



Cory McKeown
Principal

Algonquin Ridge Elementary School
191 Golden Meadow Road
Barrie, Ontario, L4N 9R6
Phone (705) 737-4080
Fax (705) 730-5820
alr.scdsb.on.ca

Karen Moffitt
Vice-Principal

ALGONQUIN RIDGE NEWS SEPTEMBER 2023

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

WELCOME BACK!

On behalf of the entire Algonquin Ridge staff, I am thrilled to extend a warm and heartfelt "welcome back!" as we have now kicked off an exciting new school year!

September is always filled with special moments when our hallways are once again filled with the laughter, energy, and boundless curiosity of our students (not to mention random single shoes, scraps of torn paper, nutrition break crumbs and an abundance of sand, LOL). Your children of course provide the magic that brings our building to life. We couldn't be happier to have them back.

A great deal of effort from our dedicated team of educators and support staff has occurred to get us to this point. From deep summer cleaning to preparing engaging lessons and creating vibrant learning environments, our goal has been to get this year's educational journey off to a fantastic start. We are deeply committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive atmosphere, where your child can thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. That said, we recognize that determinations of class placement are always difficult given some of the parameters we must work within. We appreciate your patience, support, and open-mindedness as we work to create balanced rooms where all students can be successful. This year we opened our doors with a higher-than-average number of split classrooms (7, not including our 4 JK/SK rooms) that are home to over 1/3 of all gr. 1-8 children. It is very important that families understand that split classrooms are a necessary reality in the Ontario public school system and are required to ensure that ministry guidelines around classroom size and student to teacher ratios are met. Our teachers are more than capable of programming at each student's level, delivering the curriculum for each grade. Independent problem-solving skills, positive work habits, leadership and resilience are all valuable skills that are emphasized in split classrooms. In general, every family should expect their children to be placed in a split classroom at least once or twice between Kindergarten and grade 8. We do try to avoid placing a student into a split class 2 years in a row. Regardless of whether your child began this year in a split or straight grade classroom, the vast majority of students and families will be happy with their teacher, peers, and program after the initial back to school shock wears off.

We hope you have also had success in establishing the home routines that allow your children to arrive at school each day, rested and ready to learn. If you have been at ARES for a while, you will know that we often share how important attendance is to overall success—academically and socially. We have something exciting happening here almost every single day and it should be no secret that the students who remain positive about school and become the most involved end up happy and successful. Consistent routines at home, positive communication with teachers and clear expectations from you and the school will help to ensure that we remain partners in your children's education.

Let's have another fantastic year at Algonquin Ridge!

Cory McKeown
Principal

CALENDAR

Sept 21 – Terry Fox Run
Sept 22 – PA Day – no school
Sept 25 – School Council meeting in Learning Commons @ 6:30 pm
Sept 28 – Open House (meet the teacher) 5:00-6:00 pm
Sept 29 – School Day of Truth and Reconciliation (Orange Shirt Day)
Oct 3 – Barrie Colts visit ARES 9:30-10:30
Oct 9 – Thanksgiving – **School closed**
Oct 11 – Cross Country Regionals at Innisfil Beach Park
Oct 12 – Cross Country Regionals rain date
Oct 17 – School Photo Day
Oct 19 – Barrie Colts Game @ 7:00
Oct 20 – PA Day – no school

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

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) has a new Safe Arrival system at elementary schools. This system will support us in continuing to improve our home-to-school communication process and streamline 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 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 new system, please contact the school office.

SCHOOL COUNCIL 2023/24 UPDATE

Please consider getting involved with the ARES School Council this year. The committee is made up of dedicated parents, staff and community members who work together to keep our school great. This advisory committee shares their ideas and input with the school staff, organizes and leads fund raising efforts, and contributes to the decisions made around how we use funds to enhance student life.

We are currently planning for a face-to-face **first School Council Meeting on Monday Sept. 25th at 6:30pm**. We will also hold our school council election at this meeting. Elected/voting members are expected to attend about 6-7 meetings per year (some online and some in person) which usually run about 1.5-2 hours. Non-elected parents are always welcome to attend meetings to learn about their school and often volunteer to assist with fund-raising efforts etc. We usually share meeting date reminders on our roadside sign, in our school Newsletters and on the school webpage. ARES would also like to sincerely thank our 2022/23 School Council who remain in their current positions until our election takes place on the 25th. We hope to see you all back again this year!

