



BENCH ELEMENTARY

DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dear Bench Families,

What a wonderful time of year it is here at Bench! We're embracing all the festive energy at school with holiday artwork, Kerry Park skates, gingerbread bake sales, jingle jogs, Spirit Week, and the anticipation of a well-deserved break to rest and recharge with our families.

Our four fantastic holiday concerts and PAC bake sales were a huge success! A heartfelt thank-you goes to Mrs. MacLean, Mrs. Stephen, and our amazing students for their hard work, as well as to all the staff who supported them. The students have a remarkable way of reminding us what truly matters this holiday season.

The PAC outdid themselves organizing the annual Christmas Emporium. The students were thrilled to bring home special gifts to share with you and their loved ones. Their enthusiasm for giving is contagious and heartwarming. We are deeply grateful to the Bench PAC for their unwavering commitment to our school community in hosting this cherished event.

On behalf of the entire Bench staff, we wish you a joyful holiday break and look forward to seeing everyone in January!

Huy ch q'u!

Warm regards,

Kyla Bridge & Steven Brooks
Bench Elementary School

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

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BENCH ELEMENTARY

DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Dates to Remember

- December 16, Monday - Assembly
- December 17, Tuesday - PAC Pizza
- December 20, Friday - Last Day of School
- December 23 to January 3 - Winter Break (Happy Holidays!)
- January 6, Monday - First day of school in 2025
- January 10, Friday - PAC Coffee Chat
- January 20 to 24, Monday to Friday - Kindergarten Registration, French Immersion Program
- January 21, Tuesday - Hearing Screening (Kindergarten)
- January 27 to 31, Monday to Friday - Kindergarten Registration, catchment school

Kindergarten Registration 2025-2026

Kindergarten Registration is coming soon.

- January 20th to 24th for French Immersion Program (with a lottery, if required, on January 24)
- January 27th to 231st for all catchment schools (until the end of the first week of September)

School registration can be done [online](#) or in person IF you are in Bench's catchment. You can use the [School District School Locator](#) to find out what school your catchment school is.

Please note that Bench is currently at capacity. Bench Kindergarten registration is for families who live full-time in our catchment. An address in our catchment area needs to be the place that you reside the majority of the time. If not, you will need to register at the school that corresponds with that address. Any proof of address other than a current Driver's License or BC Identification card will have to speak to the Principal about their situation.



Spirit Days

The Spirit Squad is happy to present the following SPIRIT DAYS to lead us into the Break!

- Monday, December 16: Red & Green Day
- Tuesday, December 17: Festive Hair and Hat Day
- Wednesday, December 18: Festive Sweater Day
- Thursday, December 19: Grinch Day
- Friday, December 20: P.J. Day & Christmas Carols in the gym





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DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Child Care / Out of School Care

The Cowichan Valley School District Out of School Care program is available at Bench Elementary. This is the link for the SD79 website child care page <https://sd79.bc.ca/programs/child-care/> for information regarding registration (waitlist), fees, operating hours, and contact information for the Child Care Office. If you are needing Out of School Care for your child(ren) for September 2025 - you can scan the QR code which will take you straight to the waitlist.



School Pizza Sales

The online school sales for the weekly pizza by the slice for the period of January 16 - March 13, 2025 start on Thursday, January 2nd. All you need to do is choose your pizza, and then select the number of slices per week (1 piece - \$27, 2 pieces - \$54, 3 pieces - \$81).

Online orders must be placed by FRIDAY, JAN 10, 2025, 3:00 pm. For the first week back to school, we will be doing cash sales only. Please place your order with grade 7 students in the pod before school by January 15 (Wednesday) for the pizza that will be served on January 16 (Thursday).

If you miss the deadline for online orders, cash sales are available Wednesday mornings before school in the back pod area.

Unfortunately no late orders or refunds can be issued.

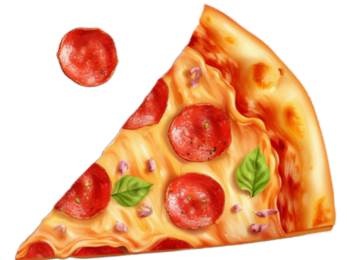
To set up an account and explore the system, please follow the instructions below.

Register Online:

Step 1: Please click on this link: <https://sd79.schoolcashionline.com>

Step 2: Register by selecting the "Get Started Now" and following the steps.

Step 3: After you receive the confirmation email, select the "click here" option, login in and add each of your children to your household account.



