DROP OFF ZONE IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL !!**

Please remember that there is **no parking in front of the school**. If you are leaving your vehicle to come to the school to pick up your child or if you are waiting for someone you **must park in the parking lot**. **The Drop off area is a designated area for the School Bus, Emergency Vehicles and School District vehicles only**. We are very grateful to our Traffic volunteer, Wendy Grubac, who keeps traffic moving smoothly and safely for our children.

### **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.

### **VALUABLE ITEMS**

Over the past few years at McGirr, we have noticed a marked increase in the number of valuable items that students are bringing to school. Personal items that are not directly related to education should not be brought to school. Every year items are misplaced or go missing and this causes a lot of concern for students and staff. If we notice items that do not have an educational purpose during school hours, they will be held in the office for safe keeping until such a time that a parent can attend the School to claim the item(s).

### **CELL PHONES, CAMERAS, ELECTRONICS**

Cameras, PDAs, MP3 players, iPods, CD players, and handheld video game units (such as a Nintendo DS) are not part of an educational program. As such, they are not to be present at McGirr. This includes housing an electronic item in a backpack during the school day. These devices are absolutely prohibited, unless a teacher has expressly asked that they be brought to school for a performance, such as a class dance. If electronic items are on the school site, they will be confiscated. Items will be returned when parents or guardians and the student make an appointment and meet with a school administrator.

Use of any photographic device, film camera, digital camera, cell phone camera, video camera, etc. is strictly prohibited. Use of any such device can potentially violate the personal privacy of individuals and such items are not to be at the school. If such a device is in use or in an individual's hand emulating use, a logical consequence - that may include suspension- will be given.

As a school staff, we do understand the importance of phone communication between parents and students before and after school. Cell phones that are brought to school must be turned off and stored in a back pack, prior to entering the building. They shall not be in pockets of clothing or in desks. Cell phones must be stored in backpacks and are not permitted to be brought out at any point during the school day. This is solely the responsibility of the student possessing the phone. After school, they may be turned on and used outside of the school building. Cell phones are not to be removed from backpacks or used in hallways, rooms of any kind, foyers or anywhere within the school building by students for any reason.

We understand that there may be times when parents need to immediately contact their children. At McGirr it is always possible for parents to communicate with their children in an emergency, via the main office.

McGirr Elementary is not responsible for any electronic device that ends up at school and will not investigate one that is lost, stolen, or damaged while on school property, as no such items should be on site.

### **VISITING A CLASSROOM or Talking to Teachers**

At McGirr we are anxious to make certain that classrooms function to their capacity as a learning environment. We also must ensure the safety of students at school during school hours. We also like to make sure that we have good communication with all of our parents. If you have a message to give your child or are dropping off items such as homework or lunches, please check in at the office and give them to our secretary rather than disturb the classrooms. We will make sure that your child receives the items.

If you need to talk to your child's teacher please call ahead, email, or arrange with our secretary to make an appointment. Often teachers are busy and ready to teach when the bell goes. If you make an appointment you can be assured that you and the teacher will have time to have a good discussion.

If you are helping in a class, please follow this routine:

1. Check in at the office, always - sign the sign-in sheet and be sure to include all information.
2. If you are staying to assist in a class, you will be given a name tag (wearing this quickly identifies you as someone who belongs in our school).
3. When your visit is complete, please return your tag, and sign out on the sign-in sheet.

### **\*BIG REMINDER\* - MCGIRR IS A FRAGRANCE FREE SCHOOL !**

#### **FRAGRANCE FREE AT MCGIRR**

At McGirr we welcome many new people to our staff and to our community. We now have a need to remind our community that we will continue to implement a Fragrance - Free environment here at McGirr. Scented products can aggravate extreme allergic reactions and health problems for people with asthma, allergies and other medical conditions. It can become impossible for a person with extreme allergies to breathe if even one child in the room is wearing clothes that have been laundered with scented fabric sheets or soap. We are asking our staff, students and parents to avoid the use of scent in products such as cologne, perfume, hair spray, shampoo, laundry soap and fabric softener sheets as well as many other products.

We all share the same air, so please take care what 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.

#### **VOLLEYBALL BC TRAIN AND PLAY FOR GRADE 5 - 7 GIRLS AND BOYS**

This train and play program is designed for girls in grades 5-7 who are interested in training and playing indoor volleyball. It is a great way for younger players who are trying volleyball for the first time, or for those who have past experiences as well. This program is fully supported by the Mariners Volleyball Club. **Athletes who register before September 15th will receive a Volleyball BC T-Shirt.**

**Where:** Oliver Woods Community Centre

**When:** Tuesdays from September 29th - November 17th from 4:45-6pm

**Registration:** Registration is online at [www.volleyballbc.org](http://www.volleyballbc.org) - Payment must be made online via credit card

**Cost:** \$125 + Tax

This train and play program is designed for **BOYS** in **grades 5/6 and 7/8** who are interested in training and playing indoor volleyball. It is a great way for younger players who are trying volleyball for the first time, or for those who have past experience as well. This program is fully supported by the Mariners Volleyball Club.

**Athletes who register before September 15th will receive a Volleyball BC T-Shirt.**

**Where:** Mt. View School

**When:** Mondays from September 28th - November 30th (excluding Oct. 12th and 19th)

Grade 5/6 - 6:00-7:15pm

Grade 7/8 - 7:15 - 8:30pm

**Registration:** Registration is online at [www.volleyballbc.org](http://www.volleyballbc.org) - Payment must be made online via credit card

**Cost:** \$125 + Tax

**For more information contact Stephen Epp at [island@volleyballbc.ca](mailto:island@volleyballbc.ca)**