



## Algonquin Ridge Elementary School

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**Cory McKeown**  
Principal

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Vice-Principal

### **ALGONQUIN RIDGE NEWS DECEMBER 2023**

#### **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

Hopefully by now you have received and read several messages about the Algonquin Ridge Winter Fair, and we hope you will all drop in at some point between 5 and 7 this Thursday (the 7<sup>th</sup>). We have appreciated your donations to both the Misfit Gift Room, which will absolutely be a highlight for all our little guests, and donations for the grade specific 'baskets' that will be available to bid on at what will be our first 'Silent Auction' at this community event. If time got away from you and you missed this opportunity to support the school, I hope you will consider supporting our annual Gift Card Drive (details below). We recognize that this can be a very challenging time of year for many families so please do not feel obligated to make any donations if the timing is not right for your family. We plan the Winter Fair with this in mind and make sure to include many activities that are free or have only a minimal cost.

When you arrive you can pick up a program/map that explains where to find the various offerings. We encourage you to move beyond the front foyer to explore the building and visit the private vendors who will also have their goods on display. When children visit the Misfit Gift Room they will do so without their caregivers (students enter at the foyer door to the library). Staff, students, and other volunteers will help the little ones 'shop' for items priced between \$1-\$5, wrap their treasures and release them to their caregiver at the rear door of the library.

On the second floor you can view seasonal art work on display, as well as all the 'lost and found' items. You are also welcome to visit the gym at 6pm when we will pause the activities for a short performance by the ARES choir—the Ridgetones! Later, as we approach 7 pm, the Ridgetones will lead us all in some holiday caroling outside at the rear of the school. We hope to be joined here once again this year by a very special guest.

We look forward to seeing many of you on Thursday! (any students who cannot make it to the Winter Fair will have an opportunity on Friday to visit the Misfit Gift Room before it is closed)

**\*Donations to the Barrie Food Bank will be gladly accepted.**

#### **HOLIDAY/CHRISTMAS GIFT CARD DRIVE**

As in previous Decembers at Algonquin Ridge, we are actively trying to support many families in need from our own community so that everyone can enjoy a wonderful holiday season. There are always families close to home who may find themselves struggling and those challenges can become overwhelming at this time of year. To support them we will once again be collecting gift and grocery cards so that they may experience a more joyous season. We regret that we will not be able to accept donations of gifts/toys or food and we will gladly accept donations to the Barrie Food Bank at the Winter Holiday Fair.

We have already received some donations from families who anticipated this message as this initiative has become an important tradition at Algonquin Ridge thanks to the generous support of many staff members and families. We sincerely appreciate your continued support and will gladly accept donations of any amount. You can make your donation by having your child pass it on to their homeroom teacher or, more anonymously, by ringing the front bell to leave with the office staff. All donations will be appreciated but President's Choice, Walmart, Dollarstore, Giant Tiger, Gas Cards, or other grocery store cards, will be especially versatile and convenient. Please make your contributions directly to the school no later than Tuesday, December 19. If you have questions, please contact the school office. The ARES community has a long history of generosity and giving, and we will appreciate any level of support you are able to provide.

Finally, on behalf of all members of the Algonquin Ridge staff and administration, I would like to wish everyone a very safe and prosperous Holiday Season from our families to yours!

Cory McKeown Principal  
Algonquin Ridge Elementary School  
705 737-4080 x 20304  
Pronouns: He/His/Him

### CALENDAR

Dec 7<sup>th</sup> – Winter Fair - 5-7pm  
Dec 11<sup>th</sup> – Primary Character Ed Assembly @ 11:30-12:30 pm  
Dec 19<sup>th</sup> – Skills Trade Presentation – Gr 7/8  
Dec 20<sup>th</sup> – Junior Character Ed Assembly – 1:50-2:40 pm  
Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> – Hat or Scarf Day – last day of school for 2023  
Dec 25<sup>th</sup> – Jan 7<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Break  
Jan 8<sup>th</sup> – School Reopens  
Jan 25<sup>th</sup> – Comfy Clothes Day  
Jan 26<sup>th</sup> – PA Day – no school