Cowichan Valley Schools Newsletter - Mental Health Awareness

Please see the attached newsletter for families and students in Cowichan Valley schools. This issue focuses on Mental Health Awareness.

For more information, please join us for a parent information session on January 15, 2025.

"Decreasing screen time to promote and support independence and mental health and well-being".

Scan the QR code on the poster to register.



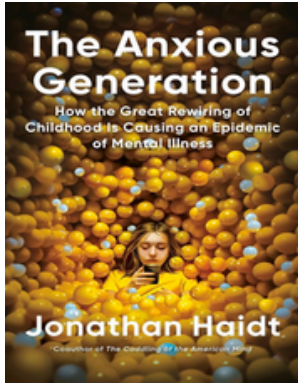


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DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Tech Tip

December Tech Tip: Stay off technology as much as possible!



This month in our book club, *The Anxious Generation*, the staff focused on Chapters 3 and 4. We explored the benefits of risky play for children and the importance of allowing them to encounter mildly stressful or unfamiliar learning situations. These experiences help kids develop stronger problem-solving skills and confidence in their abilities as they grow into adulthood. The key takeaway is to encourage time away from technology so children can engage in hands-on activities and gain valuable real-world experience.



Risky play/learning tips:

- Consider supervising children less closely when they are in hazard-free environments.
- Ensure there is time in a child's schedule for free play.
- Pause for 15–30 seconds to observe a child's state of play before intervening.
- Help children problem-solve by using phrases that create a “teaching moment” by enquiring how a child is feeling during risky play and what their next actions will be.

The Winter Break is a perfect time to put this theory into action, you could let your children try some of these suggestions:

Age 5-6 – running, jumping from heights, walking logs, biking without training wheels, trying a new sport, building forts or dens, swinging high on swings, shallow creeks and mud pies, chasing games on uneven ground

Age 7-8 – making new friends, sleepovers, using a hammer/axe, tools, climbing trees, playing board games (letting kids lose sometimes), chores around the house, disagreements with friends and siblings, playing near fire, pour your own drink

Age 9-10 – build something, use tools, maybe use power tools, sewing, knitting, skateboard, climb trees, jump off of things, building fire, ride a bike, swim independently, read chapter books independently, make simple meals (sandwiches, scrambled eggs), exploring streams and water, wrestling and play fighting and performing in front of others

Ages 11-12 – advanced playgrounds, swim, skate, play competitive sport, hiking, exploring without adult supervision, experimenting with woodworking or crafts, negotiate, pitching a tent, spending time outdoors at night (camping or survival activities), soldering kits, chemistry experiments



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DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Parking Lot Low Down

General Etiquette

1. **Follow the flow of traffic:** Drive in the direction indicated by signs and arrows to avoid confusion or accidents. See map attached. After 8:00 (ish) pull through to create a 2nd do
2. **Drive slowly** be extra cautious of children and pedestrians.
3. **No idling in drop-off lanes:** If you need to stop for an extended period, park in a designated spot instead of holding up traffic.
4. **Use crosswalks:** Always cross at designated areas, and encourage kids to do the same.
5. **Stay off your phone:** Avoid distractions while driving or walking in the parking lot.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up

1. **Stay in your car in the drop-off lane:** If you need to exit your car, use a parking space to avoid holding up the flow.
2. **Be ready:** Ensure kids have their belongings ready to exit the car quickly.
3. **Pull forward:** Move as far forward as possible in the drop-off line to make room for others.
4. **Load/unload curbside:** Always have children enter or exit the vehicle on the curbside to avoid stepping into traffic.

Parking Tips

1. **Park only in designated areas:** Avoid parking in fire lanes, reserved spots, or blocking driveways.
2. **Avoid double parking:** This creates unnecessary congestion and safety hazards.
3. **Be mindful of pedestrians:** Look carefully before backing out of a space.

Pedestrian Safety

1. **Hold your child's hand:** Especially in busy areas or near moving cars.
2. **Make eye contact with drivers:** Ensure they see you before crossing.
3. **Follow crossing guards' instructions:** They are there to ensure everyone's safety.

