



BENCH ELEMENTARY

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Dear Families,

Happy February everyone! January was a great month as students quickly settled back into familiar routines. February will be a busy month with numerous events, so please mark your calendars.



A young student came to see me at the office last week to share her excitement about the math she was learning. It was wonderful to see her enthusiasm and joy of learning. Our conversation eventually led to a chat about how math is part of daily life. From talking about the temperature, (it was 8 degrees), to baking cookies, to properly packing a backpack and remembering what time to catch the bus. MATH IS EVERYWHERE.

For the past two years, one of our schools' goals has been to improve the foundational numeracy skills of our learners. As our teachers focus on these foundational numeracy skills we are seeing the positive outcomes for our students. An example being the great numeracy conversation I had with the young learner.

Parents can help improve their children's number sense and math abilities, too, by having children help organize and count food, toys, collections, or by playing card and dice games with numbers. Family game night can be both fun and full of numeracy learning.

I encourage parents to share what you know about math and to have fun with your children doing so. I also encourage parents to speak in positive term about math. Did you know that studies have shown that when adults claim to be weak at math, this belief often passes on to their children. When we look at how much math is in everything we do, perhaps we can see that we are all mathematicians of some form or another. The more we play with math and numbers at home, the deeper the learning will be for our kids. Two, four, six, eight, who do we appreciate? Family, family yayyyyyy family!

Warm regards,

Mike Martin





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DATES TO REMEMBER

Tuesday, Feb. 10th – Hot Lunch (White Spot)

Tuesday, Feb. 10th - PAC meeting @ 7:00pm

Wednesday, Feb. 11th – Choir/Music Festival @ 9:00am

Thursday, Feb. 12th – Valentine’s colors and school run @ 1:15pm.

Friday, Feb. 13th – Professional Development Day (No School)

Monday, Feb. 16th – Family Day (No School)

Thursday, February 19th – Kindergarten Hearing Screening

Tuesday, Feb. 24th – Bake Sale Division 12 & 17

Wednesday, Feb. 25th – 2 hour Early Dismissal @ 12:13pm & PINK SHIRT DAY

Monday, March 2nd – Class Photo Day

Tuesday, March 3rd – Hot Lunch (Hot Dogs)

March 16th – March 27th – SPRING BREAK (School Closed)

PAPER OR DIGITAL NEWSLETTER?

We are attempting to ensure that all families can easily access our monthly newsletter. Newsletters will continue to be emailed, and paper copies will go home with the youngest sibling in a family. Please send an email to the school at benchsecretary2@sd79.bc.ca if you do not wish to receive a paper copy of the newsletter. Thank you!

VALENTINE’S COLOR DAYS

Thursday, February 12th is Valentine’s Colors Day. This is the day that we will celebrate Valentine’s Day! Please encourage your child to dress in Valentine colors.





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We are beginning to receive questions regarding Valentine's Day and the cards and treats that often accompany this day. Valentine's Day is typically a day when students show their appreciation for one another through cards.

We ask that all students in your child's class be included if your child is participating in the card exchange. Please, just a small card. Please consider cards that limit waste and do not include dollar store items. A green-themed Valentine's, perhaps with a student created card or note, is not only good for our environment but can also demonstrate a heartfelt touch.

In addition, we respectfully ask for your continued support regarding healthy food choices for children by limiting candy at school.

Let's spread love to each other and our environment. Thank you for supporting our requests.

PINK SHIRT DAY

Join us in support of Anti-Bullying Day! Students are encouraged to wear pink on Wednesday, February 25th to symbolize a stand against bullying. Please see the PAC section of this newsletter if you wish to purchase a pink shirt.





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FRANCES KELSEY REGISTRATION PACKAGES AND DATES OF INTEREST



Parents of grade 7 students should have received the registration packages for Frances Kelsey at the end of January. Please return these registration forms to Bench by February 27th. Grade 7 families should also take note of the following dates:

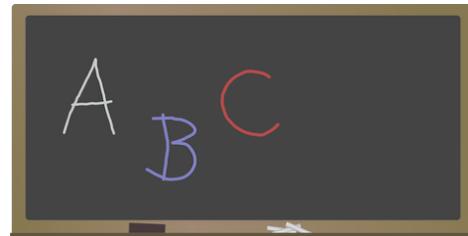
- **April 1 – Kelsey admin/counsellor visit grade 7's**
- **April 8 – Parent info night at Kelsey at 7:00pm**
- **May 21- Grade 7's visit Kelsey for a school tour**

If your child will not be attending Frances Kelsey, please let the school know. Thank you!