You can find more information on School Councils @ www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/parent/school_councils.

To be eligible to hold an elected position (chair or co-chair, treasurer, secretary, community representative, member at large) you will need to call the office and we will email a nomination form to you. We can also send one home with your child upon request, or you may choose to pick one up before or after school from the office (not within 15 min of entry or dismissal).

SEPTEMBER PA DAY

Please note that Friday, Sept. 22 is a PA Day for all SCDSB students. Please refer to the 2023-24 School Year Calendar on the SCDSB website for more information: www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/school_year_calendar.

Below is a summary of the activities planned for the **Sept. 22 PA Day**:

Length: Full day
Topic: Reading and Literacy, Social Studies, Assessment
Host: Simcoe County District School Board
Presenter(s)/facilitator(s): School board staff and school administrators.

Educators will participate in person to review the newly revised Language Curriculum, *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8, Language, 2023*, and new de-streamed *English, Grade 9*, and *Français, 9e année* courses and explore resources to support their implementation with students. Through group discussions and hands-on activities, elementary educators will learn about early reading instruction and the use of screening tools to help ensure that students with reading difficulties are identified and supported early. They will also explore and plan for literacy instruction across the curriculum, including the new Holocaust Education curriculum in Grade 6. Secondary educators will also engage in assessment activities and the collaborative planning of student tasks and opportunities to inform both course instruction and evaluation.

UNIVERSAL OTIS-LENNON SCHOOL ABILITY TEST (OLSAT) SCREENING PROCESS

The OLSAT is a standardized group test of ability. The results of this test will help us gain a better understanding of students' areas of relative strength and needs as related to their verbal and non-verbal abilities so that we can plan our programs and supports accordingly. Results may also be used to inform identification (e.g., Intellectual: Gifted).

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

A consent form examining the universal OLSAT screening process in greater detail will be sent to parent(s)/ guardian(s) of students in Grade 3 via School Cash Online in September. If you require further information about the universal OLSAT screening process, please contact the school.

DAYS OF AWARENESS 2023-24

Sept. 1-30 - Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Awareness Monthly

Sept. 10 - World Suicide Prevention Day

Sept. 10-16 - Mennonite Heritage Week

Sept. 12 - Coptic New Year/Nayrouz (Eastern Orthodox Christianity)

Sept. 12- Anniversary of the Tatsunokuchi Persecution (Buddhism)

Sept. 15-17 - Rosh Hashanah (Judaism)

Sept. 17-30 - National forest Week

Sept. 17 - Terry Fox Run

Sept. 19 - Ganesh Chaturthi (Hinduism)

Powley Day (Indigenous World View)

Samvatsari/Paryushan Parva ends/Daslakshan Parva begins (Janaism)

Sept. 20-26 - Festival of Higan-e (Buddhism)

Sept. 20 - Kshamavani or “Forgiveness Day” (Janaism)

Rowan’s Law Day

National Tree Day

Sept. 21 - School Terry Fox Run (tentative)

International Day of Peace

Harvestode/Mabon/Fall Equinox (Wicca)

Sept. 23 - International Day of Sign Languages

Sept. 24- Eihei Dogen Kigen Memorial (Buddhism)

Sept. 24-25 - Yom Kippur (Judaism)

Sept. 25-30 - National Truth and Reconciliation Week

Sept. 25- Franco-Ontarian Day

Sept. 28 - Anant Chaturdashi (Hindiusm)

Anant Chaturdashi/Daslakshan Parva ends (Jainism)

Sept. 29 - Mid-Autum Festival (Moon Festival) (Buddhism)

GISS-N-RIDE/PARKING LOT

Thank you once again to the students and families that are choosing to ride or walk (even part of the way) to school. Your help with reducing traffic by using the road in front of the school to drop off older students or parking a few blocks away from the school is appreciated (you may not leave your car in a no-parking zone to walk your child to their gate. City of Barrie By-law enforcement officers visit our school frequently and will write tickets for cars left unattended). We recognize that driving your child (ren) to school is sometimes unavoidable and that **the families of our youngest students are most in need of the limited space we have on the school property**. Over the first 2 weeks of school, we have noticed a significant drop in traffic around entry and dismissal times—thank you for your help!