Additional Considerations

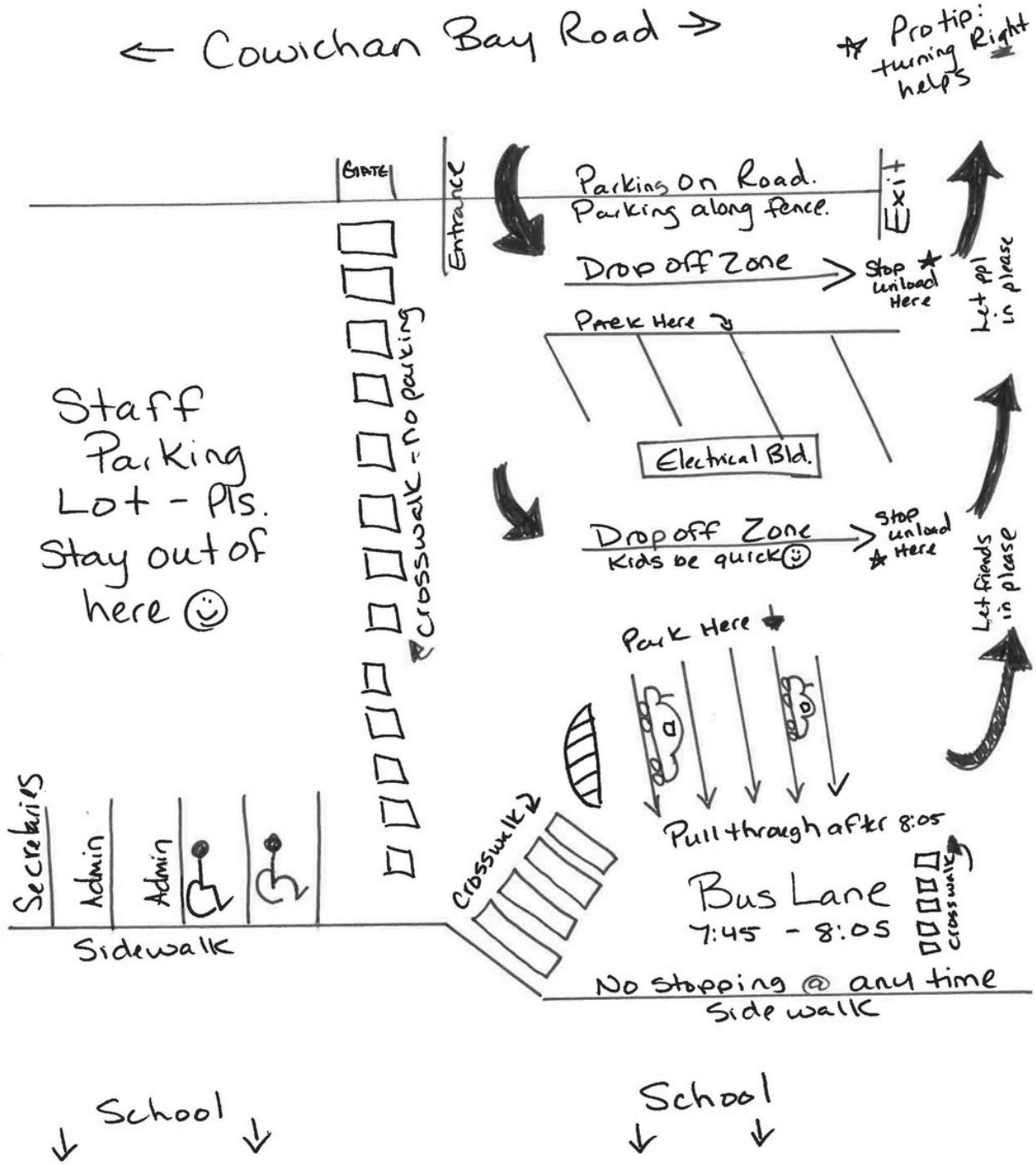
- **Be patient:** Parking lots can be frustrating, but staying calm and courteous helps everything run smoothly.
- **Arrive early:** Giving yourself extra time can reduce stress and prevent rushing.
- **Model good behaviour:** Kids are watching and learning how to navigate these situations by observing adults.



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DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Parking Lot Low Down



Thanks Everyone ♥

Health Notices

Please be aware to check for head lice and pinkeye this holiday season.

See the attached information sheets with detailed information about treatment, prevention, etc.



BENCH ELEMENTARY

DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Community Information



Winter Solstice
December 21



Christmas
December 25



Happy New Year
January 1



COWICHAN AQUATIC CENTRE
Storytime with Mr. Claus
 Saturday December 14
 10am - 11:30am
 NORTH Cowichan
 northcowichan.ca/recreation

Bring your holiday cheer for a memorable afternoon of crafts and stories.

