



February 2025

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Robbie Dhillon
VICE PRINCIPAL: Mr. Bob Brooks
SECRETARIES: Ms. Sandra Fox and Ms. Breonna Senini

<https://mg.schools.sd68.bc.ca/>

FROM THE OFFICE

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

I would like to start this newsletter by acknowledging and thanking families for the messages of condolences and support during our difficult start after Winter Break. We all loved Mr. Bamford and he will be dearly missed. His tireless commitment to choir and music education will forever resonate in the hearts of those he touched. He spent countless hours mentoring, teaching, and encouraging students, both young and old.

Our staff and community have shared stories and memories. We appreciate the time families took to help the children understand their feelings and be able to return to school. Mr. B had a profound impact on all of us. His presence will be dearly missed, but his spirit will continue to inspire us for years.

As we settle back into classes and routines after the winter break, I would like to thank all of our teachers and support staff for the excellent work they do, daily.

I would like to thank families for having their student "school ready." This really makes this possible. Also, a thank you to PAC members who have done so much to add to the school experience.

It seemed like just yesterday we came back from winter holidays and here we are at over 50% done this school year. There has been a lot going on at McGirr the past little while.

Planning Ahead for the rest of the year

Here are a few suggestions to ask your child.

"What were some important things you have learned so far this year?" or "What have been your favourite moments up to now?" Write these positive memories in the planner or in a journal.

What would you like to be able to do better? How can we work together to help you meet your goals? Review planners and notebooks for ideas.

As always, if you have any questions don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,

Mr. Robbie Dhillon (Principal)

2025 CALENDAR

PAC Meeting (7 PM)Mon Feb 10
PAC Movie Night (6 PM).....Thurs Feb 20
BC Family Day (school closed).....Mon Feb 17

PAC Meeting (7 PM)Mon Mar 10
Progress Report Term #2 issued..... Wed Mar 12
Last Day before Spring Break/Easter.....Fri. Mar 14

First Day back.....Mon Mar 31

PAC Meeting (7 PM)Mon Apr 14
Good Friday (school closed).....Fri Apr 18
Easter Monday (school closed).....Mon Apr 21
Gr 3-7 Track Meet (@ Rotary Bowl) Thurs Apr 24
Class Photo Day (all 20 divisions) "Tentative" ... Mon Apr 28

Pro-D (students do not attend).....Mon May 5
PAC Meeting (7 PM).....Mon May 12
Annie Jr Musical (More info to come) Thurs May 15
Victoria Day (school closed)Mon May 19
Zone Track Meet (Rotary Bowl) Thurs May 22

PAC Fun Fair.....Fri Jun 6
District Track Meet (Rotary Bowl).....Thurs Jun 12
PAC Meeting (7 pm)Mon Jun 16
Summative ReportsThurs Jun 26
Last Day of School (school dismissed at 2:13)...Thurs Jun 26
Administration Day Fri Jun 27
if dates change these are communicated through the office

RULES FOR PLAYING IN THE SNOW

As we approach that time of year when Nanaimo can get snow, we'd like to remind families of the "snow" rules at McGirr. The following rules are enforced for the safety of students:



- There is "no snowball throwing" on the grounds
- Students are not to participate in activities that may injure other students – face washing with snow, kicking chunks of snow/ice,

etc.

- No crazy carpets, sleds, slides brought to school
- It is important that our students understand the rules and our concern that snowballs can cause serious injury. Within these rules there are many opportunities for students to enjoy their time outside in the snow at recess.

SCHOOL CLOSURES



It is that time of year again, when the school district would like to remind parents about school closure procedures. The most common reasons that schools might be closed are dangerous road conditions due to a heavy

snowfall or ice. If you are wondering if schools are open on a particular day, for the most current updates listen to local radio stations (WAVE 102.3 FM and WOLF 106.9 FM) in the mornings.

We also attempt to put an announcement of any school closure on the school district website, www.sd68.bc.ca, and on Twitter and Facebook, but our ability to do so could be affected by such things as power outages and technical issues. If there is no announcement on the website or social media, please be sure to listen to local radio stations.

