

**Friday, October 21, 2016**

**Principal's Update:**

**Student Opportunities**

The school year is now fully underway and you can feel the energy as teams and clubs meet, hold try-outs, practice and perform. While we have already concluded both Boys' Slo-Pitch and our School Cross Country Seasons, many other sports and activities are starting up and underway, including Girls' Basketball, Boys' Volleyball, Choir, Eco-club and Kilometer Club. Today, our grade 5/6 class will enjoy a day of exploration at Hillside and we are all looking forward to the **Dance-a-thon on Friday October 28<sup>th</sup>** (this also happens to be Pizza Day!). Students have all had an opportunity to have input into the songs that they will dance and enjoy! We are grateful to our School Council and parent volunteers for their hard work and organization of fun activities like this one. It is sure to be a very exciting day for our students.

**School Volunteers**

School Volunteers here at Mackie make the world of difference. From Mackie Snackie, to school trips, team drivers and events like our Spook-a-thon, our volunteers enrich the experience for the children of our school. If you would like to volunteer in our school please ask your child's teacher, Ms. Blackburn or myself for the forms required to do so. Returning volunteers need to check in at the office to take their annual Offence Declaration. This only takes a few minutes. Please come by and see us!

**School Safety and Rainy Day Entry**

Our Caring and Safe Schools Committee has met and we are implementing our procedures to keep our students safe. Educating and rehearsing with students, staff and community are an important part of the process. We have practiced 3 fire drills this fall, and one lockdown practice. We will have at least one more lockdown practice before the school year is done.

Student arrival and entry has improved significantly. Students are acknowledged for punctuality and entering through the appropriate doors. This gives our students a confident start to the day and eliminates the possibilities of uninvited guests entering our school.

**8:40-Bell and Entry**

**8:47-Announcements**

**Rainy Day Entry**

Rainy days are often challenging for families who are already following a hectic morning routine with young children. Please be aware of the rainy day procedures at Mackie:

On rainy days students come to school at the same time and enter at the same doors at 8:45, as always. On rainy days, staff will be assigned to all of those entry doors to welcome children into

the school and gather them in classroom groupings between 8:30 and 8:40 so that those students arriving early are not getting wet waiting for the entry bell outside. Teachers will then come to collect the students in groups so that they are always supervised. We ask parents to say good-bye at the door as always and not enter with their children. Please do not enter through the front entrance. The front entrance is for students who arrive on assigned busses and a staff member is assigned to greet those select students as well. Parent/adult guests volunteering in the school that day are asked to sign in at the office and receive a volunteer badge as always.

### **School Improvement**

Our School Improvement Team has had an opportunity to meet and plan forward. We are continuing our Professional Development with our Learning Coach, Lesley Davidson, who is leading us in our efforts to continually improve our practice. We will be looking at our school data with a focus on ensuring we are meeting the needs of all of our students.

### **Food Sharing**

With a variety of holidays and special events in the near future, it is timely to remind everyone we have many students and staff members with a wide variety of allergies and intolerances, some which are life-threatening. We also teach healthy nutrition and food choices which is supported by our Mackie Snackie program available to students 3 times weekly (Mon. Wed. and Fri.).

With these issues in mind, we ask that you please refrain from sending treats for your child to share with classmates at school. Cupcakes for a birthday, a bag of treats at Halloween are kind sentiments, but they add to the risk of reaction as well as increase the sugar levels of our many students with ADHD and other intolerances. Thank you for your support on this practice.

### **School Budget**

Our Budget Committee has also met to discuss our School needs and we are planning forward. Some of the needs identified thus far include resources to support the use of technology in literacy and Social Studies.

### **Staffing**

Staffing for our school is finally complete! Next week we officially welcome Long Term Occasional teacher Ms. Nithya Mahenthirarasa (Ms. Mahen) to our Kindergarten classroom in Room 12 and the following week we will welcome Mr. Joseph Lauria who will be teaching a number of our classrooms in the gym and in the Arts. Thank you for your patience as we worked our way through the LTO hiring process following additional teacher allocation to the school in September and October.

### **Progress Reports**

Before you know it will be time to receive your child's progress report! Progress Reports provide a snapshot of how your child is progressing thus far this year and is a good starting point for discussion with the teacher. Much focus is on the learning skills at this point as they are essential in order to build on other learning opportunities. Progress reports will be sent home for all students in SK- to 6 on **November 14, 2016**. JK students do not receive a progress report at this time but are invited to be part of the parent/teacher conferences on Thursday November 17 (evening) and Friday November 18. More information on Progress reports and Teacher conferences-including scheduling will be coming home in future weeks.

Our School Council meets next week , on Tuesday October 25, at 6:00 pm. You do not need to be a member to come out and join the discussion; you just need to be a current parent guardian of a child at our school. Meetings take place in the Learning Commons. If you have questions regarding involvement in our School Council please contact me at the number below or contact our School Council Chair, Mr. Michael John at [chitan45@hotmail.com](mailto:chitan45@hotmail.com)

Go Mackie! We are small but we are Mighty!

Shirley Ponka

Principal

416-396-6265