



BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dear Bench Families,

As the leaves continue to fall and the chill settles in, we're finally feeling more at home in our classrooms and students are building connections with their classmates and teachers. We're so proud of the growth and collaboration happening each day.

A big thank you to our Parent Advisory Committee for organizing such a fantastic Halloween Dance! It was wonderful to see so many of you come out to join the fun. The pumpkin carving contest brought out some incredible creativity – thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to the spooky spirit! Events like these make field trips, guest speakers and other enhancements at Bench truly come to life – so thank you!

On a more reflective note, we recently held a special Remembrance Day tribute in honor of those who have served. It was a meaningful time for students and staff to gather, reflect, and express our gratitude.

Looking ahead, we're excited to share that learning summaries will be coming home on November 28. These summaries will give you an insight into the hard work and learning progress each student has made in such a short time. We hope this provides a valuable opportunity for families to connect over what your children are experiencing and achieving in the classroom.

With the holiday season just around the corner, we're looking forward to all the festivities and community spirit that this time of year brings! Be sure to read through this newsletter carefully for important dates, as there are many events and activities planned in the coming weeks. This year, we're excited to introduce a new initiative at Bench: our Holiday Giving Tree. This project provides an opportunity for our school community to come together to support families in need. Read on for more details. We thank you in advance for helping us spread good cheer!

As always, thank you for your support and partnership in your child's learning journey. November is a busy and productive month, and we're grateful to have you alongside us.

Warm regards,

Kyla Bridge
Principal

Bench Elementary School
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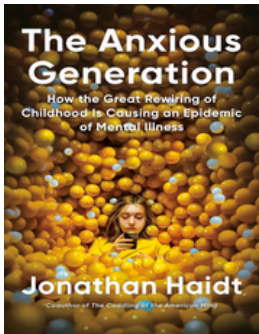
BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dates to remember

- November 20, Wednesday - 2 hr. Early Dismissal
- November 22, Friday - Non-Instructional Day (School Closed)
- December 4, Wednesday - Primary Winter Concert (Ks and Gr. 1s)
- December 5, Thursday - Intermediate Winter Concert (Gr. 2s to Gr. 7s)
- December 23 to January 3 - Winter Break (Happy Holidays!)
- January 6 (Monday) - First day of school in 2025

Tech Tip



Our teachers at Bench are diving into the book, “The Anxious Generation” by Jonathan Haidt as part of our staff book club. This book explores the challenges and pressures today’s youth face and offers insights that are helpful for both educators and parents alike. We invite you to check it out for yourself if you haven’t already done so. If time is tight, don’t worry—we’ll be sharing monthly Tech Tips in the newsletter, designed to provide you with practical strategies and ideas to support your child at home.

Our first suggestion to help you get started is the **Kelty Mental Health** website, which offers a fantastic resource called *Tech in Check*. This page provides practical tips and tools to support healthy tech habits at home—an excellent starting point for any family looking to create balanced digital routines.

<https://keltymentalhealth.ca/techincheck>



Holiday Giving Tree

Holiday Giving Tree

This year, we’re excited to introduce our Holiday Giving Tree—a new way to support families in our Bench community during the Christmas season. You’ll find the Giving Tree just outside the office on December 1st and adorned with ornaments that you can take to buy a special gift.

Simply:

1. Choose an ornament
2. Select the gift, wrap it
3. Return it to the office (with the ornament attached) by December 13th



We will ensure it reaches the intended child so students can have a gift on Christmas morning. If your family could benefit from this initiative, please reach out privately to Mrs. Bridge. We are looking forward to spreading Christmas cheer.



BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dogs and Pets on School Property

A reminder that dogs are not permitted on school property during school hours including drop off and pick up without prior, written permission of the Principal. Animals permitted include trained service or guide dogs, police dogs, or pets brought during the day for instructional purposes like “show and tell”. Thank you for your cooperation.