We would like to remind parents it is their right to make the final decision as to whether it is safe for their children to travel to school on any given day. While the district strives to make the best decision possible for students across the district, there may be circumstances in your neighbourhood that lead you to decide to keep your children home, even though schools are open.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING FOR WEATHER CONDITIONS



The cool wet weather will arrive and there will be many days students will ask the question "Is it an inside day?" The answer on most days is no. Students will be going outside to play at recess and lunch unless it is raining heavily. We thank you for ensuring your child comes to school with appropriate rain and cool weather clothing. At McGirr we believe in the importance of fresh air and outside play for all students and appreciate your assistance in this regard. **It is also advisable students have a change of clothes in their school bags, including socks.** Warm gloves are always a good idea as well.

BIKE SAFETY



In the same newsletter we mention snow, we will discuss bike safety 😊. During the winter months there is less daylight. This increases the dangers on the roads with students cycling to school in very poor lighting conditions. It is very important that students wear brightly colored clothing or reflective tape so others can see you better. Ideally the importance of having proper lighting affixed to their bike is the best way to allow for others to see you clearly as a cyclist. Just a reminder, it's against the law to ride a bicycle without a red rear light and a white light on the front. In addition, please walk your bike across marked crosswalks when crossing the road and do not ride your bike on school property. Always wear your helmet --- "It's your last line of defense!"

PARENT QUIZ – ARE YOU A GOOD LISTENER?

We all think we're good listeners, but studies show that most people can do a better job.

Have each member of your family take this quiz. See if you agree with each other!

Give yourself five points for things you think you do very well, zero for something you really need to work on – or any score in between.

- ___ 1. I do not interrupt family members when they are talking.
- ___ 2. Each person in my family can count on me for some uninterrupted listening time each day.
- ___ 3. I do not do other things while "listening" to people.
- ___ 4. I maintain eye contact with my family when they speak.

- ___ 5. My family would consider me a good listener.

YOU CAN HELP THE OFFICE BE MORE EFFICIENT BY CONTINUING TO:

- Email student absences to info.mg@sd68.bc.ca is the communication for general student absences. **(please include your child's first and last name, teacher name** and reason if needed. CC this email to your child's teacher.



- Or call the school in advance **(preferably before 8 AM)**

and leaving a message on the answering machine if you know your child will not be in attendance

- **Non Emergency Early pick up:** email info.mg@sd68.bc.ca (also copied to your child's teacher) as early as possible (on the day of) so we can ensure your child's teacher is aware. (include your child's first/last name and time of pick up).
- **Non-Emergency Pick up at end of day (1:50-2:13).** We are a large school, with a busy parking lot, and students are not always in their assigned classrooms towards the end of the day. From gym, to library, to outside PE, buddies, music, band, support rooms, the list goes on, so this email is a crucial part in allowing us to have the time to have your child ready as quickly as possible. If you are showing up without this notice, there will be a longer wait. **If requesting non-emergency early dismissal close to the end of the day bell (ie 1:50-2:13) please ensure you have given the office good lead time.. In an ideal day, students would not need to leave early during that last part of the day.**

ANTI BULLYING DAY (PINK SHIRT) WED FEB 26



On Wednesday, February 26th we would like to encourage students and parents to wear pink to school for anti-bullying day.

The Ministry of Education has a guide developed to assist parents regarding bullying behaviour and other safety issues with the E.R.A.S.E. program. The guide can be found at www.erasebullying.ca/

What is Bullying Versus Conflict?

Building respectful and safe schools proactively address bullying and all forms of unacceptable behaviour including harassment, discrimination or violence. The definitions below are adapted from various Canadian safe schools' networks including: The National Crime Preventions Strategy.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone, or a group of people, deliberately upset or hurt another person or damage

their property, reputation or social acceptance on more than one occasion. There is an imbalance of power in incidents of bullying with the bully or bullies having more power at the time due to age, size, status, or other reasons.

Bullying may occur because of perceived differences, such as, culture, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability or disability, religion, body size and physical appearance, age or economic status. Bullying may be motivated by jealousy, distrust, fear, misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge. It can continue over time, is often hidden from adults, and will probably continue if no action is taken.

Types of Bullying

There are four broad types of bullying:

- **Direct physical bullying:** includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, and pushing or damaging property.
- **Direct verbal bullying:** includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse.
- **Indirect bullying:** is often harder to recognize and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and/or cause humiliation. Indirect bullying includes: lying, and spreading rumours, playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate, mimicking, encouraging others to socially exclude someone, or damaging someone's reputation or social acceptance.
- **Cyber bullying:** is direct verbal or indirect bullying behaviours using digital technologies. Some examples include: harassment via cell phone/texting, setting up a web-bashing site or deliberately excluding someone and/or attacking them via social media sites like Facebook.

