



## Algonquin Ridge Elementary School

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**Cory McKeown**

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### ALGONQUIN RIDGE NEWS- JANUARY 2021

#### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year and welcome back(ish)! We hope you all had a safe, merry and enjoyable Winter/Christmas Break even though it may have looked and felt much different than in previous years. The January message from school has traditionally focused on information, tips and requests to help us all get back into the regular routine of school as quickly and efficiently as possible. Of course, this year, we are focused on setting up new routines and habits that will allow us to all be successful during the current period of online learning and teaching. In our first week back Ms. Moffitt and I have been thrilled to visit every classroom a time or two, even though our presence sometimes goes unnoticed! That tells us that students are doing a good job of staying engaged and working hard to follow along despite the distance between us all. Seeing the children's faces and hearing their voices has been uplifting for the Algonquin Ridge educators and Admin and we are very thankful for the significant commitment families are making at home to ensure your children are online and learning (and mostly clothed!) Once again, we will get through this period of uncertainty together with optimism for the future, at school, in our community and across the country and globe.

As well, we would like to once again take a moment to thank the Algonquin Ridge families (students/parents/extended family and staff) for their generous support of families within our own school. Your donations were all very much appreciated as they went a long way towards easing some of the stresses that the holidays can bring for almost a dozen families, with an additional donation made to the Barrie Food Bank. It was particularly moving to see several students making personal donations and we commend their empathy and generosity.

Though I am repeating a message I first wrote and shared in January of 2019, we think a few minutes spent with your children discussing and setting some goals for the remainder of the year will be time well spent. The message was as follows:

The New Year is traditionally a time when adults take a moment to reflect on the past year, to think about, and to commit to, changes they would like to make in the year ahead. Children, like adults, benefit from taking time to reflect and set goals. Goals can be either short or long term, connect to academics, behaviour, attendance, athletics or relationships etc. When deciding on a few goals, remember to be realistic so that they are achievable and also decide what strategies or specific actions need to happen to ensure success. As a school that recognizes the strong connection between attendance, positive Learning Skills and overall academic and life success, we stress the importance of developing now the positive habits that are necessary in Secondary School and in the years that follow. Our data tells us that the impact of missed school is particularly significant in Math (students in high school have reported grades approx. half a percent lower for each missed class). Please take a moment to talk with your children about goal setting.

Cory McKeown & Karen Moffitt

#### CHARACTER ATTRIBUTE FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY

**Honesty - we behave in a sincere, trustworthy and truthful manner.**

More information about character education can be found here: [www.scdsb.on.ca/about/character\\_education](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/about/character_education)

## CALENDAR

January 27, 2021 – Family Literacy Day  
January 25, 2021 – Virtual School Council meeting @ 6:30  
January 29, 2021 – PA Day – **no school**  
February 14, 2021 – Valentine’s Day  
February 15, 2021 – Family Day – **school closed**  
February 24, 2021 –Pink Shirt Day  
March 15-19, 2021 – March Break – **school closed**  
March 17, 2021 – St Patrick’s Day  
April 2, 2021 – Good Friday – **school closed**  
April 5, 2021 – Easter Monday – **school closed**  
April 14, 2021 – International Day of Pink  
April 22, 2021 – Earth Day

## COVID-19 SELF-ASSESSMENT

All students and staff will be expected to self-screen prior to attending school each day, using a self-assessment tool provided by the SMDHU. Students or staff with symptoms must stay home from school. To access the COVID-19 self-assessment tool, please visit the [SMDHU website](#).

## DAYS OF AWARENESS AND RECOGNITION TAKING PLACE IN DECEMBER

Throughout the year, there are many awareness days that focus on different causes and recognition. The Simcoe County District School Board has developed a list of these days as a guide for schools. Schools may participate in recognizing some or all of these days in various ways. This list is not exhaustive. Following are the days of awareness and recognition that the SCDSB will recognize during the month of December:

Jan. 27	Family Literacy Day
Jan. 27	International Holocaust Remembrance Day
Jan. 29	Bell Let’s Talk Day

## KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2021 IS OPEN!

Kindergarten is the beginning of a wonderful journey of learning and we want your child to begin their journey in a SCDSB school! Do you have a child who is turning four in 2021? If so, we invite you to register your child for kindergarten.