Winter Concert

The Bench Christmas concerts will take place on Wednesday, December 4th, for primary classes (1 p.m. and 6 p.m. for divisions 10-19) and Thursday, December 5th, for intermediate classes (1 p.m. and 6 p.m. for divisions 1-9 and choir). For the evening concerts, your child is asked to meet in their teacher's classroom between 5:30 - 5:45 p.m.



Vegetable Pick Up



Vegetable order pick up is Wednesday, November 27 in the gym, 5 - 7 pm, through side doors. Please let Mrs. Ingram know if you are unable to pick your veggie bundles as we have limited space for storing them beyond that time.

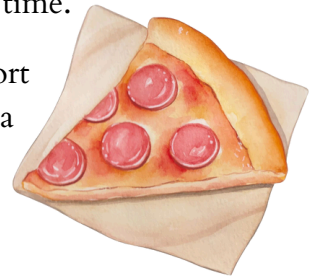
Thank you for supporting the Grades 4-6 students going to Camp Imadene!

Pizza Slices - Grade 7s

Thank you for supporting our grade 7 by purchasing pizza slices. This is a reminder that we have cash sales for pizza slices (\$3.00 each - pepperoni, ham and pineapple, cheese and gluten-free cheese) every Wednesday morning before school starts. Pizza gets delivered on Thursdays during our Lunch Recess time.

Online sales will resume in January. Please watch for the specific dates as this is a very short window to get the online orders in. If you have questions please email sgignac@sd79.bc.ca

Sincerely,
Grade 7 teachers



Bake Sale

Tuesday, November 19th - \$2.00 per cookie
The money will go towards enhancing features for our legacy trail.





BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Roots of Empathy



"Ms Kurbis and Mrs. Dougan's grade 1 classroom is pleased to welcome Tiny Teacher, Adler Jonas, and his mom, Sarah Little as our Roots of Empathy family this year. Through 9 monthly visits to their class, grade 1 students will watch Adler grow and make predictions and cheer him on when he meets his developmental milestones.

Students are coached to observe and read the emotional cues of the baby so that they may better understand their own emotions and how their classmates feel. Roots of Empathy is founded on the loving relationship between a parent and baby, which is where empathy starts.

Thank you Tiny Teacher Adler and mom Sarah!"



PAC

Our Christmas emporium collection will start on Monday, November 18th. Please drop-off your items in the front foyer. Wrapping paper and gift bags accepted as well.

Other ways to help our PAC:

Hot Lunch platform <https://benchpac.hotlunches.net>.

Co-op Gas membership # 132941

Island Return It bottle depot (Fisher Rd) acct: Bench PAC

Country Grocer receipts please retain & put them in the PAC box by reception.

* PAC email address benchpac@sd79.bc.ca

Thank you for helping us achieve our fundraising goals.

Lost and Found at Transportation

Student belongings such as gym strip, lunch bags, hats, mitts, iPods, cell phones, etc., etc., etc. are left on busses daily. Our bus drivers clean and sweep their buses after each run and may keep items on the bus for a day or two in hopes that the owner claims it. However, students often do not realize that they have lost or misplaced an item and not all items are claimed.



All belongings are brought into the Duncan bus garage and held for 2 months. After 2 months the items are donated.

If you have lost something please come to the Transportation office and have a look through the collection. We are located at 2557 Beverly St, Duncan, our office hours are 8:30 am until 4:30 pm.





BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Transportation



Our Journey is **Beyond Education**

October 18, 2024

Dear Parent/Guardians

Online registration is now closed for the 2024-2025 school year. Registration for the upcoming 2025/2026 school year will open Thursday, May 1, 2025.

Due to our current load limits, applications for ridership as well as any changes to your current scheduled routes will be assessed on an individual basis.

If you require registration for the remainder of the 2024-2025 year, please email the transportation office transportationregistration@sd79.bc.ca.

