

ALGONQUIN RIDGE ELEMENTARY  
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## ALGONQUIN RIDGE NEWS FEBRUARY 2023

### Character attribute for the month of February - Inclusiveness

We include everyone in what we do and value their contributions.

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

### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

February is here and with it much colder weather than we have seen lately. The extreme cold we saw last Friday made us realize that many families won't recall how the school navigates these challenging days. With school shutdowns and generally milder winters many of our younger students have never been to school on days like these! Our primary focus is always student safety, and we work hard to ensure that we minimize risk while still promoting a healthy active lifestyle that includes being outdoors in the winter. With this in mind, sending children to school dressed appropriately for the weather, with hats, mittens, coats, boots etc. is always the best practice.

The SCDSB policy advises that children should remain indoors when the temperatures fall to -25 C or colder (wind chill -27). Algonquin Ridge adheres to this policy and will make every effort to be outside safely up to this threshold. We will sometimes make a decision to reduce the amount of time outside e.g., split the 20 min recess in half and go out for only 10 minutes if it is particularly windy or visibility is very poor. You should also know that during the outdoor portion of the nutrition break students are allowed to enter the building to use the washroom and to warm up inside the alcove where students enter. This does not take away from a student's responsibility to dress for the weather. The policy on temperature also impacts the supervised time at the beginning of the day. Just as on rainy days, we will ring the bell early and bring students into the school beginning at 8:55. It is important that students are not to be dropped off or arrive at school prior to 8:55 a.m.

On Friday (3<sup>rd</sup>) we noticed a drastic increase in the number of students being driven to school and that many people arrived close to the 9:10 a.m. start—this may have been a result of families not wanting their students to be outside for very long before entry? Rest assured that students will be allowed into the building when the temperature is -25 C or colder or in heavy rain, so arriving earlier than 9:10 will be the best option to help us manage traffic and keep everyone safe. Despite the challenges, walking to school or walking the last portion of the distance remains the best option. Also, we cannot stress enough the importance of pulling all the way forward in the Kiss-N-Ride lane to allow more cars to access the stopping lane as possible (students can enter the yard through any gate and will be directed to their entry door).

There are several more exciting things happening at ARES in February and beyond and you will find some info on these topics in this newsletter:

- K-6 Valentine Move-a-thon (proceeds to support the purchase of new literacy resources)
- Community of Us Valentine's Candygram sales
- Dominos Raise the Dough Night Tues Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>
- ARES Family Bingo Night Returns! (date to be determined)
- Gr. 8 Classes to Camp Kandalore
- ARES Pancake Day Returns (details to be shared at a later time)

FYI—our next school council meeting will again be held online on Mon. Feb. 27. New attendees wishing to attend should share their preferred email with the ARES office.

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

## CALENDAR

Feb 8 – Int Boys Bball @ Holy Cross  
Feb 9 – Int G Vball @ St. John Paul  
Feb 13 – Int Boys Bball mini tournament @ ALR  
Feb 14 – Valentine’s Day  
Feb 14 – Move-a-thon K-6  
Feb 15 – Int Boys Bball mini tournament @ ALR  
Feb 16 – Int Girls Vball @ ALR  
Feb 17 – Report cards go home.  
Feb 20 – Family Day – **no school**  
Feb 21 – Pancake Day  
Feb 22-24 – Kandalore – Grade 8  
Feb 27- 28 – Dental team visit – JK-Grade 8  
Feb 27 – Virtual School Council meeting @ 6:30pm  
Feb 28 – Dominos Raise the Dough night.

