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**F. Van Arragon**  
Vice-Principal

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## SEPTEMBER 2016 NEWSLETTER

### **MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATION**

Hello Algonquin Ridge Parents/Guardians and school community! Mr. Van Arragon and I are thrilled to begin the new year as the administrative team here at 'ARES'.

As the new principal I am confident that by working in partnership with the school, students and families, we can build on the successes and strong traditions that are already in place. My sincere thanks go out to all of the students, parents, community members and staff who have welcomed me into your school and I pledge to do my best to carry on the exciting work (and play) of meeting the academic, social and personal needs of all of our students.

It has been a busy summer in the building with construction work, the addition of a portable, new student arrivals and changes with staff. I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of our dedicated caretaking team who have been hard at work cleaning and preparing our building for 'back to school'. Teaching, office and support staff have been busy working to ensure that everything was ready last week for returning children! Mrs. Compton and Ms. Thompson have also gone 'above and beyond' in the office!

We appreciate your efforts at home as well. We know that 'back to school' can be a busy, hectic and often stressful time for families. We are working hard here to support you and your children and know that the success of our partnership will be a result of good communication and a positive mindset (agreeing that we all have the best interests of the children at heart). We are looking forward to meeting all of you soon at our 'Meet the Teacher Open House!' (Details can be found within this newsletter) Happy September!

Sincerely,

Mr. C. McKeown and Mr. F. Van Arragon

### **CALENDAR**

September 15 – first fire drill (two more surprise drills to take place at a later date.)

September 27 – Elementary Turn around day

September 29 – Terry Fox Run

September 29, 4:30-5:30 – Meet the Teacher Open House

October 3 – School Council Nomination forms due

October 4, 6:30 – 8:30 PM – School Council Meeting in Learning Commons

October 11 – Grade 7 & 8 vaccinations

October 18 – Cross-Country Meet

Oct 18 – Picture Day K-3

Oct 19 – Picture Day 4-8

Oct 21 – PA Day

### **SCHOOL DAY BELL TIMES**

8:55 AM – Yard supervision begins  
9:10 AM – School begins  
10:50 AM – 1<sup>st</sup> nutrition break for JK-Gr.3, recess for Gr. 4-8  
11:10 AM – Recess for JK-Gr.3, nutrition break for Gr. 4-8  
11:30 AM – Classes resume  
1:10 PM – 2<sup>nd</sup> nutrition break for JK-Gr.3, recess for Gr. 4-8  
1:30 PM – 2<sup>nd</sup> recess for JK-Gr.3, nutrition break for Gr. 4-8  
1:50 PM – Classes resume  
3:30 PM – End of school day

### **OPEN HOUSE AT ALGONQUIN RIDGE**

Come one, come all! We'll be having an open house to give families an opportunity to meet the teacher and see the classroom. It will be taking place on Thursday, September 29 from 4:30 – 5:30 PM. You will also have the opportunity to sign up for parent-teacher conferences which will take place on November 17 & 18.

### **INDOOR SHOES**

All students should have indoor shoes for school. Please ensure that your child has a pair of indoor shoes (not slippers) that can be kept at school and used for gym classes, fire drills and general wear while in school. If possible, please make sure the shoes have non-marking soles.



### **RE-ORGANIZATION BALANCES CLASS SIZES TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS**

Each year, our school starts off with a certain number of classes and teachers - these numbers are based on estimates made the previous spring about how many students will be enrolled during the next school year.

As you may be aware, the Ministry of Education has class size goals that all school boards are required to meet. When the Simcoe County District School Board organized its schools in the spring, they adhered to this ministry expectation. Each September, the board compares actual enrolment numbers to the numbers projected by the board in the spring. At times it is necessary to re-organize classes.

After re-organization, some students may move to another class in order to balance class sizes. In some cases, it may be necessary to move teachers to a new school. If your child is affected by a change, you will receive a letter with details following re-organization. Please be assured that these changes will not affect the quality of education your child will receive at Algonquin Ridge. Our staff have the skills, training and resources to work effectively with students in a variety of settings.

### **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

You are invited to our first school council meeting of the year on October 4 at 6:30 PM in the school Learning Commons. If you would like to be a representative on the school council please drop by the office to pick up a nomination form. Completed forms must be submitted to the office by Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>. Elections will take place at the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. For more information, please contact our principal, Mr. McKeown in the school office.