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION 2026 - 2027

Online registration forms are still open for families to register children born in 2021 for Kindergarten.

Schools will accept registrations from families living within their catchment area. Early registration supports both district and school planning by helping to prepare funding models and class enrolment projections. Thank you!



SKATING FIELD TRIPS

During the months of January and February, classes are continuing with skating trips at Kerry Park Recreation Center. Each class has two skating sessions from November to February. A big thank you to our PAC for supporting this fantastic activity. Don't forget your helmet!



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GRAVITY CARS

All grade 6 and 7 students, and even a few grade 5 students, spent time building and learning about the science behind Gravity Cars during their Design Technology class. Our school race was held on January 7th and the top 6 cars went as a team to the District Gravity Car Competition held on January 22nd at the Motorsport Race Track. Congratulations to the Bench Gravity Car team – Eli Underwood, London Whittaker, Chloe Ralfs, Rocky Main, Aubrey Hogg and Nickolas Holmes – who represented our school with confidence and good sportsmanship.

SAFE ARRIVAL

Please be aware that if your child is late to school (after 8:30am) they need to sign into the office when they arrive, even if you have done so on the Safe Arrival Program. We cannot mark them as late until we physically see them come in. If they do not sign into the office, they are marked as absent. This will reflect on their Learning Summaries that they are missing a half day instead of just being late. Thank you for helping to ensure that our attendance records are as accurate as possible.

LOST AND FOUND

We have many, MANY jackets and other clothing items in the lost and found. Has your child lost something? Please come and take a look! Our lost and found is in the hallway on the far side of the gym.

UPDATING STUDENT INFORMATION

We recognize that over time family details and contact information may change. Please call the school and provide an update if any of the following has changed since this school year: phone numbers, addresses, medical information, custody information or emergency contacts.



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B.C. LEARNING SURVEY

Every year the Ministry of Education conducts school learning surveys for every public school in the province. The data collected in the surveys shows areas of strength and areas that need attention to improve student learning and school connectedness. If you are a parent of a grade 4 or 7 student, please follow this link to complete the survey:

<https://www.awinfosys.com/SurveyFull1/central/main/access.asp>

TIPS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD USE SOCIAL MEDIA POSITIVELY

Social media has become a significant presence in today's world. Navigating this electronic environment can be challenging for our older students. Here are some tips that may help:



1. ESTABLISH TIMES AT HOME WHEN NO ONE IS ON A DEVICE

Have a daily check-in where you are giving your child undivided attention and focusing on their world, thoughts, and interests. For instance, you could play a game that doesn't involve a screen or do something together outside. This helps them learn to value this personal connection, so they are less impacted by the forms of connection and validation they experience on social media.

2. SHOW AN INTEREST IN WHY THEY LIKE SOCIAL MEDIA

Get curious by saying: "Tell me about that game – what do you like about it?" or "What sort of friends do you make on social media?" Even if it doesn't make sense to you why they would want to message people they have never met or talk with friends online instead of in person, showing your curiosity, not your judgement, will help your child feel safe to share their online experiences with you so you then can guide them in these interactions. If your child has a negative online experience, help them brainstorm ways that they would like to respond, so it can become a learning experience in setting boundaries.



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3. ASK YOUR CHILD HOW SOCIAL MEDIA IMPACTS THEM

You can say: "When you are on a device for a long time, I notice you can become a bit anxious. I wonder what you're feeling that makes you act that way? I get how important technology is to you, and I also really care about you, and I want to make sure you are OK, so if it is impacting you negatively, we need to discuss cutting back or using it differently until it doesn't have that impact anymore."

PIZZA

Cash pizza sales are still available every Wednesday morning before the bell at Mr. Scargall's exterior door. Pizza is \$3 per slice and will be delivered to your child's classroom on THURSDAY at lunch. Thank you for supporting our Grade 7's with this fundraiser! If you have any questions, please email gscargall@sd79.bc.ca



VISITORS

A reminder that all adults visiting the school must enter through the main doors only, sign in at the office and obtain a visitor's lanyard. **ALL** parents/visitors walking in the hallways require a visitor lanyard. Our lanyard system is designed to ensure the safety of our students and staff. Thank you for your cooperation.

SLIPPERY CONDITIONS

We've had some very slippery mornings. We do our best to get salt down in some trouble spots, but we do ask students and parents to tread carefully on those days.