## DAYS OF OBSERVANCE FOR FEBRUARY

February is Black History Month

Feb 15 – Nirvana day – Buddhism/Jainism  
Feb 15 – National Flag Day of Canada  
Feb 17 – National Random Acts of Kindness Day  
Feb 18 – Maha Shivratri – Hinduism  
Feb 18 - Isra’a and Mi’raj – Islam  
Feb 20 – Family Day – Provincial Holiday  
Feb 21 – Losar (Tibetan New Year) – Buddhism  
Feb 22 – Ash Wednesday – Christianity  
Feb 22 – Pink Shirt Day  
Feb 26-Mar1 – Ayyam-Ha (Intercalary Days) – Baha’i  
Feb 27 – Clean Monday – Christianity

## MOVE-A-THON

We are very excited to be planning a fun event for our JK to gr. 6 students on Feb. 14<sup>th</sup>—Valentine’s Day! Further details will be shared in the coming week and the image above provides several important details. Our Valentine’s Day Move-a-thon will accomplish several goals that will all be positives for our school. (Please see the flyer on the last page)

These include:

- getting our younger students up and actively moving in a fun, healthy way that promotes active living
- raising money (by voluntary donation) to purchase some much needed literacy resources to support implementation of recommendations in the Ontario Right to Read Report <https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/right-to-read-inquiry-report>
- providing a valuable leadership opportunity for gr. 6 students and our A Team
- fulfilling criteria that will move us toward our OPHEA Healthy Schools “Gold” certification goal <https://healthyschools.ca/>
- and just because it will be fun! (and we have missed too many of these opportunities over the last few years)

Watch for further information, including details on how to make a voluntary donation. Our goal is to collect between \$5-\$10 per family/student but any amount will be accepted with appreciation. (FYI-students will spend one period of the day in the gymnasium by grade)

### SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE:

Term 2 IEPs will be sent home electronically for your records the week of February 21, 2023. Please see the information below to access the document.

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) uses a secure email format to distribute special education information to families, including IEPs and IPRC information. This format allows for efficient and direct communication with you, while maintaining your child's privacy.

You will receive an email that is generated by our board's special education program, IEP Online. The email will come from [notification@pcgcandada.ca](mailto:notification@pcgcandada.ca) with the subject line "SECUREEMAIL: SCDSB Special Education Information Included – Please Review".

If you use an email provider other than Microsoft Outlook (e.g., gmail, hotmail, sympatico, icloud, etc.), opening the email will require a one-time passcode. The one-time passcode will be sent to your email once you've selected "Read the message" and "Sign in with a One-time passcode".

All attached documents within the email will be password protected. The password will be your child's birth date, and must be entered in the following numeric format: YYYY-MM-DD.

If you would like to request a paper copy, please contact your child's classroom teacher.

### 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>.

### PINK SHIRT DAY – FEB 22, 2023

David Shepherd, Travis Price and their teenage friends organized a high-school protest to wear pink in sympathy with a Grade 9 boy who was being bullied for wearing a pink shirt. They took a stand against bullying when they protested against the harassment of a new Grade 9 student by distributing pink T-shirts to all the boys in their school. 'I learned that two people can come up with an idea, run with it, and it can do wonders,' says Mr. Price, 17, who organized the pink protest. 'Finally, someone stood up for a weaker kid.' Mr. Shepherd and some others headed off to a discount store and bought 50 pink tank tops. They sent out a message to schoolmates that night, and the next morning they hauled the shirts to school in a plastic bag. As they stood in the foyer handing out the shirts, the bullied boy walked in. His face spoke volumes. 'It looked like a huge weight was lifted off his shoulders,' Mr. Price recalled. The bullies were never heard from again."

### KEEP CONNECTED WITH OUR SCHOOL AND WITH THE SCDSB

It's important to get accurate information about what's 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 emergency situations. It's easy to subscribe – visit our website and click the 'Subscribe' link at the very top of the page. Provide your email and click 'Subscribe'; a message will be sent to your inbox 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 (@SCDSB\_Schools), Facebook ([facebook.com/SCDSB](https://facebook.com/SCDSB)) and Instagram ([instagram.com/scdsb](https://instagram.com/scdsb)).

### **NOTICE TO STUDENTS AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF STUDENTS REGARDING OUT-OF-AREA-REQUESTS**

Under Simcoe County District School Board procedures (APM A7000 – School Attendance Areas), it is possible for students to apply for and receive permission to attend an out-of-attendance-area school. Students will be permitted to continue in attendance as long as there are pupil places available. They may be required to return to their home school or transfer to another school when the capacity of the school they are attending has been reached and space is required for students residing within the designated attendance areas. An approval may be revoked at any time by the superintendent of education, after consultation with the receiving school principal, for reasons related to the student's behaviour, attendance, actions or inactions. Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the out-of-attendance-area student and/or parent/guardian.