## **PROCEDURES HELP KEEP OUR SCHOOL SAFE**

The safety and well-being of students is our top priority. We have a number of procedures in place to keep our school safe. You can help your child understand and feel safe by:

- talking to them about the situations below
- reminding them that emergencies are rare
- telling them it's important to follow staff instructions in these situations

Parents should talk about the following emergency drills with their children:

- **Shelter in place** is used when there is an environmental or weather-related situation, like a chemical spill outside the building, or a major storm. Activities continue inside the school. Students and staff are not allowed to leave the building. The ventilation system may be shut off.
- A **hold and secure** is used when there is a situation in the community, not related to the school, like a bank robbery nearby. Activities continue, but all doors are locked. No one is allowed to enter or exit the school.
- A **lockdown** is used when there is a major incident or a threat of violence related to the school. Students and staff move to secure areas, away from doors and windows. Doors are locked, lights are shut off and blinds are drawn. Students and staff remain quiet. We practice lockdown drills at least two times per year. In the unlikely event of an actual lockdown situation, police ask that parents do not go to the school. Information will be communicated through the school board social media sites ([www.facebook.com/SCDSB](http://www.facebook.com/SCDSB) and [www.twitter.com/SCDSB\\_Schools](http://www.twitter.com/SCDSB_Schools)) and website ([www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca)), through local police and local media.
- All schools have **evacuation plans** in case of gas leaks, bomb threats or fire incidents that would require everyone to leave the school. Each school has an evacuation site. Ours is the Allandale Recreation Centre, 190 Bayview Drive. We hold drills to practice our evacuation plan. In a real evacuation, students and staff may go to the evacuation site, depending on the situation. Parents will be informed about pick-up procedures by the school, school board and local media.
- Elementary school main doors are locked during the school day. Visitors must use the **intercom system** to enter the building. **Staff may not be available to answer the door immediately, please be patient.** All visitors, including school volunteers, are required to **sign in** at the school office and wear **visitor identification**.
- Staff and volunteers must complete a **criminal record check** before having contact with students.
- We ask parents to contact us when their child will be absent from school as part of our **Safe Arrival** program. When we don't hear from a parent/guardian, and a student is absent, we will call home to find out the reason for the absence.
- At least two staff members in every school are trained in **first aid and CPR**. All Simcoe County District School Board schools **have Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)**.

When parents are at school during a drill or emergency event, they must follow direction from school staff, police, fire and/or emergency personnel. Parents may not have immediate access to their children during drills or emergencies. They may need to wait until the situation is resolved and school staff and/or emergency personnel release students into parent care.

It's important for you to know we'll always take whatever precautions are necessary to keep our school and students safe.

## **SCDSB DRESS CODE**

### **THERE ARE LOTS OF WAYS TO DRESS FOR SCHOOL: LEARN ABOUT THE NEW STUDENT DRESS CODE**

The SCDSB is introducing a new student dress code this school year. The dress code was developed in consultation with staff and students. Students are expected to respect the guidelines when dressing for school. Our school is a safe space. We work to be equitable and inclusive, and understand that students may choose to express themselves through their clothing choices. Student clothing cannot pose a safety concern or conceal identity. Exceptions are granted to students who wear head coverings or other garments/objects for the purposes of religious observance, medical or sensory needs, or other reasons protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The SCDSB dress code is available in the student agenda and online at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca). If you have questions about the dress code, you can contact the principal or the SCDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Team at 705-728-7570.

### **WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP STUDENTS SAFE AT ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL**

The safety of our students is our top priority. Arrival and dismissal are busy times at our school. We need to work together with parents/guardians and childcare providers to make sure students are safe.

Here are key points to be aware of when planning pick up and/or drop off of students:

- Supervision starts fifteen (15) minutes before bell time. School staff will contact the parent/guardian, followed by emergency contact, for any student who is not picked up. If late pickup happens often, additional support services may be involved.
- If parents/guardians arrange for other people to pick up their children, like a private childcare provider, the parent/guardian is responsible to ensure the alternate person/program is picking up on time.
- Designated bus loading zones are out-of-bounds during arrival and dismissal times, with the only exception being Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium buses. Private childcare providers will be asked not to use these areas. Parents are also not allowed to drop off or pick up in the bus zones. *When dropping off your child by car, please use the Kiss n' Ride loop at the south end of our school parking lot.*
- Once buses have departed and the loading zone has been opened up by school staff, vehicle traffic may begin to flow through the area to pick students up. Traffic must be in constant flow in this area at all times, meaning no unattended parked vehicles in this area.
- Unattended vehicles must be parked in an approved parking space, outside of the kiss and ride area, with the engine turned off.