To register online or for more information visit: [www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning\\_for\\_school/kindergarten](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/kindergarten)



## [SCDSB TO OFFER GRADE 9 FRENCH IMMERSION BEGINNING IN SEPTEMBER 2021](#)

Starting in September 2021, The Simcoe County District School Board will begin to offer French Immersion (FI) courses to Grade 9 students. There are seven designated secondary school sites that will run FI programs. These sites are:

- Banting Memorial High School (Alliston)
- Barrie North Collegiate (Barrie)
- Collingwood Collegiate (Collingwood)
- Georgian Bay District Secondary School (Midland)
- Innisdale Secondary School (Barrie)
- Nantyr Shores Secondary School (Alcona)
- Twin Lakes Secondary School (Orillia)

Grade 9 students will take four courses in French: French language, geography and health and physical education, as well as an arts course. By the end of Grade 12, students in the FI program will have taken 10 courses in French. To learn more, including how to register and what school your child would attend visit [www.scdsb.on.ca/secondary/program\\_options/french\\_as\\_a\\_second\\_language](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/secondary/program_options/french_as_a_second_language).

## [JOIN US FOR SOME TIME WELL SPENT](#)

The SCDSB acknowledges the existence of systemic racism in society, and the importance of addressing it. We share responsibility in standing up against racism, hate and oppression of all kinds. One of the SCDSB's [Strategic Priorities](#) is Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Our focus continues to be educating our students and staff about the injustice and impact of systemic racism, and on working to create and maintain safe spaces within our schools and broader communities.

Our work within the pillar of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion stems from the fundamental principle that every student should have the opportunity to experience academic success and personal well-being regardless of their identity. With that in mind, the SCDSB Equity, Diversity and Inclusion department developed a video series focused on addressing the impacts of all forms of racism. Interviews with experts in the field, members of local and national community organizations, parents/guardians, staff and trustees have been recorded and shared with staff and with the public through our social media channels. To watch, visit the SCDSB YouTube channel at: [www.youtube.com/SimcoeCountyDSB](http://www.youtube.com/SimcoeCountyDSB) and select the Time Well Spent playlist. For more information about the SCDSB's commitment to equity and inclusion, please visit the equity and inclusion page of our website at: [https://scdsb.on.ca/about/equity\\_and\\_inclusion](https://scdsb.on.ca/about/equity_and_inclusion).

## [MABEL'S LABELS](#)

Mabel's Labels is one of our school's fundraising initiatives. This website features peel and stick clothing labels, bag tags and a variety of safety and household labeling systems. This will be an ongoing, open initiative for our school which means that any time you wish to get labels for your children or household, please consider using Mabel's Labels and help Algonquin Ridge. It could not be easier. Simply go to <http://mabelslabels.com> and click on "Support a Fundraiser". Then "Select your School/ Organization", find "Algonquin Ridge (Barrie)" and follow the steps to fulfill your order. Anyone can support our school, whether their children attend ARES or not, so please pass this on to family and friends as well. The product comes directly to you and the school will receive 20% of the total sales! Thank you so much for your support.



## [BRUSH AS A TEAM UNTIL AGE 8](#)

Baby teeth are important, and kids under age 8 still need help from an adult to brush. Help your child to brush their teeth twice a day for two minutes using a pea-sized amount of fluoridated toothpaste. Before school and before bed are two great times to get into the habit of brushing. Cavities can be painful and can lead to infection, so be sure to get any toothaches checked by a dental professional.