### DAYS OF OBSERVANCE - DECEMBER 2023

Dec 6<sup>th</sup> – National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women  
Saint Nicholas Day (Christianity)  
Dec 7-15<sup>th</sup> – Chanukah/Hanukkah (Judaism)  
Dec 8<sup>th</sup> – Awakening Day (Buddhism)  
Dec 9<sup>th</sup> – International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and of the Prevention of this Crime  
Dec 10<sup>th</sup> – Human Rights Day  
Dec 13<sup>th</sup> – Birthday of Imam Aga Khan (Islam)  
Dec 21<sup>st</sup> – Yule/Winter Solstice (Wicca)  
Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> – Maun Ekadashi (Jainism)  
Dec 24<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Eve (Christianity)  
Dec 25<sup>th</sup> – Christmas Day (Christianity)  
Dec 26<sup>th</sup> – Boxing Day  
Dec 26<sup>th</sup> – Sanghamitta Day/Unduvap Poya (Buddhism)  
Zarathosht-no-diso (Zoroastrianism) – Fasil Calendar  
Dec 26<sup>th</sup> – Jan 1<sup>st</sup> – Kwanzaa  
Jan 1-31<sup>st</sup> – Tamil Heritage Month  
Jan 1<sup>st</sup> – New Year's Day  
Temple Day/Solar New Year (Buddhism)  
Jan 4<sup>th</sup> – World Braille Day  
Jan 6<sup>th</sup> – Epiphany (Christianity)  
Jan 7<sup>th</sup> – Christmas – (Eastern Orthodox Christianity)

### A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE

We kindly ask that you be mindful of the following as the office is a very busy place, and often only one person is available:

If you miss a call from the school, please check your voicemail for details before calling back to help expedite your call and connect you with the right person.

Please make sure you let your child's teacher of any appointments ahead of time so that the student is ready and in the office or can be quickly called down.

If you need to make changes to your child(ren)'s dismissal, please try to do so well ahead of time and arrange their pickup no later than 03:00 pm the day of and communicate this with the classroom teacher as classrooms may be in various locations in the school or on the school yard.



## COMMUNICATION TO FAMILIES REGARDING 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. School staff are expected to plan for such emergencies in order to transition students who are unable to attend due to inclement weather, to their online platforms (Google Classroom and/or SCDSBhub [Brightspace by D2L]) and continue with academic programming. 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>.

## HIGH SCHOOL INFORMATION EVENTS FOR GRADE 8 STUDENTS

Is your child starting Grade 9 next year? High school information events will take place in person this winter! Student leaders and staff at the school will give an overview of what's new and what to expect. Learn about courses offered, as well as information about teams and clubs. Please visit the SCDSB website at [www.scdsb.on.ca/secondary/planning\\_for\\_high\\_school](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/secondary/planning_for_high_school) to find details on your high school's info night and contact the school directly for more information.

## GRADE 1 FRENCH IMMERSION INFORMATION

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) offers French Immersion (FI) at select schools throughout Simcoe County beginning in Grade 1. The goal of the FI program is to enable students to communicate in French with a high level of proficiency, enabling them to function with ease in both French and English. Upon graduation from the program, students will communicate in French with confidence in a wide variety of real-life situations.

**The SCDSB board-wide electronic applications for the Grade 1 FI program for all sites will open Friday, Dec. 1 at 9 a.m. and close at 4 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 15.** Entry into the FI program is determined through a digitally randomized lottery system. To learn more visit the SCDSB website: <https://www.scdsb.on.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=210982&pageId=12587752>.