A full description of the Supervision, Arrival and Dismissal Procedures is available at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca) – Parents – Safe and Healthy Schools – Procedures.

**There are lots of ways  
to dress for school...**



**...but there are a few things that aren't okay.**



## **GIVING BACK TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY - VOLUNTEER IN OUR SCHOOL**

Volunteers are an important part of what makes our school a great place to learn and grow. We value and appreciate the support of our volunteers. There are many opportunities available, including school council, breakfast clubs, milk and lunch programs, reading help, assisting in the classroom or library, chaperoning for field trips, supporting our school teams by coaching or driving students to games and tournaments and much more. Everyone who volunteers in a school must have a criminal record check, which includes a Vulnerable Sector Screening. Please call or visit the school office for more information about opportunities available or if you'd like to volunteer!

If you were on the approved volunteer list last school year, you must submit an Annual Offence Declaration for Volunteers every school year. Current volunteers who do not submit an Annual Offence Declaration for Volunteers on or before December 31, 2016, will be deleted from the database on January 1, 2017, and will have to submit a new Criminal Records Check and Vulnerable Sector Screen. Offence Declaration forms are available in the office.

## **STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE 2016-2017**

Student injuries at school, during school events, and extra-curricular activities (athletics, clubs, and out-of-province/out-of-country trips) are not covered by the Board or its insurance company. While every precaution is taken to provide a safe learning environment, accidents can and do happen.

It is essential that all students participating in extra-curricular activities have adequate insurance coverage for all instances of injury.

The Simcoe County District School Board has selected the "insure my kids" program through Old Republic Canada as an option for students/parents/guardians to consider with regards to purchasing student accident insurance coverage for the upcoming school year. The coverage is for 24 hours a day. This insurance offers a variety of plans and benefits at reasonable annual prices. Coverage can be purchased online at [www.insuremykids.com](http://www.insuremykids.com). A student accident insurance package along with a letter about requirements for extra-curricular activities was sent out earlier this month. Please contact the office if you need another copy.

## **SCHOOL BUS 'BUS TAG' PROGRAM HELPS STUDENTS GET TO AND FROM SCHOOL SAFELY**

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium's Bus Tag program supports safety for JK/SK and other school identified students. The program helps match students to their assigned afternoon school bus and identifies that they must be met by a parent or guardian at their afternoon bus stop.

The program provides a colour coded Bus Tag with the assigned p.m. route number to be attached to the student's backpack and a colour coded route card with route number in the windows of the school bus that the Bus Tag is matched to. The program can also provide tags for students who are walkers and/or who remain at an on-site daycare to make sure they don't get on a bus in error.

For more information, visit [main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) and click on the 'Safety' tab.



## **SAFETY REMINDER FROM THE SIMCOE COUNTY STUDENT TRANSPORTATION CONSORTIUM (SCSTC)**

A reminder to drivers as children return to school this fall, and school buses are back on the roads:

- Take caution – be extra cautious in the vicinity of school buses and around school bus loading and unloading zones
- Pay attention – Watch for school buses' distinctive chrome yellow colouring, flashing red lights and stop arms. **Drivers travelling in both directions on a road without a median must stop for a stopped school bus** that has its upper red lights flashing
- Know the repercussions – Any driver that fails to stop for a school bus with its lights flashing is subject to a fine of up to \$2,000 and six demerit points for a first time offence
- Be empowered – Anyone who witnesses a driver failing to stop for a school bus can report the incident to the police

Visit the SCSTC web site at [www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) and click on the 'Home' button then the 'Safety' tab for more details.

## **SAFETY PATROLLER PROGRAM AT ALGONQUIN RIDGE**

This year we would like to re-establish our safety patroller program at Algonquin Ridge. We are currently in the process of selecting student volunteers to participate in the program. Training will take place during the week of Sep 26 and we will hope to have regular patrollers in place at the crosswalk at the northwest end of our school property. Please remind your family to respect and obey the directions given by our patrollers at the crosswalk as they work to make sure that everyone crosses the street safely.