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit offers some **free** dental services for children and teens. Contact Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

*Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit*



## [GET INTO CODING!](#)

Interested in exploring coding with your child at home? There are several user-friendly programs that make coding fun, accessible and easy to discover! [Code.org](https://code.org) is a nonprofit dedicated to expanding access to computer science in schools and increasing participation by young women and students from other underrepresented groups. They offer easily accessible coding projects, lessons and experiences for students to create and alter code.

Visit this website for Hour of Code tutorials (<https://studio.code.org/courses>) or try some of the ones we recommend below!

- Dance Party - <https://studio.code.org/s/dance-2019/stage/1/puzzle/1>
- Minecraft Voyage Aquatic - <https://studio.code.org/s/aquatic/stage/1/puzzle/1>
- Flappy Code - <https://studio.code.org/flappy/1>
- Classic Maze - <https://studio.code.org/hoc/1>



**Scratch Junior** ([www.scratchjr.org/](http://www.scratchjr.org/)) - With the ScratchJr iPad app, young children (ages 5-7) can program their own interactive stories and games. In the process, they learn to solve problems, design projects and express themselves creatively on the computer.

**Scratch** (<https://scratch.mit.edu/>) - Scratch is a web-based tool where you can program your own interactive stories, games, and animations and share your creations with others in the online community. Scratch includes easy to follow tutorials, and endless project ideas to get your young coder creating and exploring the world of code.

Check out some of the great Scratch Tutorials (<https://scratch.mit.edu/ideas>) or try some of the ones we recommend below!

- Animate your Name - <https://scratch.mit.edu/projects/462492913/editor>
- Make a Chase Game - <https://scratch.mit.edu/projects/462493493/editor>
- Create a Story - <https://scratch.mit.edu/projects/462493360/editor>

## IT'S ALL ABOUT THE CONNECTION

Young people are more likely to grow up successfully when they have close connections with the important adults in their lives. Through these connections, young people discover who they are, what they are capable of and how to make a positive contribution in their community. Here are some ways to help keep your relationship with your child strong:

- *Show me that I matter to you.* Encourage my efforts, and believe in me
- *Push me to keep getting better.* Expect my best, while helping me learn from mistakes
- *Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.* Stand up for me when I need it
- *Treat me with respect and give me a say.* Take me seriously and treat me fairly
- *Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.* Inspire me about my future.

Looking for more parenting support? Speak with a public health nurse by calling 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

*Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit*



## PAY FOR FIELD TRIPS, LUNCH DAYS ETC. WITH SCHOOLCASH ONLINE

We have made it easy for parents to make their school purchases from the convenience of their own home. Whether it is lunch days, field trips or school wear, we have it online for you! Follow these three steps to get started:

1. Go to [simcoecounty.schoolcashionline.com](http://simcoecounty.schoolcashionline.com) or visit our school website and click on 'Pay Fees'
2. Register and add your child to the newly created account
3. View and purchase items through bank transfer or credit card.
4. It is safe, fast and convenient. Contact the office with any questions.

## NEW YEAR, NEW GOALS FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY!

The beginning of a new year is the perfect time to start thinking about setting new goals. Bringing the whole family together for a new year goal-setting session not only provides an opportunity to discuss the importance of exercise and a healthy diet with your children – it also gives you the chance to brainstorm on working towards a shared goal.

Here are some small steps to set your family up for success in the new year:

**Play together.** Spend time outside playing together as often as possible. Spending time outdoors improves your mood and helps you get an extra dose of vitamin D. Go for a walk, build a snow fort or go tobogganing – fun for the whole family!

**Pencil it in.** Add physical activity or play time to the calendar, with the same commitment as other important meetings. Schedule an evening family walk or a [virtual family fitness class](#) from your living room – seeing it on the calendar will help motivate your family to stay on track.

**Set goals.** Set a goal that you can achieve together as a family, like trying one new activity each week, or walking for 30 minutes a few times a week. Having a reward, like a family movie night, when you reach your goal will encourage the whole family to participate and make reaching the goal even more fun.

