



BENCH ELEMENTARY

SEPTEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Welcome back everyone!

We hope you and your family had a restful and enjoyable summer break!

As we gear up for the new school year, we wanted to share some updates and important information with you.

While we are still finalizing class configurations and teacher assignments, our team is hard at work to ensure a smooth and successful start to the year. We recognize that this can present a challenge, but please be assured our amazing team is ready to move as soon as we get the word from the District. You will get an email from us when this happens, and at that point we will be able to proceed with final class placements.

In the meantime, although our students are not with their 2024/2025 groups yet, they are working on important September learning for their assigned grade level. This includes administration of our District Learning Inventories, which will guide each child's individual learning this year. We are focusing on creating engaging and meaningful learning opportunities for all our students, and we are excited to share these with you in the coming weeks.

If you have been inside of the school, you may have noticed that our incredible custodial staff have been diligently preparing the school building over the summer. Their hard work has ensured that our school environment is clean, safe, and ready to welcome our students back.

Looking ahead, we have some exciting events coming up. On top of our school assemblies, we will be participating in the Terry Fox Run to honor Terry's legacy and raise funds for cancer research (details in this newsletter), we will soon kick-off our Fall Sports season (details to come soon) and will also be organizing several school-wide runs to promote fitness and school spirit. These events are always a highlight, and we encourage all students to take part.

Lastly, I would really like to welcome and encourage any and all families to come in and introduce themselves if we haven't met yet.

Thank you to all of our staff, students and families, for an upbeat and exciting start to the school year.

Scott Jackson
Kyla Bridge

Bench Elementary School
1501 Cowichan Bay Road
Cowichan Bay, BC - V0R 1N2

(T) 250-743-5552
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Dates to remember

- September 20, Friday - Bench Terry Fox Run
- September 23, Monday - Non-Instructional Day (School Closed)
- September 30, Monday - Truth and Reconciliation Day (School Closed)
- October 1, Tuesday - Photo Day
- October 3, Thursday - 1 hr. Early Dismissal
- October 14, Monday - Thanksgiving (School Closed)
- October 23, Wednesday - 2 hr. Early Dismissal
- October 25, Friday - Pro D Day (School Closed)



Indigenous Ancestry & Support

'Uy'skweyul! Tansi!

Welcome to a fantastic year of growth and learning. Indigenous education staff work throughout the district to foster inclusive classrooms where every student feels a sense of belonging and experiences academic success.

'If your child has Indigenous ancestry - First Nations, Métis or Inuit, (documentation is NOT required) and you would like to self-identify, please see the school secretary for a self-identification form. Each year your child will be funded for and included in Indigenous Education programs. Almost all programs will be delivered in the regular classroom, to ALL students. You will be asked to give permission for any activities offered outside of the regular class. If you have self-identified with the school in previous years, you do NOT need to do a new form each year.

You can opt out of Indigenous Education services at any time by notifying the Indigenous Education staff in person or in writing either at your school or through the district office 250 748 0321 ext 235, or email at ined@sd79.bc.ca

As you may know, in 2017, the Federal Government changed from using the term Aboriginal people to using Indigenous Peoples when referring to First Nations, Métis & Inuit peoples. This change acknowledges the rights of Indigenous Peoples as outlined in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf

It will take us some time to transition to the new language so you may see the terms Indigenous and Aboriginal both used.

We are looking forward to a positive school year together!





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New Late Sign-In Procedure

If your child has arrived late to school this school year, you may have noticed that the late sign-in sheet is no longer at the desk by the office. From now on, when a child is running late, parents are not required to sign them in. Instead, we ask that the child goes to our head secretary's desk to sign in directly with her.

Please note that the sign-out procedure remains the same, so parents are still required to come to the office for that.

Photo Day

Edge Imaging will be at the school on October 1st. Photo order forms will be sent home once we receive them from Edge Imaging. All students will be photographed for school service products. Be ready to bring your smiles on picture day! Retakes are tentatively scheduled for November 5th.



Bench Terry Fox Run

Please help us celebrate and honour Terry Fox.

