



BENCH ELEMENTARY

PUNHWE'MUN (MAY) 2025 NEWSLETTER

As we head into the final stretch of the school year, late May and June are shaping up to be full of energy and excitement! From field trips and sporting events to the Fun Fair, Bike to Work Week, Bench Field Day, Track and Field at Chesterfield, and our Welcome to Kindergarten event—there's lots happening. Our Grade 7 students are also gearing up for their big Camp Thunderbird trip.

Behind the scenes, we are already planning for the 2025/2026 school year. Accurate enrollment numbers are essential, as they directly impact our staffing and class organization. If your family is planning a move or if your child will be attending a different school next year, please let us know as soon as possible. This information is especially helpful for our planning. The same applies to incoming Kindergarten students—please encourage any families with soon-to-be Kindergarteners to register at the front office if they haven't already done so.

There have been some notable staffing changes for next year. We are sad to announce that Mrs. Ayers will be leaving Bench, but we are happy that she will be joining Mr. Brooks at Frances Kelsey Secondary as the Resource teacher. We will also miss Ms. Frissell but are happy for her as she transitions to Quw'utsun to join Mr. Jackson in the new school Library there. Bench is happy to welcome Mrs. Spotts to the library and Mrs. Merrick as the new Learning Assistance teacher. We will also be saying goodbye to Mrs. Tan, Ms. Kurbis and Ms. Emily who are on temporary contracts. We wish everyone all the best as they apply for the new postings that will be coming out shortly and continued excitement learning new roles. We thank each of the Bench teachers for their dedication and commitment to our school community.

We've also started to receive inquiries about class placements for next year. We kindly ask that families wait until we send out a specific message inviting that feedback—thank you for your understanding.

Lastly, we want to ensure that every child can participate in school events. If cost is ever a barrier to your child's involvement in any upcoming activity, please don't hesitate to reach out to me or your child's teacher in confidence. We're here to help.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. It's a joy to be part of the Bench community.

Huy tseep q'u!

Sincerely,

Kyla Bridge & Steven Brooks

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

(T) 250-743-5552

(F) 250-743-5807



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Dates to Remember

- May 19, Monday - Victoria Day (School Closed)
- May 22, Thursday - Bench Track and Field Day
- May 23, Friday - Welcome to Kindergarten Event
- May 28-30, Wednesday - Friday - Gr. 7s to Camp Thunderbird
- June 3, Tuesday - Bake Sale + PAC Popcorn Day
- June 4, Wednesday - Fun Fair (Volunteers needed)
- June 6, Friday - PAC Coffee Chat
- June 12, Thursday - PAC meeting
- June 13, Friday - Young Entrepreneur Fair
- June 18, Wednesday - Primary Sports Day
- June 25, Wednesday - Bench Talent Show
- June 26, Thursday - Last day of school + 2 hr. Early Dismissal

Welcome to Kindergarten Event 2025-2026



The Bench Welcome to Kindergarten event will be taking place on Friday May 23 from 12:30 - 2:00 for all Kindergarten students registered for the 2025-2026 school year! Stop by and meet the teachers, try out some fun activities, and meet some new friends. We look forward to seeing you there!



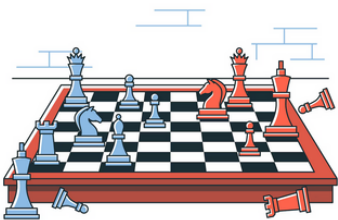
Gr. 7s - Camp Thunderbird

Grade 7 students are off to Camp Thunderbird May 28-30th where they will enjoy a rigorous outdoor education program that includes rock climbing, archery, kayaking and team building.



Reminder to not park by the Modular and Garbage bins on Wednesday May 28 before school starts so we can load our equipment. Thank you in advance.

District Chess Tournament



On April 10, 10 students from Bench represented our school at the District Chess Tournament, playing 5 games against students from schools across the district. It was an exciting day and our players played well. Etta Bautz in Mrs. Wilson's class won the bronze medal in the Primary age category, and Allistair McClean in Mr. Dodd's class won the gold medal for the Primary students. Congratulations to all the players!

Bake Sale

June 3rd, Tuesday
\$2.00 per cookie



The money will go towards enhancing features for our legacy trail.



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Transportation



NEW BUS PASS PROCESS 2025/2026



Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are writing to inform you of an important change regarding our school bus pass process, starting with the **2025/2026 academic year**. Students **must retain their bus pass from the 24/25** school year as the Cowichan Valley School District will provide only **one** bus pass the **first** time a student is enrolled in the transportation service.