Due to changing demographics routing provided to students is under continual evaluation and restructuring. Please refer to [AP 560 District Transportation Services](#)

Regards,

SD 79 Transportation

2557 Beverly Street, Duncan BC | 250-748-0321 | www.sd79.bc.ca



BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Inclement Weather Information



COWICHAN VALLEY
School District

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

October 18, 2024

Dear Parents/Guardians:

With the winter season fast approaching, it is time to share the School District's procedures regarding inclement weather. There may be times when bus routes will not be operating as usual, or where schools in the district are closed.

BUS CANCELLATIONS

The most likely reason for cancellation of bus service will be for severe winter weather conditions, in which case one or more bus routes in the district may be cancelled. It will be determined by approximately 5:45 a.m. whether to cancel one or more bus routes. This is done in consultation with transportation staff who carefully assess local road conditions after severe weather warnings or events.

It is especially important that you take note of what route(s) your child(ren) ride on.

BUS OPERATIONS DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

During inclement weather events, there are roadways that are part of regular routing that are initially less maintained. Some of these roadways may be considered unsafe to drive for district school buses. If this determination is made, following the careful assessment by transportation staff, communication will go out to district ridership. The messaging will include affected routes, and if applicable, will also outline alternate safe pick-up locations for affected routes. Communications will be provided through My Ride K-12 and will be posted to the district [Facebook](#) page.

If bus routes are running more than 15 minutes behind schedule, drivers will notify the transportation office. The transportation team will then advise the Principals and Vice-Principals of affected schools. Information regarding bus routes running more than 15 minutes behind schedule will also be found on My Ride K-12 and the district [Facebook](#) page.

It is recommended to download the My Ride K-12 app for timely updates.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

The closure of schools in the district may occur when we are experiencing severe winter weather conditions, or when it is simply unsafe to drive. Again, it will be determined by approximately 5:45 a.m. whether to close schools in the district after assessing the situation.



BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Inclement Weather Information

WHERE TO FIND BUS ROUTE AND SCHOOL CANCELLATION NOTIFICATIONS

Any notice of official school closures due to weather will be posted to the district [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

We will notify local radio and TV media outlets prior to 6 a.m. with information regarding bus or route cancellations and school closures. News announcements usually begin after 6 a.m. Media partners will not be notified about individual route changes.

The following local radio stations will be contacted about inclement weather notifications:

- The Q! (100.3 FM)
- The Zone (91.3 FM)
- CBC (90.5 FM)
- SUN-FM (89.7 FM)
- CFAX (1070 AM)

The following TV stations will also be contacted:

- CTV Vancouver Island
- Global BC
- CHEK News

The school district website (www.sd79.bc.ca) will also be updated with a banner informing you of any closures.

In all cases, the safety of students will be the priority. Parents are equally encouraged to keep safety in mind when determining whether to take your child(ren) to school in the event the district is open during winter weather conditions. It is your prerogative to keep them at home if you feel it is the safest choice. When able, students and families should come to the school grounds in suitable winter footwear, use designated walkways, and only park in designated drop off locations.

Let us work together to ensure winter weather days can be safe for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Robyn Gray
Superintendent
Cowichan Valley School District



BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Community Information



November

Adoption and Permanency Awareness Month



World Children's Day

November 20

International Day of Persons With Disabilities

December 3



Christmas Hamper Registration

When: Nov 26 to Nov 30, 2024

Time: 10 am - 3 pm

Where: Duncan Mall - 182 Trunk Rd, beside PetSmart

Bring: Care card & proof of residence (e.g. utility bill)



Late registrations may not be accepted. Please be sure to register on time.

While we will work to accommodate late registrations, we are unable to guarantee hampers for late registrations.

For more info call: 250-710-6419.



Christmas Kick-Off in Downtown Duncan
November 22

Don't miss your chance to snap a photo with Santa himself, creating memories to cherish.

The night wraps up with a spectacular fireworks display at 8:45 pm, lighting up the sky to celebrate the beginning of the holiday season!