## JOIN US! A LEARNING SERIES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WITH PINE RIVER INSTITUTE

Mental health and well-being continues to be a key strategic priority within the SCDSB. We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Centre for Family Initiatives at Pine River Institute (CFI@PRI) to provide several curated learning sessions focused on student mental health and well-being to SCDSB families.

These webinars are specifically planned for parents/guardians and other caregivers during this school year.

Jan. 11, 2024	Sleep hygiene
Feb. 8, 2024	Self regulation for kids
Feb. 22, 2024	Self regulation for teens
March 28, 2024	Building parents' resiliency
April 18, 2024	Vaping, weed, and alcohol

We hope you save these dates in your calendar and join us for these learning opportunities. For more information and to register, please visit the SCDSB website: <https://bit.ly/3jGaC74>.

Pine River Institute is a live-in treatment centre and outdoor leadership experience for youth aged 13 to 19 struggling with addictive behaviours and often other mental health issues. Combining therapy with a fully-accredited education program, PRI reinforces the healthy life skills required for a successful future. CFI@PRI extends PRI's knowledge, experience and evidence-informed treatment approach to families and care providers in the community to support youth mental wellness and prevent the need for more intensive interventions. Learn more about PRI by visiting their website at [www.pineriverinstitute.com](http://www.pineriverinstitute.com).



### **PARENTS' GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND REPORTING**

Learn to navigate the world of assessment, evaluation, and reporting with this new guide for parents/guardians. Created to support parents'/guardians' understanding of assessment, this guide was designed to effectively empower you to actively engage in your child's educational journey. The guide has been posted to the Simcoe County District School Board's website and can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/2urcm2tm>.

### **SUBSCRIBE TO COMMUNITY CONNECTS!**

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is excited to launch Community Connects, a new bimonthly newsletter for the SCDSB community. Our shared goal with this new tool is to keep our community partners and stakeholders informed while nurturing relationships that are built on accountability, trust, and transparency.

To learn more and subscribe, visit the Community Connects page on the SCDSB website:

[https://www.scdsb.on.ca/community/community\\_connects](https://www.scdsb.on.ca/community/community_connects).

### **SUBSCRIBE TO KINDERGARTEN CONNECTIONS!**

Will your child be turning four in 2024? If so, the SCDSB invites you to Kindergarten Connections! This is a monthly enewsletter informing families of everything they need to know about preparing their child for school, as well as registering them for Kindergarten in the SCDSB. To learn more and subscribe, visit the Kindergarten page on the SCDSB website:

[www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning\\_for\\_school/kindergarten](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/kindergarten).

### **EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES**

The foundation for lifelong learning and health is built in the early years. EarlyON Child and Family Centres across Simcoe County offer programs for children prenatal to six years of age and their parents/guardians and caregivers. They offer access to play- and inquiry-based learning supported by *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's pedagogy for the early years, information on child development and developmental screening including Early Referral Identification Kits (ERIKs), parent/guardian education, referrals to community resources, nutrition information, and post-natal resources. Check with your local EarlyON provider:

<https://linktr.ee/earlyonsimcoe>.

### **HOW IS YOUR INFANT, TODDLER, OR PRESCHOOL CHILD DEVELOPING?**

Is your child meeting their milestones? Age-appropriate speech and language skills are critical to your child's ability to read, write, and be successful in school as well as to their ability to engage with their peers. Free services are available to support you with your child's development. Preschool speech and language programs are located across the County of Simcoe. Call 705-739-5696 or 1-800-675-1979 to complete a developmental screen. The earlier we work together the better!

### **LICENSED WINTER BREAK SCHOOL-AGE CHILDCARE PROGRAMS**

Childcare programs for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 are provided by independent, third-party childcare operators in some SCDSB schools. To support your childcare needs, some operators offer childcare on PA days and holidays including over the Winter Break. Registration in advance is required.

Please contact the childcare operator directly to discuss fees and to register. More information and contact numbers can be found by visiting: [www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning\\_for\\_school/childcare\\_before\\_after](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/childcare_before_after).