The run this year will take place on September 20th at 10:30am. Parents are encouraged to donate to the run and also join us in participating this year. Students will be asked to bring a toonie for Terry during the week of Sept.16th-20th. We will also have our donation collection online available. Please see the link below.

<https://schools.terryfox.ca/BenchElementary>



Staff

Welcome to all new staff joining our Bench Elementary team this year!

Teachers:

Alex Dodd

(from Drinkwater Elementary)

Chris Miller

(from Mill Bay Nature School)

Returning Teachers:

Lauren Kurbis

Leslie Merrick

Educational Assistants:

Leanne Henley

Marlies Murray
(from Alexander Elementary)

WELCOME
to Bench Elementary!



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Meet the Staff Picnic and PAC Meeting

On September 25th, families are invited to come and meet the Bench Staff from 5:00 - 6:30. There will be some food provided and families are encouraged to mingle on the property and meet other families before or after they meet their children's teachers. Parents are also encouraged to stay for the PAC Meeting at 7:00. New parents are always welcome to PAC Meetings.



School Messenger and Safe Arrival

Please note that School Messenger and Safe Arrival has not been activated yet. The instructions for installing and using the app are as follows but until it's activated, please continue to call or email the office if your child is going to be absent from school.

1. Using your mobile device, download and install the **SchoolMessenger app** from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store or from <https://home.schoolmessenger.ca>. The first time you use the app, select **Sign Up** to create your account. Select **Attendance** then **Report an Absence**.
See the attached Parent's instruction guide.

OR:

2. Use the SafeArrival website home.schoolmessenger.ca. The first time you use the website, select **Sign Up** to create your account. Select **Attendance** then **Report an Absence**.

OR:

3. Call the toll-free number **1-833-784-0364** to report an absence using the automated phone system. *Please save this number to your contacts, as it is the number that will contact you, if you did not call in your child's absence.*

These options are available 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. Future absences can be reported at any time.

Note#1: *You must use the email and phone number on file with the school. If you update either of these, you will need to re-register for the system to recognize you.*

Note#2: *Please save 1-888-784-0364 into your phone contacts, as this will be the number to contact you, if you did not call in your child's absence.*

If after trying the three listed absence reporting options above, you are unsuccessful, please contact the school office directly at **250-743-5552** to report an absence.

We will use the **SchoolMessenger Communicate** automated notification system to contact parents whose child is absent when the absence was not reported. The automated notification system will attempt to contact parents at multiple contact points until a reason is submitted for the absence. If our system is unable to reach the designated contacts, office staff will follow up. The system will use the email and phone number(s) provided by you to the school. You will also be notified by the App if you have downloaded and installed it on your phone.

If you report your child's absence before the attendance cut off using the **SafeArrival** toll-free number, website or mobile app, you will NOT receive notifications.



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Caps Visit




On September 24th, members of the Cowichan Capitals will be coming to read with select classes to show the importance of literacy to all of us. They might stick around and play some road hockey too.

Everybody Rides Bike Event

Capital Bikes Events will be here on October 1st and 3rd to share their love of cycling with some Grade 4 and 5 students. Details, schedule and permission forms will follow soon.



Community Information

 **World Suicide Prevention Day**
September 10

Fall Equinox 
September 22



National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
Orange Shirt Day
September 30



World Teachers' Day
October 5



 **Thanksgiving**
October 14



Come and enjoy the sights and sounds of the Cowichan Exhibition!

SEPTEMBER
13, 14, 15, 2024

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DUNCAN
BC V9L6B1

1868 **156** 2024
YEARS OF GROWING



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Community Information

Duncan Terry Fox Run – Sunday, September 15, 2024

Registration: 9:00 am

Start: 10:00 am

Time Start to Close: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Location: Evans Park, 6257 Somenos Rd

More details: <https://run.terryfox.ca/55642>



Stsi'elh Stuhw tu Smun'eem (Formerly Lalum'utul' Smun'eem)

Prevention Lum-stam'sh



NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Each year, September 30 marks the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

The day honours the children who never returned home and survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is a vital component of the reconciliation process.

This federal statutory holiday was created through legislative amendments made by Parliament.

ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Both the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Orange Shirt Day take place on September 30. Orange Shirt Day is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters". The orange shirt is a symbol of the stripping away of culture, freedom and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children over generations.

On September 30, we encourage all Canadians to wear orange to honour the thousands of survivors of residential schools.

Quoted from:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/national-day-truth-reconciliation.html>



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Parent-Child Mother Goose Fall 2024



Parent-Child Mother Goose are

- Playful, experience for birth to 5 years and their adults.
- Traditional play - parent child interactions without toys.
- Activities that enriches parent- child lives and relationships.
- RHYMES and SONGS
- STORY TELLING
- Literacy
- No Cost

Drop-ins Welcome

September – November 2024

Friday Sep 27 – Nov 15	10:30-11:30am	0-2 yrs With Adults focused on infants	South Cowichan Library, Mill Bay
Wednesday Sep 25 – Nov 20 (except Oct 30)	10:30-11:30am	0-2 yrs With Adults focused on infants	Cowichan Library, Duncan



Brought to you by the Cowichan Valley Mother Goose Community Collaborative.



COWICHAN INTERCULTURAL SOCIETY where cultures connect

Dream Catcher Workshop

With Métis Cultural Presenter, Brigette Furlonger



Tuesday, September 17

1:00 pm - 3:30 pm

CIS Office, 321 St. Julien St., Duncan

For more information please email francoise@cis-iwc.org or call 250-748-3112

Funded by / Financé par:



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada



GO BY BIKE WEEKS
SEPT 23 - OCT 6, 2024
FREE REGISTRATION: GOBYBIKEBC.CA

30 YEARS
GoByBike Week

BRITISH COLUMBIA
Supported by the Province of British Columbia



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Cowichan Tribes and the Cowichan Stewardship Roundtable are co-hosting:

Quw'utsun Sta'lo' Skweyul Cowichan River Day

Sunday, September 22, 2024 10:00AM to 3:00PM

Gather with us at Black Bridge Beach, on Cowichan Tribes private property. Parking will be available behind Si'em Lelum Gym, 5574 River Road, Duncan. From the parking area, you will take a short walk to the river site.



Free! Everyone welcome! Refreshments!

Please wear an orange shirt!

Performance by the Tzinquaw Dancers, learn Cowichan Teachings, make salmon art, meet birds of prey, and experience so many more opportunities to learn about the watershed!

Bring your own water bottle!

The Quw'utsun River has been the heartbeat of the Cowichan People since time immemorial and is a Provincially and Nationally designated Heritage River. Come learn about and celebrate the river with us!



Please let our volunteers know if you require accessibility support.

For more information, contact: 250-701-1054 or cowichanstewardshiproundtable@gmail.com.



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COPS FOR CANCER



2024 TOUR DE ROCK SCHEDULE

SEP 30 NANAIMO
LADYSMITH

OCT 01 CHEMAINUS
LAKE COWICHAN
DUNCAN

OCT 02 SHAWNIGAN LAKE
MILL BAY
WESTSHORE
SOOKE

OCT 03 OAK BAY
VICTORIA
SIDNEY

OCT 04 ESQUIMALT
SAANICH
VICTORIA



Canadian Mental Health Association
Cowichan Valley
Mental health for all

Canadian Mental Health Association RAINBOWS Program September & January

RAINBOWS

The RAINBOWS program is a free effective peer support program for children and their families; whether single-parent families, step-families or families in painful transition. The group is for children who have suffered a significant loss in their lives, either by death, divorce or any other painful transition. Groups are offered twice a year in late September and January.

<https://www.cmhacowichanvalley.com/rainbows>



RAINBOWS DUNCAN & COWICHAN VALLEY



To register, please contact:

Canadian Mental Health Association
Cowichan Valley Branch
371 Festubert Street
Duncan, BC
V9L 3T1



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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.

Parking Lot

Please follow the directional flow signage in the parking lot. Student drop-off should not be occurring in either the bus lane or the Staff Parking Lot. Please report any dangerous driving to the office. Also please encourage your children to use the crosswalk and to look both ways.

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.

Happy Fall