### **BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) recognizes and celebrates Black History Month every February. The SCDSB is committed to improving equity of access and opportunity for Black students, staff, and parents/guardians, and to creating a safe and caring learning environment that promotes the human rights of staff, students, and parent/guardians. The initiatives undertaken by the SCDSB have been embedded in teaching and learning at all school levels, and centrally, for Black History Month and throughout the year. Follow the SCDSB on social media to see how schools are recognizing Black History Month.

### **KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2023 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 2023? If so, we invite you to register your child for Kindergarten. To register online or for more information visit: [www.scdsb.on.ca/kindergarten](https://www.scdsb.on.ca/kindergarten).

### **EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE**

The Simcoe County EarlyON Child and Family Centres have locations throughout Simcoe County. These centres offer a variety of services including programs that help prepare children and parents for kindergarten. Programming will be offered in the spring of 2023. Check with your local EarlyON provider for dates and times: <https://linktr.ee/earlyonsimcoe>.

### **CHILD CARE PROGRAMS AVAILABLE ON PA DAYS, HOLIDAYS AND MARCH BREAK**

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 March Break (Mar. 13 to 17). Registration in advance is required. Please contact the childcare operator directly to discuss fees and to register. For more information and contact numbers, please visit: [https://scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning\\_for\\_school/childcare\\_before\\_after](https://scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/childcare_before_after).

### **SCDSB CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

Our SCDSB Character Education program was developed over 20 years ago. As a school board, we are moving forward to update the SCDSB Character Education program, along with the attributes. The intended implementation date for our new Character Education program will be September 2023. To make this successful, it is imperative that everyone has an opportunity to have a voice. Currently, we are eliciting student voice from our elementary and secondary students and understanding the important partnership with parents/guardians; we are asking if you could take a moment to fill out the below survey.

The survey opens on Feb. 6 and will remain open until Feb. 10: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M2BF38X>.

### **SCDSB ANTI-SEX TRAFFICKING PROTOCOL AND RESOURCES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

In 2021-22, the Ministry of Education directed Ontario school boards to develop an anti-sex trafficking protocol that was tailored to the needs of their community. The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) has developed a protocol and relevant training and resources for staff, students and parents/guardians. The focus of the SCDSB's protocol and resources is to protect students and empower school communities to play a key role in fighting sex trafficking and keeping children and youth safe from sexual exploitation.

More information, including a link to the SCDSB Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol and associated resources, is available on the SCDSB website: [www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/safe\\_schools/anti-sex\\_trafficking\\_protocol](https://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/safe_schools/anti-sex_trafficking_protocol).

### [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, staff and within the SCDSB's broader school communities.

There are five webinars in the learning series specifically planned for parents, guardians and other caregivers during this school year. The remaining sessions include:

Feb. 9, 2023	Guide to Attuned Limit Setting
March 2, 2023	Emotional Regulation for Kids and Adults
April 27, 2023	The Biology of Stress

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).

### [REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR SUMMER ELEARNING!](#)

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is offering summer school courses in July 2023 for current high school students or adult learners who are interested in earning a new credit or upgrading a previous mark. Students can advance online learning skills, earn missed credits or fast-track preparation for graduation or post-secondary in just four weeks. eLearning is fully supported by certified teachers who are available electronically daily. Summer school program details can be found on the Learning Centres website at <http://thelearningcentres.com/high-school-student/summer-school>

### [INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE WAYS THAT THE SCDSB SUPPORTS STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND THEIR FAMILIES?](#)

#### **Join us for a virtual special education outreach series**

In 2023, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is hosting virtual special education outreach sessions to assist parents/caregivers in learning more about programs, supports and ways that we work together to support students with special education needs. The remaining sessions include:

#### **Supporting students with autism spectrum disorder**

Feb. 14  
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

#### **Supporting students as they transition into school, from one school to another, and from school upon graduation**

April 20  
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

#### **Working with families to create safe and supportive environments for children who have experienced trauma**

May 9  
6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Participants are asked to register in advance. Information to access the sessions will be shared via email with individuals who have pre-registered. Learn more about each session and how to register on the SCDSB website at [www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/special\\_education/special\\_education\\_outreach\\_sessions](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/special_education/special_education_outreach_sessions).