What Bullying is Not

Many distressing behaviours are not examples of bullying even though they are unpleasant and often require teacher intervention and management.

- **Mutual conflict:** involves an argument or disagreement between people but not an imbalance of power. Both parties are upset and usually both want a resolution. Unresolved mutual conflict can develop into bullying if one of the parties targets the other repeatedly in retaliation.
- **Social rejection or dislike:** is not bullying unless it involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others.
- **Single episode acts:** of nastiness or physical aggression are not the same as bullying. If someone is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion they are not being bullied. Nastiness or physical aggression that is directed towards many different people is not the same as bullying. However, this does not mean that single episodes of nastiness or physical aggression should be ignored or condoned as these are unacceptable behaviours.

It is important that all students recognize that they are each responsible for helping to create a safe, caring, and respectful environment.

15 MINUTES OF FUN: LEARN WITH YOUR FAMILY



ABC Life Literacy Canada is encouraging Canadian families to

have "15 Minutes of Fun" learning together. Learning can happen at any time. Practicing literacy together every day has tremendous benefits for both children and parents. Here are some great ways to get started:

1. Read a "wake up" story in the morning (after reading your bedtime story the night before).
2. Search online for fun places to go in your community. Pick out a spot for your next family day trip.
3. Make up a new recipe together and post it online.
4. Tell knock-knock jokes together while doing the dishes.
5. Create a story with your family: take turns writing one sentence at a time, then read the whole story aloud when you're done.
6. Write a review of a book you read together as a family. Send it to the author through email or snail mail.
7. Organize a book swap at your school or with your friends.
8. Track your trip to school, the park, and the grocery store on a map. Find a different route to take to each place.
9. Learn to play a musical instrument. What about the ukulele?
10. Write a note to include in a grown-up's lunch – ask them to write back!
11. Make a popsicle stick model with your family.
12. Write your names graffiti-style using chalk on your sidewalk – you may need to shovel first!
13. Play a board game together.
14. Look up the words to your favorite song online. Have a sing-off with your friends!
15. Count how many steps it takes to get from your bedroom to your kitchen. Find out who in your family has the most steps to a snack!

INTERNET SAFETY –KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE

Internet safety for children is an important subject and something many parents are concerned about. The internet does have many good points, but there are dangers, and parents and children should be particularly cautious.

So, what can you do to protect your children when they are online?

Use A Child Safe Browser

These are browsers that block websites with content that is not appropriate for children to view. Although you can never be completely sure it will block everything, it will at least go some way to protect children from content that is not child friendly.

Observe Children When They Are Using The Internet

It may not always be possible, but where it is, you should observe what your children are looking at, or at least be in the same room as them.

Limit Internet Usage

There are many reasons to limit the time your children spend on the internet. Spending too much time on the computer is not healthy, and the less time they spend online the less chance of them coming across something they shouldn't.

Stay In Touch

Parents should keep abreast of the latest online threats, so they know the dangers their children could face. It is a good idea to read up on the subject occasionally. If you are educated on these matters, you can educate your children, thus protecting them from internet dangers.

The better placed you are to protect your children the better, but children themselves also need to be aware. So, what should parents tell their children to do and not to do when using the internet?

Don't Give Away Personal Information

Parents should tell their children not to give information such as their telephone number, their address or their age to people online. There are times when they cannot be sure who they are talking to and who will see this information.

Don't Meet Up With Online "Friends"

Children should not meet up with someone they have met online. The problem here is that it is easy to hide your identity online, so you never know who you will really be meeting.

Don't Give Information About You Away

Any information children would not be comfortable with everyone knowing should not be shared online. Whether true or not, this could be seen by anyone and may not disappear in a hurry. If there is something they wouldn't share with their entire school it should not be revealed online, because all of their friends (and even people they don't know) may be privy to this information.

Don't Post Pictures Of Yourself Online

Any pictures posted online have the potential to get anywhere. They can even be manipulated. For obvious reasons children posting pictures of themselves online could lead to problems.

Don't Tell People Your Plans

Again, this could be seen by anyone. If people know where children will be and when, then they will easily be able to find them. This means they could be tracked down by anyone, from school bullies to child predators.

Don't Respond To Messages If Not Comfortable Doing So

If a child is sent a message online they should not respond unless they feel comfortable. All they have to do is ignore it or delete it or turn their computer off.