

December 2016

As 2016 approaches an end and the holiday season approaches I find myself in a state of the utmost gratitude. I am grateful for the wonderful young people you send to school every day- a truly magnificent group of children. I am grateful for a caring and devoted staff that is always up for a challenge or an event that supports student success, and I am grateful for the supportive and caring parents and caregivers in this community. Busy working parents, school volunteers and our School Council create a collaborative community and I am very grateful to be a part of it. Recently, we enjoyed a fantastic movie evening, snuggling up to "The Life of Pets" thanks to the G. P. Mackie School Council.

Winter Weather

Winter weather brings many different considerations at school. Most important, please remember that while the temperatures may seem very cold, we only shorten the time outside for students when temperatures are considered extreme (-20 to -28 C). This usually only happens a few times a year (here's hoping) so parents must help their child prepare for the weather. Yes, even our big grade 6's who we might wish would be responsible for themselves, need some check-ins to see that they are dressed appropriately. Snowpants (labelled please) are truly an essential item in order for children to enjoy the snow without getting wet or cold. Please help us to keep your child safe and keep them engaged and learning despite the snow and the cold temperatures. You can help! Please...

- create a family plan to give yourselves enough time to get to school in the snow
- double check to see if your child is wearing : a proper coat, snowpants, boots, mittens and a hat
- please label all of your child's belongings—yes, even if they are 11 years old
- support our "no throwing snow" efforts
- walk to school whenever possible
- many of our streets do not have sidewalks-please teach your child to be aware safety hazards and driver visibility or lack there of
- if you must drive to school, park well away from the school where you can park legally and not detain our busses or create unsafe conditions

Student Entry

Students line up and enter the school at the 8:40 bell. Announcements start at 8:47 to allow for students to get into the school, up the stairs in some cases, and change shoes. Announcements last to 8:50 am. During the time of the announcements (between 8:47 and 8:50) students who may be arriving a couple of minutes late are directed to their proper entry doors. Student monitors are assigned to these doors daily to let these latecomers into the school. While we all experience unexpected delays at times, please do your best to help your child arrive on time. Entering together, greeting each, celebrating our Canadian culture through our anthem and hearing the organization of the day, are calming routines for all of us and help students prepare for a successful day of learning.

Activity

Recently we have enjoyed a number of enriching experiences that have added to the value of our work here at Mackie. Our school-wide trip to Munsch All Over was hugely successful and enjoyable, our Movie Night fundraiser organized by our School Council raised \$---and provided an adorable setting for friends to cuddle up and relax together, and next week we will all come together to enjoy the sights and sounds of your children at our **Holiday Concert on Tuesday December, 20 at 6:30 pm.**

While Cross Country, KM Club, girls' basketball and boys' volleyball seasons have finished, try-outs and practices for girls' volleyball and boys' basketball are now underway. There is never a moment of inactivity around here! Meanwhile, **student leadership** is being developed through our LCT leaders with Ms. Raynor, Mr. Mike's Lunchroom Crew, Ms. Blackburn's Office Helpers and my trusty door monitors!

Curriculum

In the classroom, our teaching staff has continued to engage our students in meaningful literacy and numeracy tasks. We have been expanding our use of technology to meet these goals and have started meaningful conversations about Equity in terms of ensuring all student needs are met. At this time I remind all staff and parents

about the TDSB [Homework Policy](#) Students should not be expected to do homework over the holiday, although a family “cuddle up and read” day is highly encouraged! I know I cannot wait for this experience with my own family! J

We hope that you have been finding this website, our Remind Messages, email from School Connects, Twitter Tweets and your child’s agenda and/or calls from your child’s teacher sufficient for keeping you informed. Please call Ms. Blackburn (416-396-6265) if there are any areas of communication we can help you access.

Eco-School

We have recently been presented with **Platinum Status** for our Eco-Efforts. This is the highest standard of achievement for our Board of Education and it does not come without a very coordinated and dedicated effort. Ms. Qazi and Ms. Mahenthirarasa have provided leadership to our students, staff and community that have brought about unprecedented results. We are very grateful for your support, especially accepting all of the waste from our litterless lunches. While we have recently set up a system for the collection of fruit peelings, milk cartons and juice boxes, all other waste and leftovers should be coming back to you. Often parents find it helpful to see how much their child is eating (or not!). We continue to request and appreciate your efforts to send food that is nut and sesame seed-free, and remember that even during these times of sharing, we do not send candy, treats or other food for students to share. We continue with our healthy Mackie Snackie (three times weekly) thanks to Ms. Gibbs and her dedicated team of volunteers.

Finally, I am grateful for the giant squirrels and deer that often visit my office window and remind me of the wonders and curiosity, and generosity that live within all of us. You must see the mountain of food, for the food bank growing in our foyer! Thank you!

Wishing you all a safe and happy holiday season with your families!

Shirley Ponka