## EVALUATING EARLY LITERACY

The Ministry of Education has directed all Ontario school boards to begin implementing the recommendations outlined in the Right to Read Inquiry. As a result, primary educators are shifting from using leveled texts for reading instruction as they encourage reliance on guessing strategies to solve unknown words. Instead, educators are beginning to use a scope and sequence to systematically teach phonemic awareness (awareness of the sounds in words) and phonics (understanding of the letters that represent sounds). Students may apply the phonics skills they have learned by reading 'decodable' or 'phonetically controlled' texts. As a result, educators are moving away from using PM Benchmarks and moving towards assessments that measure foundational reading skills. For example, in Grade 1, educators will be observing a child's ability to identify the sounds they hear in a word, identify the letter(s) that represent the sound, and their ability to blend the sounds together to decode (read) the word and encode (write) the word. In later primary, educators will be observing a child's understanding of more complex letter/sound relationships such as prefixes and suffixes.

Educators will also consider a child's achievement in reading fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension when assigning a report card grade for reading.

To support your child at home, the following documents provide activities that may help foster these foundational skills:

1. Phonological Awareness Activities for Families  
<https://bit.ly/3WVsexb>
2. Supporting Reading Development at Home  
<https://bit.ly/3X3wB9w>

## MATH GAMES AT HOME

Playing math games at home is a great way to reinforce math concepts that students learn at school. The YouTube channel MMMathMania has a large number of videos of math games that can be played using paper, dice, and/or playing cards.

Check out the channel at: [www.youtube.com/@mmmathamiamathgamesmore3985](https://www.youtube.com/@mmmathamiamathgamesmore3985) or search MMMathMania on YouTube.

## EXERCISING TOGETHER CAN MAKE YOUR FAMILY STRONGER AND HEALTHIER

Families that exercise together get stronger in more ways than one. Getting your daily dose of exercise not only helps to prevent health risks, it builds strong muscles and bones, develops positive body image, supports mental health, and strengthens the family bond. With so many great reasons to get moving, why aren't Canadians doing it more often? One of the most common barriers reported is time. This is also one of the biggest roadblocks to spending quality time together as a family. With Family Day just around the corner, why not plan a weekend of activities that gets the whole family out and moving! Here are some tips to help make family fitness fun for everyone.

### **Put family first**

Make the focus of family fitness about family time. Use this time to connect with one another, share stories, discuss interests, check in on the day, or just make each other laugh. Quality family time is important, no matter your age!

### **Take classes together**

Ask your local health and fitness centre about classes offered to parents and kids, or family-oriented drop in programs. Centres like the YMCA often have open family swim times for family members of all ages to enjoy. If your little one is too young to swim in the pool, look for child-minding or parent and tot programs.

### **Plan outdoor activities**

Set aside one day every weekend to do something active as a family such as sledding, skating, or hiking. Making physical activity part of your routine will set your family up for healthy habits now and in the future. Don't forget to splurge on some healthy snacks after a good workout!

### **Surround your family with active people**

Healthy habits can be contagious! Surround your family with active people who enjoy healthy lifestyles and you'll be more likely to make those same choices. Group classes or drop-in programs are a great way to meet new people that share your passion for fitness.

### **Spend quality time together this Family Day weekend**

The YMCA is a great place to have fun with the whole family while building healthy habits of physical fitness and well-being. With activities like open family gym and open family swim, family members of all ages can be healthy and active together. To find your local YMCA and view Family Day weekend activities, visit [www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/schedules](https://www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/schedules). *Information provided by the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka*