

**Algonquin Ridge Elementary School**

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<http://alr.scdsb.on.ca>**Cory McKeown**

Principal

K. Moffitt

Vice-Principal

ALGONQUIN RIDGE NEWS FEBRUARY 2024**PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

Let's not be fooled into thinking Winter is over! We are 4 closing in on the end of Term 1 and Report Card day (Feb. 16th), and a few weeks away the first day of Spring (7 weeks to go!) The weather has been relatively easy to contend with. We've only had a week of very cold weather with many days right around or even above zero. That means classes have been able to take advantage of outside time for Phys-ed classes, DPA etc. We haven't needed to cancel any recesses or change our entry time, but we have seen a lot of hats, coats and other outdoor wear left on the yard as layers are peeled off and abandoned during recesses. Daily reminders to switch between indoor and outdoor shoes have limited success but we continue to promote this habit and appreciate your support at home—having a pair of indoor shoes here at school is essential to keeping our classrooms clean and dry all day. Inclement weather, heavy snowfall and slippery conditions have not been a serious problem, but we remain ready for the next couple of punches that the Ontario winter is likely to send our way before the worst is behind us. We know that families work hard at home to get their children out the door each day dressed for the weather, and this is especially important when the conditions are so varied. Please continue to do your best to get your kids here as consistently as possible and prepared to be outside for nutrition breaks and learning.

With Term 1 report cards all but complete, classrooms across all the grades are beginning new units so positive attendance remains critically important. On the top of the first page of the report, you will see a total for lates and absences that you should pay some attention to. By this point of the year anything higher than 10 missed days of school could be a cause for concern—more than 20 days missed in a year is considered 'chronic absenteeism and is an 'at risk' factor when predicting future high school graduation rates. 45 missed days in a year equates to an entire missed year of school after 4 years! To increase awareness of the importance of establishing good attendance habits early in a student's school life we regularly send home letters of concern when numbers begin to climb. We recognize that some absences cannot be avoided, which only makes it more important to attend school regularly the rest of the time. When your child is in Kindergarten or the Primary grades the foundations of literacy and numeracy are being built as well as the school habits that contribute to success or struggle. As students move to the higher grades the curriculum content becomes more complex, so the impact of inconsistent participation is more immediately seen. At all times children are developing relationships and the self-regulation skills and resilience that will ensure their positive well-being in the short and long term. This means that there is no 'OK' time for students to miss many days, with plans to make improvements down the road. When being away cannot be avoided the best approach is to communicate with your child's teacher to minimize the impact of missed school. We are your partners and want to continue to work with you to ensure all children succeed at Algonquin Ridge and are well prepared for what comes next when they move on to high school.

Cory McKeown

Principal

Algonquin Ridge Elementary School

705 737-4080 x 20304

Pronouns: He/His/Him

cmckeown@scdsb.on.ca**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, positive identity affirming experiences and opportunities for Black students, staff, and parents/guardians, and to creating a safe and caring learning environment that promotes the human rights of students, staff, 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 and celebrating Black excellence.

CALENDAR

Feb 8th – Int Boys Bball mini@ARES
Feb 13th – Int Girls Vball@St Francis
Feb 14th – Valentines Day
 - Move-a - thon
 - Int Boys Bball mini @Alcona Glen
Feb 15th – Int Boys Bball mini @ARES
 - Int Girls Vball @ Hewitts Creek
Feb 16th – Term 1 Report Cards home
Feb 19th – Family Day – **no school**
Feb 20th – Int Boys Bball/Girls Vball – Zones pm
Feb 21 – 23rd – Grade 8 to Camp Kandalore
Feb 21st – Chess Club – Area Tournament
Feb 28th – Int Bball/GVBall – Regionals
Feb 29th – Decades Day
Mar 11-15th – March Break **-school closed**
Mar 29th – Good Friday – **school closed**
Apr 1st – Easter Monday – **school closed**

DAYS OF AWARENESS - FEBRUARY 2024

Feb 1-29 – Black History Month
Feb 1 – World Hijab Day
Feb 1-2 – Imbolc (Wicca)
Feb 2 – Ground Hog Day
 World Wetlands Day
Feb 4 – World Cancer Day
Feb 6 – Isra'a and Mi'raj (Islam)
Feb 10 – Losar/Tibetan New Year (Buddhism)
 Lunar New Year/Maitreya Bodhisattva's Birthday (Buddhism)
Feb 11 – International Day of Women and Girls in Science
Feb 14 – Ash Wednesday (Christianity)
 Valentine's Day
 Vasant Panchami (Hinduism)
Feb 15 – National Flag of Canada Day
 Nirvana Day (Buddhism, Jainism)
Feb 17 – Random Acts of Kindness Day
Feb 19 – Family Day
Feb 20 – World Day of Social Justice
Feb 22 – Pink Shirt Day (Anti-Bullying Day)
Feb 24 – Magha/Sangha Day (Buddhism)
Feb 24-25 – Mid-Sha'ban (Islam)
Feb 26-March 1 – Ayyam -i-Ha/Intercalary Days (Baha'i)
Feb 29 – Rare Diseases Day

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2024 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 2024? If so, we invite you to register your child for Kindergarten. To register online or for more information visit: www.scdsb.on.ca/kindergarten

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/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 (ERIK), 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!

CHILDCARE 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 (March 11 to 15). 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://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/childcare_before_after.

SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE

Term 2 IEPs will be sent home electronically for your records the week of February 20, 2024. 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@pcgcanada.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 (including the dashes). If you would like to request a paper copy please contact your child's classroom teacher.

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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/. 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>.

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://cdnsm5-ss14.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_210898/File/Secondary/Parents-Guide-to-Assessment.pdf

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.

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.

There are eight webinars specifically planned for parents/guardians and other caregivers during this school year. The remaining webinars are:

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.

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 information series

During the 2023-24 school year, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is hosting virtual special education outreach sessions to assist parents/guardians in learning more about programs, supports, and ways that we work together to support students with special education needs.

Transition planning

Feb. 13

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Reading strategies

March 19

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

April 16

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Every day mental health strategies

May 14

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:

www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/special_education/special_education_outreach_sessions.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR SUMMER ELEARNING!

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is offering summer school courses in July 2024 (eLearning) and travel for credit courses in both July and August 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 https://www.thelearningcentres.com/programs/summer_school.

EDUTravel programs are offered in a variety of destinations including Canada, USA, and Europe. For more information including costs, destinations, credits, and dates of commitment, please visit: www.edutravelforcredit.com.

SUMMER ELEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADE 9!

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is offering summer school eLearning courses in July 2024. Current Grade 8 students wishing to reach ahead and earn a credit before high school can now register through their elementary school principal. eLearning is fully supported by certified teachers who are available electronically daily. Available courses include:

CGC1D – Grade 9 Geography

PAF1O – Grade 9 Personal Fitness

CHV2O & GLC2O – Grade 10 Civics and Careers

CHC2P – Grade 10 Applied History

CHC2D – Grade 10 Academic History

Summer school program details can be found on the Learning Centres website at www.thelearningcentres.com/programs/summer_school.

REMINDER: SAFE ARRIVAL SYSTEM FOR SCDSB SCHOOLS – CALL 1-888-885-8065 TO REPORT AN ABSENCE

This school year, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) launched a new Safe Arrival system at elementary schools. This system supports us in continuing to improve our home-to-school communication process and streamlines absence reporting. To report a student absence, call **1-888-885-8065**. Callers will be prompted to identify the school before leaving a message.

Parents/guardians should include the student's name, teachers' name, dates, and reason for the absence. When schools do not hear from a parent/guardian, and a student is absent, the school will call home to find out the reason for the absence. If you have questions about the system, please contact the school office.

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.

NEW MATH AT HOME ONLINE RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) Math team is excited to launch Math at Home, an online resource for parents/caregivers of SCDSB students from ages 0-16. Math at Home provides the following information and resources to support math learning:

- Math games to play at home
- Links to digital math games
- Practice opportunities
- Real world math connections
- Math mindset

Math at Home will be updated monthly to include new math games, problems, and number talks. Visit www.scdsb.on.ca/MathAtHome to begin supporting your child's math learning at home!

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>.

Developing fluency through repeated reading

Fluency, the ability to read smoothly, accurately, and with expression, is a fundamental skill that significantly impacts a child's overall reading proficiency. When children read fluently, they can focus more on comprehension, understanding the meaning behind the words, rather than struggling with decoding. Repeated reading is a highly effective strategy that involves a child reading the same text multiple times. This method aims to enhance fluency, comprehension, and overall reading proficiency. By revisiting a text, readers become more familiar with the words and structure, leading to increased speed and accuracy. Additionally, repeated reading allows children to focus on expression and intonation, promoting a more natural and engaging reading style. This approach is particularly beneficial for struggling readers, as it builds confidence and reinforces word recognition. As parents/guardians, incorporating repeated reading into your child's routine not only reinforces the joy of reading but also cultivates a strong foundation for improved fluency and comprehension skills over time.

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY OF THE MONTH - JUST BREATHE

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 *Just Breathe*. The purpose of this strategy is to help students develop a mind/body connection, self-regulation, awareness of emotions, and resiliency by practising deep breathing.

To practice *Just Breathe* at home, follow these steps:

- Place your hands flat on your stomach or pay attention to your stomach.
- As you breathe deeply in through your nose, send this breath all the way to your stomach.
- Feel your stomach expand and your hands move out.
- Breathe out. Feel your stomach contract and your hands move in.
- Repeat 5-6 times.

Practice deep belly breathing any time you feel stressed or upset. Find more information to support your child's mental health here: <https://smho-smso.ca/parents-and-caregivers/>.

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

ONLINE LURING AND GROOMING

As part of our shared commitment to educating our students about digital citizenship and cyber awareness, this month we are highlighting online luring and grooming. The following info sheet has been created by the Educational Collaborative Network of Ontario (ECNO) to overview:

- What online luring and grooming is
- Commonly used tactics that online predators use
- Helpful tips to stay safe
- How to report if necessary

Info sheet: https://ecno.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ECNO-CAM-Calendar-23-Aug3023_GroomingLuring.pdf

For additional activities and information, please refer to the digital citizenship resources for parents/guardians that are available on the Safe Schools page on the SCDSB website (www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/safe_schools). The Ministry of Education has also provided information and resources in PPM 166 Keeping Students Safe: Policy Framework for School Board Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocols: www.ontario.ca/document/education-ontario-policy-and-program-direction/policyprogram-memorandum-166.

FOSTER FAMILIES NEEDED IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

Children in our community need you! We have an urgent need for foster homes in Simcoe Muskoka. We are looking for diverse foster care providers who understand children's needs. Our needs are diverse and range from babies to teens. Open your home to a child/youth and receive training, support, and between \$85 and \$155 per child and per day. Do you know anyone who may be interested? Visit <https://familyconnexions.ca/fosterconnexions/> to inquire, apply, and for more information. You may also call 705-726-6587 ext. 4.

Information provided by Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions.

STAY HEALTHY THIS SCHOOL YEAR

COVID and other respiratory infections can spread easily from person to person. These germs can spread quickly when someone coughs or sneezes directly on another person, or when germs land on hard surfaces like doorknobs, desks, and keyboards and then are touched by someone else. 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 is wash your hands. Wash with soap and warm running water for at least 15 seconds (or try singing Happy Birthday twice). If your hands are not visibly dirty you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer for 15 seconds. Also, make sure you are up to date with your immunizations, cover coughs and sneezes, 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 www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

CREATING SAFE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS

A healthy school supports children to reach their full health and learning potential. There are many ways for you to get involved in creating a safe and healthy school for your child. Here are some ideas:

- Talk with your child about what they are learning at school and find ways to role model or reinforce the health messages at home.
- Stay informed about your child's school through the school website and social media platforms.
- Get to know your child's friends, other parents, and staff from the school and communicate often.
- Volunteer to participate on a committee that helps organize healthy activities for the school community. Contact your child's school or your local public health unit to get started.

Looking for more parenting support? Speak with a public health nurse by calling 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

[REGISTER YOUR CHILD FOR THE YMCA'S ESCAPE IN THE LANDSCAPE PROGRAM](#)

Register your child for an outdoor education experience like no other. The YMCA of Simcoe Muskoka's Escape in the Landscape program offers nature immersion activities led by qualified staff for children ages 4-12. Through experimentation, peer-to-peer learning, and storytelling, your child will be encouraged to discover new experiences and skills, all while making lasting friendships and developing a love of the great outdoors.

During this memorable program, your child will:

- Learn about the land and how to be environmental caretakers.
- Connect with nature and build self-confidence.
- Improve their mental and physical health.
- Be curious, resilient, and motivated to make a difference.

The program runs for eight weeks from March to April 2024 and is offered in Alliston, Innisfil, Midland, Wasaga Beach, and Barrie.

Cost:

Ages 4-6: \$125.00

Ages 7-12: \$175.00

For more information and to register, visit <https://ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/escape-in-the-landscape/>.

Information provided by the YMCA of Simcoe Muskoka.