



Algonquin Ridge Elementary School

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ALGONQUIN RIDGE JANUARY NEWS

MESSAGE FROM MR. MCKEOWN AND MR. VAN ARRAGON

Happy New Year and welcome back! We hope you all had a safe, merry, enjoyable Winter/Christmas Break with your family and friends and that you are managing to get back to your more 'normal' routines with back to school this week. The focus of this message will be a few suggestions to get the year started on a positive note.

The New Year is traditionally a great time for families to take a moment to discuss any changes they might like to make and to do some goal setting. Goals can be either short or long term, connect to academics, behaviour, attendance, athletic or social etc. When deciding on a few goals remember to be realistic so that they are achievable and decide what strategies or specific actions need to happen to ensure success. As a school that recognizes the strong connection between attendance, strong Learning Skills and overall academic and life success, we stress the importance of developing 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 intense in Math (students in high school have reported grades approximately half a percent lower for each missed class). Please consider these categories when thinking about goal setting.

Finally, with winter in like a lion, dress for the weather! We are an active community and as such will be outside daily in adherence with the board policies connected to extreme weather. We will only alter our outdoor activities when temperatures are -25 C or below (typically). Extreme wind, poor visibility or near 'extreme' cold temperatures may lead to adjustments to our routine. Remember that students at school will be expected to be outside for recess as supervision schedules do not provide coverage for students to remain indoors during nutrition breaks.

You will find a wealth of valuable information in the pages that follow. Please take a moment to learn about the many positive things happening in your child (ren)'s school and let's continue to work together in the coming months to make our school even better.

JANUARY CALENDAR

Jan 9 - School resumes

Jan 9 - MADD presentation for grade 7&8

Jan 13 - Grade 8 field trip to Ripley's Aquarium and CN Tower

Jan 13 - ARES Spirit Day - Pajama Day

Jan 16 - Grade 7 – Men C immunization

Jan 17 - Gr. 7&8 field trip to Barrie Film Festival presentation of "He Called Me Malala"

Jan 17 – School Council @ 6:30 in the Learning Commons

Jan 17 – McLaren Art visits the kindies

Jan 19 - Board Games Day

Jan 23 - Buddy Reading Day

Jan 23 – Kindergarten registration begins

Jan 24 - Gr. 6 field trip to Hardwood Hills

Jan 26 - Character Assembly at 11:40 AM

Jan 27 – PA day – **no school**

SAVE THE DATE - Thursday, February 23 - Barrie Colts Night

1500 EBOOKS NOW AVAILABLE IN OUR SCHOOL LIBRARY

Thanks to the generous support of our school council, we now have 1500 eBooks added to our school library collection. These books are accessible to our students from anywhere, school, home, the cottage, mobile device, as long as you have a Wi-Fi connection. Simply follow the link below to access 1500 great books to read! This link will be made available on our school website as well, so your family can enjoy these good books anytime, anywhere!

<http://my.abdodigital.com>

Username – algonquinridge

Password – library

SAVE THE DATE - Thursday, February 23 -Barrie Colts Night at the BMC

Watch for information coming home with your child soon to purchase your tickets for Algonquin Ridge night at the Barrie Molson Centre. The Barrie Colts face off against the Hamilton Bulldogs. Charlie Horse and some Colts players will be visiting our school in the near future and you'll be able to see them on the ice on the 23rd as well. For every ticket purchased a portion comes back to our school.

QSP FUNDRAISER UPDATE

In November, Algonquin Ridge launched the fall QSP magazine and cookie dough fundraiser, and thanks to the continued support our amazing school community we made just over \$2,500 in profit. We'd also like to thank all the parents who were so diligent in picking up their cookie dough from the school the evening of December 8th. Unfortunately, we did experience a slight delay in receiving some of the gift/specialty items that were ordered online from QSP, which they explained was due to higher than normal order volumes. These items were sent home with the applicable students the week of December 19th, and QSP has assured us this won't happen in the future. Special thanks goes out to Andrea Ryan, Giovanna Bowes and Lisa Duhamel for volunteering their time to spearhead and organize this fundraiser.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION WELL-BEING STRATEGY SURVEY

Well-Being is central to a student's ability to achieve and flourish. The Ministry of Education has prioritized the focus on student well-being as a crucial prerequisite for future success.

In keeping with this priority, the Ministry is developing a shared vision of how to best support the well-being of all students, in collaboration with parents, students, educators and administrators, counsellors, social workers and community partners across the province. With the input gathered from these stakeholders, the Ministry will establish a Well-Being Framework for students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 that reflects the shared commitments and positive outcomes desired for students.