### **PROGRAMS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE SCDSB'S ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION LEARNING CENTRES**

The Simcoe County District School Board's Adult and Continuing Education department offers a variety of programming including day school, night school, summer school, correspondence, and co-op. Courses may be online, hybrid, or in-person and are based on sufficient enrollment. For current high school students, we offer travel for credit, summer school, and night school programs. For adults, we offer credit courses towards completion of an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) including credits granted for prior learning and experiences (PLAR). In support of many of the adult learners in our communities, we also offer non-credit classes in English as a second language (ESL) and literacy and essential skills (LES) both of which can support learners towards paths of employment, continued education, and citizenship. Please visit us at [www.thelearningcentres.com](http://www.thelearningcentres.com) to learn more.

### **SCHOOL PLAYGROUND STRUCTURES 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.

### MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY OF THE MONTH - EMOTION CHARADES

Well-being is a Strategic Priority in the Simcoe County District School Board, and our mental health and well-being department provides monthly strategies to support student and family well-being.

This month's strategy is *Emotion Charades*. This practice helps students practice expressing emotions with their whole body and recognize body language and facial expressions in others. To practice *Emotion Charades* at home, on slips of paper, write or draw different feelings depending on the age of your child. For instance, happy, sad, angry, scared, worried, sleepy, frustrated, etc. Place the papers in a bowl/container.

Then:

- Decide who will go first. Have that person pick a piece of paper from the bowl.
- Have them read the feeling to themselves, or, if needed, help your child read the feeling.
- Now they will act out the feeling without words while the other players try to guess what it is.
- Once someone gets the right answer, it's the next person's turn to pick a piece of paper and act out the feeling.

This is a fun activity that everyone in the family can play!

*Emotion Charades* link to School Mental Health Ontario parent sheet: <https://smho-smso.ca/online-resources/easy-and-fun-mental-health-activities-for-home/> Find more information to support your child's mental health here: <https://smho-smso.ca/parents-and-caregivers/>

***Emotion Charades***: <https://smho-smso.ca/emhc/identification-and-management-of-emotions/recognizing/emotion-charades/>

Follow the Mental Health and Well-being social media accounts (@SCDSB\_MHWP) to see how well-being is being supported in our schools.

### MATH @HOME PARENT AND CAREGIVER SERIES

It's back! The SCDSB math team is pleased to offer three virtual sessions for parents and caregivers of SCDSB students. These sessions will focus on practical and fun ways to support children with their mathematics learning and engagement at home. The first 200 registrants will receive a Math @Home kit of resources to use at home. Participants must pre-register for each of the sessions.

### EXPLORING THE NEW SCDSB FAMILY MATH RESOURCES

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.

This session is for parents and caregivers. Join members of the SCDSB math team for a guided exploration of the new SCDSB family math resources. Participants will have the opportunity to explore the resources that are available to support their child's math learning at home. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length. During the final 15 minutes, the math team will be available to answer questions about the resources available.

### TIPS FOR ENGAGING IN MATH CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUR CHILD @HOME

Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.

This session is for parents and caregivers and will explore opportunities to discuss math with their child(ren) at home. Participants will learn about how events such as shopping, preparing food, engaging in a building project, or going for a walk can be used as a starting point for math conversations, and will receive prompts to get the discussion rolling. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length. During the final 15 minutes, the math team will be available to answer questions about the session.

### GAMES TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S MATH LEARNING @HOME

Thursday, April 4, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.

This session is for parents, caregivers, and their children. Playing games at home is a great way to support child(ren)'s math development. In this session, several games will be explored, and participants will have the opportunity to try the games with their children during the session. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length followed by 15 additional minutes for further game play or to ask questions of our math facilitators. Bring your child(ren) and your math kit to this session!