<https://www.downtownduncan.ca/events>



BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Community Information



Light Up Parade - Ladysmith

November 28th

Parade lineup starts at 5:00 pm.

Parade begins at 6:40 pm

<https://www.ladysmithfol.com/event-information/light-up-parade/>



Deck the Hall Christmas Market

November 22 – November 24

Christmas Market Hours:

Friday, Nov 22 - 12 pm to 6 pm

Saturday, Nov 23 - 10 am to 4 pm

Sunday, Nov 24 - 10 am to 3 pm



Dinter Nursery's Open House and Makers Market

November 23, 10 am - 3 pm



BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Community Information

School Newsletter - Pertussis



Currently, pertussis is increasing in Canada as part of the expected cyclical peak of the disease (occurring every 2-5 years). Pertussis, or whooping cough, is a very contagious (easy to catch) disease of the respiratory tract. It is caused by a bacterium (germ) found in the mouth, nose and throat of a person who is infected. In Aug 2024, BC saw 72 cases of pertussis, 16 of which were on Vancouver Island and the majority of the 16 cases were unimmunized or under immunized. Cases of pertussis are expected to increase this fall/school year.

The best way to protect your child against pertussis is to get them immunized. In British Columbia, the pertussis vaccine is part of the routine childhood immunization program, and is given at 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, and 18 months old, and again at age 4 to 6 years (before kindergarten). A pertussis vaccine is also given to teens at 14 to 16 years of age (Grade 9). Children who are currently in Grade 6 or 9 will be offered all immunizations they are due for through school-based immunization clinics. Information and consent forms will be distributed through the school this fall or early 2025.

The [ImmunizeBC Vaccination Status Indicator](https://immunizebc.ca/vaccination-status-indicator) (<https://immunizebc.ca/vaccination-status-indicator>) can also be used to find out if your child's immunization records are in the Provincial Immunization Registry. If your child was immunized at a public health unit, community health centre, school, or pharmacy, their record should already be in the registry. If your child was immunized at a First Nations community health centre, doctor's office, or outside BC, their record might not be in the registry yet.

- If the Vaccination Status Indicator shows that your child's vaccination status is **complete**, you do not need to do anything.
- If the Vaccination Status Indicator shows that your child's vaccination status is **incomplete**, please drop off a copy of your child's immunization record at your local public health unit, upload a copy to <https://www.immunizationrecord.gov.bc.ca/> (records must be in English or French or a certified translation), or call your local public health unit for support.

If your child is not up to date for their routine immunizations or if you have questions about their immunization status, please contact your [local public health unit](https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations) (<https://www.islandhealth.ca/our-locations/health-unit-locations>) to schedule an appointment or speak to a Public Health Nurse.

For additional immunization information you can also refer to <https://immunizebc.ca/> or <https://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/immunizations>



BENCH ELEMENTARY

NOVEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Personal Electronics - iPhones/iPads

Please note that use of personal electronic devices are **NOT** permitted on school property unless supervised by a teacher. If your child does bring an electronic device to school, it **MUST** be kept in their backpack or with the teacher during school hours. Please remember that we cannot guarantee the security of these items. If an item is confiscated by an adult during school hours or is turned in at the office for any reason, it will generally be held until the end of the day and, sometimes, will only be returned to an adult (depending on the circumstances).

Visitors

A reminder that all adults visiting the school must enter through the main doors only and sign in. Thank you for your cooperation.

Student Clothing

Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather each morning. Unless there are extreme weather conditions, Students will be outside every day during the 45 minute lunch break as well as an additional short break with their teachers at some point through the day.

Water Bottles

Our school has a limited supply of glasses for students to use, especially disposable ones. Families are encouraged to please send their child with a water bottle that they can refill from the fountain.

School Schedule

Supervision begins at 8:00 a.m.

8:30 a.m. Classes begin

11:00 a.m. - 11:47 a.m. Outside play

11:47 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Eating time

2:15 p.m. Dismissal

Supervision ends at 2:40 p.m.