Stakeholders are encouraged to participate in this process by providing feedback through the completion of a Well-being Engagement Survey.

Go to <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/about/Wellbeing2.html> to access the Ministry of Education website. Complete the engagement survey prior to January 15, 2017 by accessing the link entitled, "engagement portal" on the website.

ME TO WE TEAM UPDATE

Thank you to all the students and staff who supported the Me to We team's Holiday Candy grams initiative in December. We sold approximately 1200 candy canes and raised almost \$1000 which will go towards supporting health care initiatives in the country of Haiti, through the Free the Children organization. Thank you also to the team for all their efforts, staying in for many recesses throughout the month of December to make, sell and deliver 1200 candy grams!

SCDSB SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

One of the goals in the Simcoe County District School Board improvement plan is to provide a safe, supportive learning environment that supports all students in being successful. In January, *all students in grades 4 to 8* will be asked to complete an anonymous, online survey at school about how they feel about their school. Your child's teacher will supervise the class during the survey and can answer any questions or concerns your child may have.

This year, *parents/guardians of students in grades 4 to 8* will also be asked to complete an anonymous online survey about how they feel about their child's school.

These surveys provide students, parent/guardians and staff with the opportunity to say what is great about their school, as well as express their concerns. The survey results will provide valuable feedback to staff and will help schools to develop their Safe Schools Plans.

Students, parents/guardians and staff will not be asked to provide their names and all responses will be combined to ensure confidentiality.

Questions on the surveys cover a range of topics, such as:

- the overall tone of the school, often referred to as school climate;
- perceptions of peers in terms of the Board's 10 Character traits;
- involvement in extracurricular activities and academic achievement;
- experiences of school safety and bullying;
- equity and inclusion practices within the school;
- school responses to instances of student wrongdoing; and
- 3 questions to assist the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit in their Healthy Schools Initiative.

STUDENT SURVEY

Should you wish to review the *student survey*, a sample version is available here <http://fluidsurveys.com/s/SCStudent1617Sample>. A paper copy of the *student survey* is also available at the school office. Please call the school if you have questions about how the *student survey* will be implemented in your child's school.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY

To complete the *parent/guardian survey*, please go to the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) website (<http://scdsb.on.ca>) and click the link to the parent/guardian School Climate survey. The **password** for the *parent/guardian survey* is **ElementaryParent2017**. If you do not have access to the internet and/or you prefer to complete a paper version of the survey, copies of the *parent/guardian survey* are available at the school office. Questions about how to access the survey can be directed to SCDSB's Research and Evaluation Services team research@scdsb.on.ca

The information that is collected will be used to help guide our school in creating and maintaining safe, supportive learning environments for all students. Thank you for your support.

THREE CHEERS FOR CHRISTMAS CHEER

Student Ambassadors appealed to the Algonquin Ridge Community to donate food items and toys to those in need during the Christmas season and our community responded with hearts and arms wide open! We went from approximately 300 items in our 2015 drive to approximately 1400 items in our 2016 drive. As a community we contributed over 1000 food items and almost 400 toys. The Student Ambassadors were allowed to tour Christmas Cheer headquarters where the school liaison told us we had an awesome campaign. She was very impressed by the assembly the ambassadors organized and commented on how lucky we were to have a great staff that was willing to go to such varying degrees of public embarrassment to spur on our campaign. No one will ever forget the sight of Mr. Sclater and Mr. Hamilton with pie in their face, or Mme. Murphy knocked to the ground after getting a good soaking, or the toilet paper brides and their silly string. The 3 Man Rock band attracted new groupies and the youngest in the crowd roared with excitement as T-Rex out arm wrestled Santa Claus. The spaghetti contest controversy may linger for years around the halls of A.R.E.S. Every face in the school beamed with happiness that day, and I hope again a couple of days later, when we thought of all those families whose Christmas was made just a little bit brighter because we cared enough to do something to help others in need.

Mrs. Gray and the Student Ambassadors

ME TO WE TEAM UPDATE

Thank you to all the students and staff who supported the Me to We team's Holiday Candy grams initiative in December. We sold approximately 1200 candy canes and raised almost \$1000 which will go towards supporting health care initiatives in the country of Haiti, through the Free the Children organization. Thank you also to the team for all their efforts, staying in for many recesses throughout the month of December to make, sell and deliver 1200 candy grams!

CELEBRATE READING

Algonquin Ridge will be hosting our 4th Annual Celebrate Reading event in January to coincide with "literacy awareness month". We are excited about the books we will share, the activities we will do and the fun we will have! We are going to ask that each student commits to reading every night for a set amount of time (as determined by the classroom teacher and students) and to record his/her reading on each calendar day. Students should bring their reading sheets regularly so that the teachers can keep track of the progress in meeting the reading goals. *To make our addition a little easier, please record reading sessions in five minute blocks.*



On Friday, January 13th, we will be enjoying a pajama day at ARES. Each student is invited to wear his/her pajamas, bring a blanket or stuffed animal, and a favourite book to share!