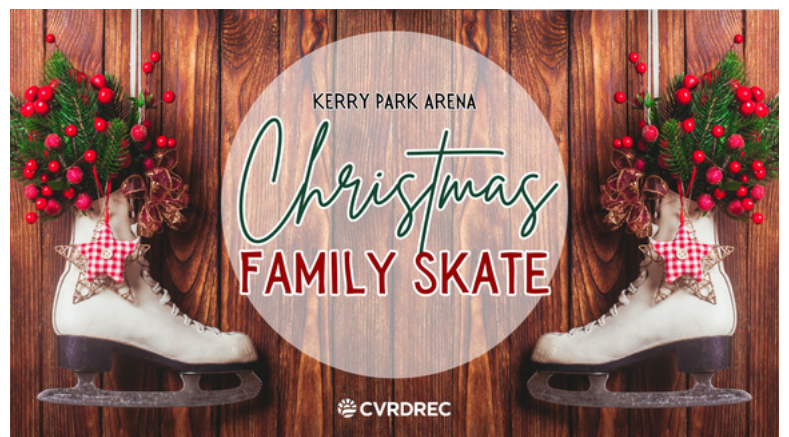
Jolly St. Nick will be there in his rocking chair, ready to read you Christmas stories and find out what you want for Christmas.

Story Time With Mr. Claus
 Saturday December 14
 10:00am -11:30am | Code: 79391
 Ages 2 - 5yrs
 \$12

Register online at reccowichan.ca, by phone at 250-746-7665, or in person at the Cowichan Aquatic Centre.

Christmas Family Skate

Kerry Park Arena
 AND
Cowichan Community Centre
 Sunday, Dec 15



The arena will be transformed with lights, trees, and decorations. Bring your family and enjoy the on-ice activities or warm up around the fire. Santa will stop by for a special visit and bring treats for the little ones.

Pre-registration is required for Kerry Park Arena, beginning Dec 2.



BENCH ELEMENTARY

DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Community Information




Breakfast with Santa at the Cowichan Aquatic Centre

Dec 15 2024 | 10am - 12pm

Stay after breakfast for a photo and swim with his elves and the big jolly guy himself. Tickets are \$7 at the door.

TS'EWULHTUN HEALTH CENTRE - EMBRACING LIFE & YOUTH SERVICES



EMBRACING LIFE


Bead Circle

UPCOMING DATES

DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
Dec 2, 2024	Jan 13, 2025	Feb 3, 2025
Dec 16, 2024	Jan 27, 2025	Feb 17, 2025
1:30pm - 3:00 pm	6:00pm - 8:00 pm	6:00pm - 8:00 pm
MONDAY	MONDAY	MONDAY

Location: 470 Trans Canada Highway - Access off Whistler st.

To RSVP please contact Natasha Toth
 ✉ Natasha.toth@cowichantribes.com
 ☎ (250) 732-3712




CALL TO ARTISTS



Animalia: A Wild Return
 CVAC | Jan. 8 - Feb. 28, 2025

Submission deadline: December 20, 2024
or when capacity is reached

Art Quest: after school art classes with Chantey Dayal



ages 12-14

CVAC | Art Classes

Classes take place Thursdays from 3:45 to 5:15 at the CVAC Studio (January 30, 2025 – May 1, 2025)
Registrations open on December 8, 2024



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DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

Community Information



Lego Club

South Cowichan (Mill Bay).
December 2024 - December 2025
Tuesdays, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Cowichan (Duncan).
December 18, 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm



Inspired by Reading Book Club

South Cowichan (Mill Bay).
Tuesdays - Until April 1, 2025
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm



LADYSMITH RESOURCES CENTRE ASSOCIATION
Heart on the Hill

and
Festival of Lights present...

The MERRY & BRIGHT
Holiday
STORYBOOK WALK
DEC 2-31

Proudly Sponsored by:
Ladysmith & District Credit Union
service since 1944
Our Community. Your Credit Union.

Step foot on a holiday reading adventure in Downtown Ladysmith! Start on High St. and follow the numbers along First Ave to find the pages of a storybook displayed on **ILLUMINATED SIGNS!**

ON DISPLAY DEC 2-17: *Pip and Posy: The Christmas Tree* by Axel Scheffler

ON DISPLAY DEC 17-31: *The Christmas Crumb* by Leanne Wilton & Jane Wilton

Join Ladysmith Storybook Walk on Facebook to learn more!

START HERE! END HERE!

VISIT DAY OR NIGHT!



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DECEMBER 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.



HAPPY
WINTER
HOLIDAYS!