For those who are entering our school parking lot in their personal vehicle we offer these important reminders:

DO'S

- drive slowly in the school lot and in surrounding 40 km zones
- **obey staff directions** - recognize that accessing the school lot during entry and dismissal is a privilege and not a right
- pull all the way forward when dropping off students in the Kiss-N-Ride!**
- unload children from the curbside and **do not leave your car**
- consider dropping off a few blocks from school or on an alternate street and allow students to walk from there**
- remember that pedestrians have the right of way
- recognize that parents of our youngest students have a greater need to access the school parking and Kiss-N-Ride**
- be hyper-aware of student pedestrians at all times
- be patient if you are choosing to drive into the school parking lot (the busy period is over in less than 10 min)
- have students walk/wheel to school whenever possible**
- park in designated spots only
- have your child fully ready to go when you get in your car
- park in a designated space if you plan to leave your vehicle**
- pedestrians at the front need to cross to the school by the flag post and not cut across the entry/exit lanes
- school vehicles should be given the right of way
- the lane across the front of the school is closed at entry and dismissal

DO NOT'S

- do not block school vehicles (buses and vans)
- do not pull through pylons, that close the bus lane directly in front of the school, until after the school day has begun in the a.m. or until buses have departed in the p.m.
- do not unload students where they will need to cross the parking lot and live lanes unattended
- do not double park/park in non-spaces
- do not leave your vehicle unattended unless in a designated parking space**
- do not use your cell phone while driving
- do not block or park in posted fire routes
- do not interfere with the staff's efforts to monitor students and traffic to ensure safety
- do not distract staff who are monitoring student entry and dismissal

The Kiss-N-Ride is for only a very brief 'stop and drop'. If you need to leave your vehicle to assist your child or walk them to their gate, please park in a designated space. If there are no spots available, then drive away from the school until you can find a legal parking space. The staff here often face the same parking challenges that you do. Blocking lanes, double parking or parking in fire routes is not an option. Be aware that City of Barrie Bylaw officers have written tickets on our property and will continue to do so. Students, administration, the staff, School Council, and your neighbours thank you for your continued efforts to ensure students can come and go from school safely. Please recognize that student safety is our top priority, even when it may mean a momentary inconvenience for parents and caregivers. Remember that children do not always obey the 'rules of the road' or 'look before they leap' and, therefore, all adults are responsible for being extra diligent when driving to, from or around our busy school. Also be aware that a return to extracurricular activities means that we will have additional visitors to our school on days when school teams are playing games after school.

SCDSB LAUNCHES UPDATED CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR

This year the SCDSB will begin implementation of the updated character education program. Rather than focus on one attribute each month, the program has been changed to reflect that character is a fluid concept that includes a variety of attributes.

The updated character attributes are:

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Bravery | Helpfulness | Listening | Responsibility |
| Caring | Honesty | Love | Trustworthiness |
| Compassion | Humility | Loyalty | Truth |
| Cooperation | Inclusiveness | Optimism | Sharing |
| Courage | Integrity | Perseverance | Wisdom |
| Empathy | Kindness | Respect | |

For more information on the updated character education program, visit the character education page on the SCDSB website: www.scdsb.on.ca/about/character_education.

SCDSB 2023-24 STUDENT HANDBOOK

The SCDSB student handbook contains a variety of information that the SCDSB is required to share with all students and families. This September, schools will be distributing the student handbook to all families via email. The SCDSB 2023-24 Student Handbook can also be found on the SCDSB website at www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/parent and on school websites under 'students'. If you have questions, please contact the school.

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:

- Sign up to receive SCDSB media releases by clicking the 'Subscribe' button at scdsb.on.ca.
- Follow the SCDSB on X (@SCDSB_Schools), Facebook (facebook.com/SCDSB) and Instagram (instagram.com/scdsb) or X@RidgeAlgonquin

ANNUAL NOTICE TO ADULT STUDENTS OR PARENT(S)/GUARDIAN(S) OF STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 16

A completed Student Medical Form (FORM A1420 - 1) is required each school year, or when a medical need is identified, or when the student transfers to another school, in order to authorize medical response plan development and the administration of prescribed medication to students who require it during school hours, or when the medication and/or dosage requirements change. Specific to asthma, every student is now permitted to carry their asthma medication if the student has their parent's/guardian's permission. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and adult students are responsible for ensuring that a current, completed Student Medical Form is on file at the school. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and adult students are also to complete a Plan of Care for students with prevalent medical conditions such as anaphylaxis, asthma, type 1 diabetes, or epilepsy/seizure disorder.