On Thursday, January 19th, we will have "board games day"...bring a favourite board game to share with your class (think Trivial Pursuit, Boggle, Scrabble...or any game that requires reading cards or instructions...this will be an "electronics free day").

On Monday, January 23rd, each class will be joining with a "buddy class" to share in some reading activities together. On Thursday, January 26th, Algonquin Ridge students will celebrate their reading success together at our monthly Character Education assembly.

Throughout the month, there will be other fun activities to share in each classroom...have fun and start reading!

TUMBLEBOOKS

Great news! Algonquin Ridge has purchased a subscription to an online collection of exciting books which you and your family can access from home. It includes a wide range of animated talking picture books, chapter books, videos, non-fiction titles, graphic novels, and math stories. Please check it out today.

Here is the link and login:

www.tumblebooklibrary.com

User Name: scdsb123

Password: reads

Direct link:

http://www.tumblebooklibrary.com/auto_login.aspx?u=scdsb123&p=reads

BUS CANCELLATION INFORMATION IN CASE OF INCLEMENT WEATHER

Winter is just around the corner in Simcoe County, and with it comes the possibility of severe weather, challenging winter driving conditions and, as a result, possible bus and school event cancellations.

All information regarding cancelled buses in Simcoe County is posted on the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium's bus information website at www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca. **OUR SCHOOL IS IN THE CENTRAL ZONE.**

When buses are cancelled, please remember that schools are still open (unless otherwise noted) for student learning.

The Consortium, in conjunction with bus operators, will make the decision to cancel school buses before 6 a.m. and as such, will make every effort to post announcements between 6 and 7 a.m. Parents should also note that 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 also subscribe to receive bus delay notifications here: <https://scstc.ca/Subscriptions> and you can follow the Consortium on Twitter @SCSTCSchoolBus.

REGISTER YOUR CHILD FOR FRENCH IMMERSION, FIND OUT MORE AT INFORMATION SESSIONS IN JANUARY

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) offers French Immersion (FI) at select schools throughout the county beginning in Grade 1. This program gives students a bilingual education and the opportunity to become fluent in another language.

Information sessions will be held in January for parents of students in Senior Kindergarten. A letter will be sent home to those parents with more details. Information session dates will be posted at www.scdsb.on.ca under Programs, French as a Second Language.

The FI online application form will be available from 9 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 23, until 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2017 at www.scdsb.on.ca under Programs, French as a Second Language. While every effort is made to accommodate all FI applications, available space and staffing will determine how many students can be registered in the program.

Applications will be processed in the order they are received electronically.

Please contact the school if you do not have Internet access at home or require assistance accessing the online application. Please note that the host sites for FI may change during your child's time in the program, and your child may need to move schools. This may also include splitting the program between two different sites.

PROVIDE INPUT ON PROPOSED 2017-18 SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) invites public school communities to submit input regarding the proposed school year calendar for next school year (Sept. 2017 to June 2018). Input can be provided by visiting www.scdsb.on.ca, then clicking the link on the 'School Year Calendars' page under the 'Schools' menu. All stakeholders including staff, school council members, parents/guardians, students and members of the school community are invited to provide input. **The deadline to submit input is Jan. 13, 2017.**

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION OPENS IN JANUARY

Do you (or someone you know) have a child who was born in 2013? If so, it's almost time to register them for Kindergarten in the SCDSB! Beginning on January 23, 2017, Simcoe County's public schools will register children for Kindergarten for the 2017-18 school year. Required registration documents include birth date documentation, proof of address and record of immunization. Visit www.scdsb.on.ca/kindergarten for more information.



ALL SCHOOL PLAYGROUNDS ARE CLOSED FOR THE WINTER

Every winter, school playground structures are closed. Students are made aware of this during school hours through announcements and staff reminders during breaks. This may not be well known throughout the community despite signs indicating that playground structures are a winter hazard and are closed. The Canadian Standards Association Regulations make recommendations for the depth of ground cover required to minimize injuries (e.g. sand, pea gravel, or wood chips). These surfaces cannot be maintained when the ground freezes. Injuries from falling would be more significant on frozen ground. We strongly recommend that you do not allow your children to play on any structures while the ground is frozen.