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

The SchoolCash Online program is available at our school. Parents can pay online for lunch days and other items. Parents who sign up will receive a notification when a new item becomes available for purchase. Items are personalized to each student. Parents use a secure online account to process payments, and can either make a one-time payment for each item as it occurs, or load money to carry a balance in the online account to make payments in the future. To create an online account, go to [simcoecounty.schoolcashionline.com](http://simcoecounty.schoolcashionline.com). If you have any questions please contact the office.

## **GIFTED SCREENING PROCESS**

Students who display an advanced degree of general intellectual ability require additional program support in order to reach their educational potential. This support may be through enhancing the curriculum, differentiated instruction and through providing program modifications. This type of programming is important to engage, motivate and challenge students who are identified as gifted in either the regular classroom or in gifted classroom placements.

Parents/guardians of a student who will be in or above Grade 3 this school year, who wish to nominate their child for gifted screening are asked to contact Ms. N. Chute before October 7, 2016.

Students may be nominated by either a teacher or parent.

A letter examining the gifted screening process in greater detail will be sent to parents of students in Grade 3 in September. Parents will still have the opportunity for nominating their child in September and October.

If you require further information about the gifted screening process, please contact the school.

### **SCHOOLS ARE AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY USE**

Through our Community Use of Schools program, almost all of our schools are available outside of school hours for not-for-profit community groups. Our gyms, fields, auditoriums and classrooms are available for your sporting events, concerts, recitals and more.

You can apply online. A Permit Clerk will process the application and advise if the facility is available at the requested time. Once an application is approved, a rental contract will be issued and the applicant will be invoiced.

For more information, visit [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca), click on 'Schools' and then 'Community Use of Schools.'

### **FREE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES CLASSES – REGISTRATION FOR FALL PROGRAM AVAILABLE NOW**

*Would your child like to learn a new language or maintain their first language? These courses are FREE and open to any student in Grades 1 to 8. Classes run Saturday mornings from 9 to 11:30 a.m. beginning Sept. 17, 2016. Registration forms can be found at [www.thelearningcentres.com](http://www.thelearningcentres.com) or call 705-725-8360 x45151 or 45160 if you have any questions.*

### **REGISTER NOW FOR ESL FALL CLASSES**

Do you or someone you know want to improve English language skills? The SCDSB Learning Centres can help. English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adults are offered at the Alliston, Barrie and Bradford Learning Centres. Visit [www.thelearningcentres.com](http://www.thelearningcentres.com) or call for more information: Alliston: 705-435-7778; Barrie 705-725-8360; Bradford: 905-775-4432.

### **REMINDER FROM THE SIMCOE MUSKOKA DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT: PACKING A HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCH**

A school lunch should give children the energy and nutrients they need to be ready to learn, be more alert and perform better at school. When planning lunches keep these tips in mind:

- Include one serving from at least three of the four food groups from Canada's Food Guide
- Rather than buying pre-made lunch kits, make your own healthy lunch kit with divided containers and small 'bite-sized' cheese cubes, left over chicken chunks, veggie sticks or fruit slices
- Get your kids to eat more veggies! Send cucumber coins, zucchini sticks and pepper strips with dip
- Fill whole wheat or multi grain wrap/pits/tortilla shells with your child's favourite foods such as hummus and grated carrot or sliced turkey with honey mustard.
  
- Water is the best option for hydration.

Looking for more information to help keep you and your family healthy? Call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit the health unit's website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

### **ACTIVE AND SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL**

Walking or cycling to school is a great way to help your child get the 60 minutes of recommended daily physical activity. It also teaches them to be aware of their own safety, builds responsibility and independence, and helps them to feel more connected to the community. And it's good for their physical and mental health!

More walkers also means less car traffic around our school, which will help keep students safe and improve outdoor air quality too. Committing to even one day a week of walking or cycling to school can make a big difference!

To find out more about the recommendations for physical activity and how to make Active and Safe Routes to School happen in your school community, visit [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca).

### **REMINDER FROM THE HEALTH UNIT: SCHOOL GROUNDS ARE SMOKE FREE 24/7**

Protect yourself and your children from the health hazards of secondhand smoke. Remember, it is against the law to smoke ANYWHERE on school property at ANY TIME. This includes smoking in your vehicle while picking up or dropping off students. It is also against the law to smoke or hold lit tobacco in a vehicle carrying anyone under age 16. The fine for ignoring the law is \$250. For more information contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).