Some students may experience severe life-threatening allergic reactions to bee, hornet, wasp, or other flying insect stings or to certain foods or food ingredients such as peanuts. The best way to reduce the risk of accidental exposure for these students is to respectfully ask parent(s)/guardian(s) to avoid sending peanut butter or products with peanuts and/or tree nuts listed in the ingredients to school. For students with life-threatening allergies, it is recommended that two doses of an epinephrine auto-injector are available on site at school. Please do not hesitate to contact the school with any questions you may have.

STANDARD ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND PERMISSION FORM/STUDENT INFORMATION COMPUTING TECHNOLOGY APPROPRIATE USE AGREEMENT 2023-24

The 2023-24 Standard Acknowledgment and Permission Form and Student Information Computing Technology Appropriate Use Agreement are required forms for all Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) students. The forms have been made available electronically through School Cash Online until Oct. 16. School Cash Online is our preferred method for forms. If you are unable to submit these forms electronically, please contact the office for paper copies.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE 2023-24

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

A variety of plans and benefits at reasonable annual prices can be found through either:

- StudyInsured at www.studyinsuredstudentaccident.com or by calling 1-833-560-0527; or,
- Insure my Kids through at www.insuremykids.com or by calling 1-800-463-5437.

Participation in extra-curricular activities (e.g., athletics, clubs, etc.) and/or out-of-province/ out-of-country trips require the purchase of this insurance, or other extended health and dental coverage.

VOLUNTEERING IN SCHOOLS DURING THE 2023-24 SCHOOL YEAR

Volunteers are an important part of what makes our schools great places to learn and grow. We value and appreciate the support of our volunteers. Volunteers have various roles at our schools including:

- School event volunteer
- Hot lunch day organizers
- Field trip supervisors
- Classroom helpers

Please contact your local school's office if you are interested in volunteering and would like to know more about the opportunities available.

To become a volunteer in a Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) school, you must complete accessibility training and submit a current (dated within six months) Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC). Schools require all VSCs to be in their original form and emailed directly to the school for processing. Please note, volunteers are unable to upload VSCs directly to the volunteer portal. Each potential volunteer must create an account within the volunteer portal. Please remember to choose the school you wish to volunteer with.

If you do not have a computer or require assistance, please contact the school.

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/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 childcare centre to make sure they don't get on a bus in error.

For more information, visit main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca

PROCEDURES HELP KEEP OUR SCHOOL SAFE

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/guardians 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 temporarily.
- 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 exterior 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. Interior 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/guardians do not go to the school. Information will be communicated through the school board social media sites (www.facebook.com/SCDSB and www.twitter.com/SCDSB_Schools) and website (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. 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/guardians will be informed about pick-up procedures by the school, school board and local media.

When parents/guardians are at school during a drill or emergency event, they must follow direction from school staff, police, fire, and/or emergency personnel. Parents/guardians 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/guardian care.

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

Please note the following:

- Elementary school main doors are locked during the school day. Visitors must use the **intercom system** and wait for assistance. **Staff may not be available to answer the door immediately, so please be patient.**
- Staff must complete a **criminal record check** before having contact with students.
- We ask parents/guardians of elementary students 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 SCDSB schools have **automated external defibrillators (AEDs)**.

STUDENT DRESS CODE

Our board's dress code is one way that we embed the principles set out in the SCDSB and Ministry of Education documents, Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario, and Equity and Inclusive Education to ensure safe, inclusive and equitable learning environments for all of our students. In SCDSB schools, we believe that students should be able to learn in a safe and caring space that is free of bias and discrimination. When making choices about what to wear to school, we respect your individuality. To ensure that our learning environments are safe and respectful spaces, our board has consulted with students and staff to develop a set of shared standards for student dress.

The SCDSB dress code is available on the SCDSB website at www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/dress_code. If you have questions about the dress code, contact your school principal.

BRADFORD GREENHOUSES FUNDRAISER FOR ALGONQUIN RIDGE ELEMENTARY

Fall is almost upon us and it's time to decorate with all of the beautiful plants, flowers, trees and decor items from Bradford Greenhouse. Don't forget to share your Bradford points with Algonquin Ridge Elementary School.

It's super-easy! Before you check out, tell the cashier that you would like to donate your points to Algonquin Ridge. No sign-up or extra purchases necessary. At the end of the season, Bradford will donate 5% of all ARES purchases back to the school in the form of a gift card. Spread the word and share this info with all your friends and family.

Thank you so much for all of your support! Happy shopping!

Your ARES School Council