MESSAGE FROM THE SIMCOE MUSKOKA DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT: HEALTHY CELEBRATIONS

Celebrations are great opportunities for children to practice the healthy eating messages they learn in class. You can help us teach the importance of healthy eating by choosing healthy foods to send to school the next time your child's class is celebrating. Try these ideas:

- send a tray of watermelon slices, box of clementines or fruit kabobs
- make homemade mini muffins with whole wheat flour and grated carrots or apple
- send a tray of whole grain crackers, cubes of lower fat cheese and grapes

For more ideas, tool and resources to support your healthy classroom celebrations, check out www.brightbites.ca – Reason to Celebrate.



MESSAGE FROM THE HEALTH UNIT: STAY HEALTHY THIS SCHOOL YEAR!

Colds and Influenza spread easily from person to person. These germs can spread directly from person to person when someone coughs or sneezes, or indirectly when germs land on hard surfaces like doorknobs, desks, keyboards, or wet tissues and then are touched by someone. These germs can then enter the body through the eyes, nose or mouth.

The most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick and stop the spread of germs to others is wash your hands with soap and warm running water for at least 15 seconds. If your hands are not visibly dirty, you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer for 15 seconds. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or cough into your sleeve or upper

arm and stay home if you are sick. Teach your kids to do the same!

For more tips to keep you and your family healthy this school year, contact Health Connection at 1-877-721-7520 or visit the health unit's website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

HOST FAMILIES WANTED – LEARN A NEW CULTURE AND SHARE YOURS

Would you like to become a host family for an international student? Learn more about another culture? Share yours? Make a new friend? There are different hosting programs available - several days, weeks, a month, semester or 10 months...it's up to you and your family. For more information, call 705-734-6363 x11211 or email: studyinsimcoecounty@scdsb.on.ca

LIFE WITH KIDS IS MESSY – AND THAT'S OK!

Ever feel like some days you have it all together, and some days you don't? Love your kids to bits, but sometimes feel like you're the only parent who has hard days? Want to connect with other parents who have those kinds of days too? Come join the conversation on Facebook @lifewithkidsismessy. Laugh about the tough stuff, hear about what works for other families and to share the ways you give your kids your best. When the messy days pile up, call Your Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520, Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

THE FACTS OF LICE: HOW TO PREVENT AND TREAT THIS NUISANCE

Like everywhere else, there are head lice in Simcoe County. Lice are a nuisance, but do not pose a public health hazard as they are not known to transmit any infectious diseases. Anyone can get head lice but kids tend to get them more often because they can have head-to-head contact with other children during school and play. The best way to keep head lice in check is to work together to prevent the spread.

Schools are required to inform parents when a case of head lice is confirmed, to provide parents with timely information to begin their own checks at home. Head lice management and treatment is a responsibility of parents/guardians.

Here are some tips to help prevent and treat lice:

- Teach your child not to share personal things like hair brushes, combs and hats
- Set a schedule to check your child's head regularly. Use an area with bright light and look carefully for nits (shells containing eggs) and live lice in the hair, behind the ears and around the neck and hairline. Nits looks like half the size of the head of a pin, shaped like a teardrop and stick to the hair so you can't blow, flick, or easily side them off. Lice are about the size of a sesame seed and are very hard to see because they can crawl and hide but they cannot hop or fly.
- If you find nits or live head lice, you'll need to use a head lice treatment to kill them. Make sure to follow the directions, and then to do a second treatment 7 to 10 days later to help stop the lice from returning. Head lice are not likely to live in clothing, furniture or bed linen but it's a good idea to wash bed linen and hats in hot water and dry them in a hot dryer just in case.

For more information, visit the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's website www.simcoemuskokahealth.org or call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICAL LITERACY

Physical literacy is the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities. Much like learning to read using the ABC's, it's important to start with the basics. The most important step in developing physical literacy is the mastery of fundamental movement skills.

As kids become more confident in their movements, they're able to progress their physical skills faster and more successfully than if they skip over the basics and jump right into recreational athletics. Physical literacy not only supports physical fitness and health, it's proven to support strong social skills, mental health, cognitive skills and educational success.

The best way for parents to support physical literacy is to start young providing safe, play-based activities. As they reach the age of four, be sure to support fundamental movements such as climbing, kicking, catching, throwing, dodging, twisting, skipping, sliding, running and jumping. Help your children master these fundamentals as they age by exposing them to activities such as swimming, gymnastics, running games and athletics. And most importantly, make sure that physical activity is always delivered in a fun, safe and supportive way to develop a positive outlook on active movement. For more information on physical literacy and how organizations like the YMCA can help support your family's healthy lifestyle, visit your local [YMCA Health, Fitness and Aquatics Centre](#).

Information provided by the YMCA of Simcoe Muskoka