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FROM OUR PAC

DATES OF INTEREST

Friday, Feb. 6th- Popcorn Day
Tuesday, Feb. 10th- Hot Lunch - White Spot
Tuesday, Feb. 10th-PAC MEETING @ 7pm
Sunday, Feb. 22nd -Pink Shirt Orders Due
Monday, Feb. 23rd-Hot Lunch Orders Due
Wednesday, Feb. 25th-Pink Shirt day
Tuesday, Mar. 3rd-Hot Lunch (Hot Dogs)
Wednesday, Mar. 4th- Popcorn Orders Due
Friday, Mar. 6th-Coffee Chat
Friday, Mar. 6th-Popcorn Day
Thursday, March 12th -PAC MEETING @ 7pm
April 30th-Island Poultry Fundraiser Orders Due
Thursday, May 14th-Island Poultry Pick Up
Thursday, May 28th-Fun Fair

PAC is excited to offer SPIRIT WEAR Pink Shirt Day T-shirts

Order here by Feb. 22nd

<https://www.urbanvalleytees.com/bench-elem>

Wear proudly on Pink Shirt Day – **Wed. Feb. 25, 2026**





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FUN FAIR 2026

Help Make the Fun Fair a reality! 🎈 Our annual Fun Fair is the highlight of the year for the kids, but we can't open the gates without a few more leaders. We have an experienced team to lead the way, who need a few fresh faces to join the team! We are currently looking for:

- **Games Coordinator** (1-2 people)
- **Cake Walk Coordinator**
- **Volunteers Coordinator**

What can you expect?

- **Zero Guesswork:** Each role comes with a detailed, step-by-step task list.
- **Full Support:** Liz (Lead Coordinator) will be by your side to assist and answer every question along the way.
- **Shared Load:** Many hands make light work! We have a committed team who have led the Fun Fair for many years and are preparing to pass the torch. This year is a wonderful time to join the team, ensuring success for years to come!



Our kids look forward to this day all year. Please help us keep the tradition alive! Interested? **Please contact Liz Maco - benchpactreasurer@gmail.com**

COUNTRY GROCER RECEIPTS

We will be running another class challenge in April & May. Please continue to collect your Country Grocer Receipts!



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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 outside the office.

PAC email address benchpac@sd79.bc.ca

DIVERSE LEARNERS PARENT & CAREGIVER NETWORK

The Diverse Learners Parent & Caregiver Network is a supportive circle for Bench parents and caregivers to connect, share knowledge, and better understand how to support our kids to flourish at school. These meetings occur on the first Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:00pm in the school library.



LEARN MORE HERE AND SIGN UP TO



JOIN



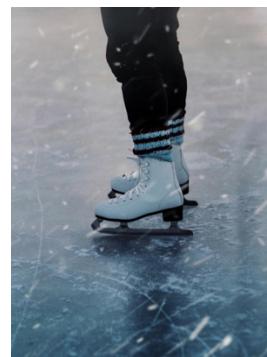
COMMUNITY INFORMATION

**MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH – FREE FAMILY DAY
SKATING SESSIONS AT COWICHAN COMMUNITY
CENTER**

Times: 12:00PM-1:00PM

2:00PM-3:00PM

Admission: FREE





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cowichan valley
**performing arts
academy**



REGISTER

FOR INFORMATION MEETINGS

info@cvperformingartsacademy.com



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Cowichan Valley School District
- BC certified teachers
- Grade 8-12 Academics & Electives
- Three Focus Areas: Music, Dance, & Musical Theatre
- Three BC Dogwood Graduation Pathway
- University Prep



1033 Nagle Street, Duncan, BC
(250) 746 - 0277

grovesecretary@sd79.bc.ca

8-12 Performing Arts Academy
<https://grovecv.sd79.bc.ca/options/#paa>





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TOGETHER *in stride*

Spring Break Camp Day!

Learning with Horses

Social Skill Development through hands-on, group activities with horses in a safe, inclusive farm setting.

- Ages 10 - 14
- Guided, non-riding interactions with horses
- Supportive, inclusive learning environment
- Explore teamwork, communication, leadership & self-awareness - learning by doing together.
- No prior experience required.

Register now!

March 19th, 8:30 am - 2:30 pm

\$150 - one day immersive with horses

Location: Cobble Hill, B.C.

For more information & to register contact

programcoordinator@togetherinstride.ca

togetherinstride