Participants must pre-register for the sessions they wish to attend. Registered participants will receive a kit of hands-on resources that will be sent to the school indicated on the registration form. Use this link to register: <https://bit.ly/24MathAtHome>.

### HEAD LICE TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

Anyone can get head lice. Having head lice does not mean a person is unclean or lives in a dirty home. While they are a nuisance, head lice do not spread disease or cause illness. Head lice spreads easily, especially where people are in close contact and are very common among school-aged children or children in childcare.

Head lice spreads through direct hair-to-hair contact or indirectly by sharing hats, combs, hairbrushes, and headphones. To help prevent the spread of head lice, it's important to educate students about avoiding head-to-head contact and discourage sharing combs, hairbrushes, tuques, hats, or hair accessories. Parents/guardians, caregivers, and families can visit

<https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/PP2B/RaisingChildren/YourGrowingChild/HeadLice> for more information about head lice treatment and prevention. Or call Health Connection at 1-877-721-7520 to speak to a public health nurse.

Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit



### IS BEDTIME STRESSING YOU OUT?

Kids need 10-12 hours of sleep every night but sometimes getting them to bed can be challenging. You can help create a regular sleep schedule for your child by setting a clear bedtime and sticking to the same time every night. Start getting ready an hour before bed; turn off the TV, computers, and phones. Spend quality time talking or reading stories to help them unwind. Agree on how many you'll read before you start! Keep their room dark, cool, and quiet - a night light is fine. Remember, making sure your child gets enough rest will help improve their mood, behaviour, and ability to learn.

For more bedtime tips, contact Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 to speak with a public health nurse. Visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) for more information. *Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit*

### DID YOU KNOW IT'S ILLEGAL TO VAPE OR SMOKE ANYWHERE ON SCHOOL PROPERTY, INSIDE THE SCHOOL OR OUTSIDE WITHIN 20M OF SCHOOL PROPERTY, 24 HOURS A DAY, 365 DAYS A YEAR?

The law applies to everyone on school property, students, staff, and visitors. It also means it is illegal to vape or smoke on school athletic fields during afterhours activities or vape or smoke in school washrooms. There is a fine of \$305 for vaping or smoking on school property.

*But why do youth vape at school?* Vapes contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive drug. Nicotine addiction is extremely powerful, develops quickly, and youth may not realize they are addicted. Once addicted, they need nicotine regularly or they will experience withdrawal, making it hard to get through the school day. Help them take back control – there are supports to help youth quit! Talk to your child about vaping, they listen more than you think. Learn more at [NotAnExperiment.ca/parents](http://NotAnExperiment.ca/parents).

*Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit*

### SIMCOE MUSKOKA FAMILY CONNEXIONS IS SEEKING COMPASSIONATE AND SKILLED PROFESSIONALS WITH SPECIALIZED EXPERIENCE TO APPLY TO BECOME FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS

The goal of this program is to meet the needs of youth through a therapeutically supported parenting approach within a structured environment, where they are supported and guided by a multi-disciplinary treatment team. The youth will remain, or become connected to, their family/kin/community whenever possible. Treatment services will be individualized based on the needs of the youth, and the knowledge of those who know the youth best in collaboration with community partners. This will allow youth to reside in a family-based setting and remain in their home community of Simcoe Muskoka, staying connected to important relationships and supports that may already be in place.

The homes approved under this strategy are designed to create clinically informed care plans that will support the youth directly, in addition to the continued support of their care providers. Youth will be supported by a multi-disciplinary team and will be available to implement and design parenting and support to address the needs of the youth.

Compensation packages will be offered to be experienced foster care providers, as well as clinical support to both care providers and youth. If you or someone you know is looking for more information or would like to apply, contact Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions by email at [bruna.figliuzzi@familyconnexions.ca](mailto:bruna.figliuzzi@familyconnexions.ca) or call [705-716.4664](tel:705-716-4664). *Information provided by Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions*

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happy  
holidays!