The YMCA offers a variety of family programs - with registered activities like open gym, family swim and the Y kids' program, the Y offers plenty of great opportunities to be active with your family in a safe environment. For more information on booking a visit to your YMCA, visit [ymcasm.ca/FAQ](http://ymcasm.ca/FAQ). If you are looking for activities to do in the comfort of your home, [YMCAHome.ca](http://YMCAHome.ca) has a variety of free, virtual fitness classes and family-friendly workouts. Wishing you a safe and healthy 2021!

*Information provided by the YMCA of Simcoe Muskoka*

## PEANUT AND NUT AWARE SCHOOL

Our school strives to be a Nut-Safe School. At Algonquin Ridge, we have several students who have a severe nut allergy. These students cannot be exposed to nuts in ANY form, as this may trigger an anaphylactic reaction that is life threatening and requires immediate medical intervention. Therefore, in the best interests of these students and for any other students who may develop peanut or nut allergies in the future we have banned all peanut/nuts and food containing nuts within the school. These include, but are not limited to:

- Peanut butter sandwiches, dips or crackers
- Nutella
- Cookies or cakes with nuts
- Granola Bars with nuts
- Chocolate bars containing nuts e.g. Snickers
- Dried Fruit and nut mixes



Direct contact with the food is not always required to trigger a reaction. For example, if someone in our school eats peanuts and then touches playground equipment it could be contaminated with enough peanut butter to trigger a severe reaction. We also ask that children who have peanut butter for breakfast on school days please wash their hands thoroughly and clean their teeth before coming to school.

As always, our paramount concern is for the safety and well-being for all children in our care. We feel this is the best way to attempt to ensure the safety of students that have severe nut allergies in our school. If your child forgets to comply with this, we will send a reminder home with them and provide an alternative snack. Teachers will also assist students by reinforcing the policy through class discussions.

*Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit*

## KEEP CONNECTED WITH OUR SCHOOL AND WITH THE SCDSB

It is important to get accurate information about what is going on at your school and at the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB). Here are some ways to do that:

- Subscribe to our school's website by visiting the 'What's New' section at <http://alr.scdsb.on.ca>. You can sign up to receive emails about school news updates and information during emergencies. It is easy to subscribe – visit our website and click the 'Subscribe' link at the very top of the page. Provide your email and click 'Subscribe'; and we will send you an email with a link to click to confirm that you want to subscribe. You can unsubscribe at any time using the link at the bottom of each email.
- Sign up to receive SCDSB media releases by clicking the 'Subscribe' button at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca).
- Follow the SCDSB on Twitter (@SCDSBSchools), Facebook ([facebook.com/SCDSB](https://www.facebook.com/SCDSB)) and Instagram ([instagram.com/scdsb](https://www.instagram.com/scdsb)).

For school bus transportation information, visit the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium's website at [main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca). Also, remember to bookmark the school bus information page at [simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) for bus delay and cancellation information on inclement weather days.

## SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION AVAILABLE FROM THE SCSTC

For school bus transportation information, visit the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC)'s website at [main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca). Also, remember to bookmark the school bus information page at [simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) for bus delay and cancellation information on inclement weather days.

### **Inclement weather and bus cancellation information reminder.**

All information regarding cancelled buses in Simcoe County is posted on the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC)'s bus information website at [www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca). Our school is in the **CENTRAL** zone.

When buses are cancelled, schools remain open for student learning, unless otherwise noted. It is always a family decision whether or not it is safe for their child(ren) to leave for school under severe weather conditions. The Consortium and bus operators try to make the decision to cancel school buses before 6 a.m. and make every effort to post announcements before 7 a.m. Inclement weather cancellations are effective for the whole day and buses cancelled in the morning will not run at the end of the day. You can follow the Consortium on Twitter [@SCSTC\\_SchoolBus](https://twitter.com/SCSTC_SchoolBus) for bus cancellations and other information. You can also subscribe to receive bus delay notifications here: <https://scstc.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx>