What's Changing?

Beginning in the 2025/2026 academic school year, bus passes will no longer be reissued annually. Instead, your student will be expected to keep their current pass from 2024/2025 academic year and reuse the same bus pass from year to year.

How to Keep the Bus Pass in Good Condition

To help protect the pass and ensure its longevity, we strongly recommend placing it in a plastic protective cover.

Lost or Damaged Passes

The replacement fee for lost and altered passes is \$10.00. Payment can be made for replacement passes via e-transfer to buspasspayments@sd79.bc.ca or by credit card at 250-748-1066 ext 276. Replacement passes will be sent with your students afternoon driver.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we implement this new process.



Bus Passes Replacement

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Grade 7s Year End Celebration



Save the Date

Grade 7 Year End Celebration

Wednesday, June 25

Drive Thru Bench Parking Lot - 4:00 pm

Dinner at the Panorama Room in the Cook and
Butcher - 5:00pm



*more details to follow

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PAC

Bench Elementary's Annual

FUN FAIR

is Wednesday, June 4!

5-8pm

TICKETS
50¢

ACTIVITIES
2-6
TICKETS
EACH

NEW THIS YEAR

Crane heist (get an amazing view!)

Hairstyling (have your hair curled, braided, tinsel up!)

SAR Command Centre

That Bubble Guy (Giant Bubbles!)

Plus familiar favourites!

Games, Inflatables, Fun Store, Bubble Balls, Plant Sale, Raffle Baskets, Cake Walk, Face Painting, Shriners Hamburgers & Hot Dogs, Food Trucks, Cotton Candy, And MORE!

SEE REVERSE TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Parent run event ~ Child supervision required

Questions? Contact Liz @ benchpactreasurer@gmail.com

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

VOLUNTEER

This event can not happen without parent volunteers! Seeking 104 amazing volunteers to deliver FUN!



Use the QR code to see the list of jobs and sign up.

RAFFLE BASKETS

Please help us fill our incredible raffle baskets. Each division is assigned a theme, keep an eye out for a poster coming home with your child, detailing theme suggestions for their class and all the info.

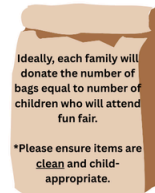


We are so grateful for your support and can't wait to enjoy Fun Fair with you.

MYSTERY BAGS

Help us with stocking up for one of our most popular games!

How to help: bring in lunch sized paper bags with any clean, appropriate items of your choice. Decorate the bag and seal it up!
Example of contents: mini toys/cars, wrapped candy, marbles, stickers, bubbles, glitter, crafty things...



Drop off sealed bags in the donation bin by the office May 19th-29th.

*Please ensure items are clean and child-appropriate.

PRE-PURCHASE YOUR TICKETS

Ticket ordering will be available on the hot lunch website. Pre-purchased tickets will be sent home with students.

Stay tuned for a flyer coming home.



CAKE WALK

Students create and decorate their own cake that will be used for the cake walk.



- Judges will award 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prizes.
- Prizes awarded will be fun fair tickets for activities

Stay tuned for flyer coming home with all of the details.

PLANT SALE

Seeking Donations

Annuals & Perennials
Vegetables, Herbs, Flowers
Small Shrubs



Drop off donations in the courtyard June 2nd-4th

VOLUNTEER! VOLUNTEER! VOLUNTEER!

The Annual Fun Fair is less than 3 weeks away! Come celebrate another epic year at Bench and support our fundraising efforts. We need all families to support or fun fair can not happen! If slots are not filled, we have no choice but to slash activities... that means less fun :(



Volunteers are the ticket to a successful event. Only 38% of the roles are currently filled. The commitment is only 1 hour. Lots of jobs are a great opportunity for older kids, grandparents and friends.



Sign up here or with the QR code above: [Bench PAC: 2025 Fun Fair ~ Wed. June 4th](#)

Show Your Bench Spirit!

Bench Spirit Wear is now available through Urban Valley TEES. Visit: <https://www.urbanvalleytees.com/bench> and navigate to the Bench Elementary section to check out the latest gear!



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Homestays Needed



BE MY HOME AWAY FROM HOME

HOMESTAYS NEEDED FOR HIGH SCHOOL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

If you are an active family interested in hosting an international student from Europe and around the world contact us!

Brenda 250-510-1436 / blanglois@sd79.bc.ca

Dear Bench Families,

Are you excited about the idea of welcoming a high school student from another part of the world into your home? Becoming a host family is a unique opportunity to share Canadian culture, form lifelong connections, and play a crucial role in a young person's educational journey in our community.

Our high school aged international students are eager to experience life in Canada. As a host, you'll provide a safe, supportive, and caring environment to help them thrive.

Families of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply—and hosts receive support and compensation to ensure a successful experience for everyone involved!

We are actively recruiting host families for the upcoming fall semester (September 2025)! Now is the perfect time to apply and prepare to welcome a student into your home.

Join us in creating unforgettable memories and making a difference in a student's life.

If you know another family in the community who might like to host an international student, our program is also offering a referral incentive of \$150 to people who successfully refer another family to host a student.

Apply today and make a difference! For more information, contact blanglois@sd79.bc.ca or apply here: <https://www.studyincowichan.com/homestay-program/>

Community Information



International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT)
May 17



Victoria Day
May 19

BC Child & Youth in Care Week
June 2-8



National Indigenous History Month
June (1st - 30th)



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Community Information

JOIN US AT OUR COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE

Learn more about our departments, projects, programs, and services that directly impact YOU and our community. This is a welcoming space to ask questions, provide feedback, and connect with the people who make it all happen!



Why Attend?


- Meet department staff
- Get information about services, programs, and important community initiatives
- Share your ideas and feedback
- North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP and Indigenous Policing Services community engagement session (12:00 pm - 3:00 pm)

Don't miss this opportunity to connect and learn about the great work happening in our community.

BBQ / Prizes

Family Fun

Kids Activities

A wooden sign with a blue border. At the top, it says "SI'EM LELUM" in blue letters. Below that, in smaller text, it says "WELCOME WELCOME WELCOME WELCOME" and "IN RESPECT OF OUR TRADITION".

Wednesday, May 21, 2025
12:00pm – 6:00pm
Si'em Lelum Gym

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Community Information



Summer Art Camps @ CVAC

Detailed information about each camp on this list can be found at: <https://cowichanvalleyartscouncil.ca/event/summer-art-camps-2025/>

Registrations: <https://www.reccowichan.ca/>

Camps for kids from 6-9

July 2 - 4: Start with Art into Summer

July 14 - 18 : Art Explorers

July 21 - 25 : Artistic Mix & Match Adventures

Aug 5 - 8: Fairies and Friends Art Camp

Camps for Kids 8-12 or 9-13

July 7 - 9 : 3D Art Camp: Sculpt, Build, Create! (Ages 9 - 13)

July 14 - 18: With Heart and Hands: Textile Creations for Kids (Ages 8 - 12)

Jul 28 - Aug 1: Sketch & Draw: Skills for Visual Storytelling (Ages 8 - 12)

Aug 11 - 14: Dig Into Art (Ages 9 - 13)

Teen Summer Programs

July 21 - 23: CVAC: Art Lab for Youth (Ages 13 - 15)

Aug 11 - 15: Painting With Acrylics - Youth Summer Art Intensive (Ages 16 - 19)

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Community Information

Parent Child Mother Goose

Wednesdays, until June 11th
Time: 10:30 am - 11:30 am
Branch: Cowichan (Duncan)



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



Cowichan Family Storytime



Fridays, until June 27th
Time: 11:00 am - 11:30 am
Branch: Cowichan (Duncan)

A program for parents and caregivers with young children. Songs, rhymes and stories are shared. Suitable for preschool aged children to enjoy and learn together. No registration. Drop in welcome.



Celebrate Asian Heritage Month at VIRC with these online and print resources and entertainment! We've curated a whole variety of materials in different formats for reading, listening, watching, and learning. Whether you're looking for historical tidbits of Asian Canadian history on Vancouver Island, authoritative websites focused on Asian Canadian history, great fiction by Asian Canadian authors, streaming videos about Asian (Canadian) topics, or resources to learn Asian languages, we've got something for you!

Ha'wa'lum'tul Kids Book Club

Saturdays, May 24th & June 14th
Time: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm
Branch: Cowichan (Duncan)
Age: 8-12

We give you a monthly theme and you pick which book you read that month. Come to our meetings the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month from 3-4pm for book discussions, themed crafts and activities.

Parent attendance is optional.

Ha'wa'lum'tul means playing together and was suggested by local Quw'utsun elder Ron Alphonse



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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

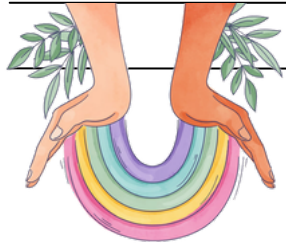
A reminder that all adults visiting the school must enter through the main doors only and sign in. Thank you for your cooperation.

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.



National Indigenous Peoples Day