



BENCH NEWS

Phone: 250-743-5552

Principal – Mr. Mike Martin

Principal's Message

Spring is showing its beautiful scenery and sweet smells. These annual signs remind me that the current school year is winding down. Our students have shown wonderful growth in a variety of areas, and our staff is proud of their progress. The end of the school year is an exciting time for all, and we hope that our students end the year with a variety of valuable experiences.

I would like to extend a big thank you to our PAC and parent volunteers for their support throughout the school year. The upcoming months will provide more opportunities for parents to become involved in school activities. With only 2 months of school remaining, I encourage all parents to communicate with their child's teacher if there are any questions or concerns.

The coming weeks will fly by, and we are looking forward to an exciting May.



Warm Regards,
Mike Martin, Principal



DATES TO REMEMBER



- May 1 - Pro D Day (No School)
- May 5 - Hot Lunch (Subway)
- May 7 - Bench Track Meet (Gr. 4-7)
- May 8 - PAC Coffee Chat & Popcorn Day. Senior Girls Soccer (Gr. 7)
- May 11 - Try-a-Trade (Div. 1)
- May 11-22 - Mystery Bag donations (office)
- May 12 - Try-a-Trade (Grade 7s in Div. 2 & 3)
- May 13 - 2 Hour Early Dismissal (12:13pm)
- May 14 - PAC Meeting @ 7pm. Junior Girls Soccer (Gr. 6)
- May 18 - Victoria Day (No School)
- May 20 - Young Entrepreneurs Day
- May 21 - Grade 7s visit FKSS for a tour
- May 22 - Ready Set Learn! For new Kindergarten Families (Visit #1)
- May 25-28 - Scholastic Book Fair in the Library and Plant Sale donations (courtyard)
- May 26 - Bake Sale
- May 28 - FUN FAIR!
- June 1 - Ready Set Learn! For new Kindergarten Families (Visit #2)
- June 4 - Camp Imadene (Div. 6-9)
- June 5 - Camp Imadene (Grade 5/6's in Div. 2-5)
- June 9-11 - Camp Thunderbird (Grade 7s)
- June 12 - PAC Coffee Chat & Popcorn Day
- June 16 - Hot Lunch (White Spot)
- June 18 - Final PAC Meeting & Mini AGM @ 7pm

June 24 - Grade 7 Farewell Celebration & School Talent Show

June 25 - Last day of school (2 Hour Early Dismissal 12:13pm)

Grade 7's transitioning to Frances Kelsey Secondary School

It's that time of the year again when our Grade 7 students and parents start to learn more about Grade 8 at Frances Kelsey Secondary. On **Thursday, May 21st** Grade 7's will visit FKSS for a tour.

Grade 7 Farewell Celebration

On **Wednesday, June 24th** a Grade 7 farewell celebration will take place! This will include a Grade 7 farewell drive-thru at the school at 4:15pm, followed by a Grade 7 dinner celebration (students only) at the Cook & Butcher Restaurant from 5pm-7pm. More details will be coming out, so mark this on your calendar!



Bus Registration

Bus registration for the 2026/2027 school year is open and can be completed online until **May 31st, 2026**. You can

find more information on the Transportation website

<https://sd79.bc.ca/services/transportation/>

or contact the Transportation office at 250-748-0321 ext. 276. Please make sure to keep your child's bus pass as it will be used again next year.

Lost Belongings on Busses

Student belongings are left on school busses daily. Please check with your students and if you feel they have a lost or misplaced item, kindly visit the Lost & Found at the Transportation Department at the School Board Office. They are located at 2557 Beverly Street, Duncan Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:30pm.

Class Placement for September 2027

As we approach the end of another school year, questions begin to arise about next year. Parents

requesting a placement are asked to give educational reasons for their requests. No requests are guaranteed. The professionalism, knowledge and judgment of teachers is the main determinant in your child's placement.

When we think about placement for your child, many things are carefully considered:

- A positive learning experience for your child is our number one goal
- Academic, emotional and social needs
- Friendships and peer dynamics
- Level of independence and level of academic support needed
- Physical needs
- Class size and composition

Any requests **MUST** be made in writing to the office (mmartin@sd79.bc.ca) by **May 30th, 2026**. Thank you.

Ready Set Learn!

Each year, our future Kindergarten students (and families) are invited to the annual "Ready, Set, Learn" activities. This is an opportunity for next year's Kindergarten students and parents to visit our school and be introduced to the school and the Kindergarten classroom. There will be three sessions: **May 22nd**, **June 1st** and **September 2nd**. Kindergarten students have been organized into two groups for these sessions. Group 1 consists of students with last names starting with A-H. Group 2 consists of students with last names starting with I-Z. Below is the schedule for each group.

May 22 - 'Learning Together session'

Group 1 (last name A-H 12:00pm-12:45pm)

Group 2 (last name I-Z 1:00pm-1:45pm)

June 1 - 'Active Play session'

Group 1 (last name A-H 9:00am-9:45am)

Group 2 (last name I-Z 10:00am-10:45am)

Sept. 2 - 'Creating Together session'

Groups 1 & 2 (1:00pm-2:00pm)

Track Meet

On Thursday, May 7th students in Grade 4-7 will be going to the Cowichan Sportsplex to participate in the school track meet. Results of the school meet will help to determine participants for the District Track and Field Meet scheduled for Friday May 29th, 2026. Please pack a substantial lunch, water and dress for the weather. There will be a table with treats if you want to send money with your child. Parents are welcome at this event.

Try-a-Trade

Qw'utsun Secondary's applied skills department is providing an exploratory "Try a Trade" program to all Grade 7's in the district. On May 11 & 12 Grade 7's in Div. 1, 2 & 3 will work in a 21st Century constructionist fashion to discover various building trades. Students will work in groups and will move through various "Try a Trade" labs where they will have hands on experiences with the various trades. The emphasis of the program is to get tools into the hands of the students and let them explore aspects of some of the building trades.



Young Entrepreneur Day

We are excited to invite all of you to the Young Entrepreneurs Sales Event happening on Wednesday, May 20th in our school gym. This is a fantastic opportunity to support our young entrepreneurs (Div. 1-4) and shop some unique items! The gym will be open from 9:20am-11:00am and 12pm-1pm and will be CASH only. Please use the exterior gym door (left-hand side, when facing the school). We hope to see you and your family members there!

Jump Rope for Heart

Bench Elementary extends a heartfelt thank you to our entire school community for their fundraising and generosity in support of the Jump Rope for Heart event benefiting the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Together, we raised an outstanding total



of over \$2,856! A special congratulations goes to Ms. Price's class, who raised the highest amount and earned a well-deserved class set of skipping ropes. Throughout the week, students practiced skipping skills, built their knowledge of heart health by learning simple, everyday healthy habits (EASY) and how to recognize the signs of a stroke (FAST). The excitement culminated in a fun-filled grand finale skipping event on April 17th, where students celebrated their efforts with energy and enthusiasm. We are proud of the dedication and spirit shown by our students, and we sincerely appreciate the support from families at home that helped make this initiative such a success!

Homestay Recruitment

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. As a host, you'll provide a safe, supportive, and caring environment to help them thrive. Families of all backgrounds are encouraged to apply. Hosts receive support and compensation to ensure a successful experience for everyone! For more information, please contact blanglois@sd79.bc.ca or apply here: <https://www.studyincowichan.com/homestay-program/>



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



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.

News and Workshops shared by the District PAC

Free Community Presentation & Panel Discussion from Cowichan Hospice - When Loss Touches Youth: A Community Conversation on Seeing and Supporting Grieving Youth

When: Thursday, May 21st 6pm-8:30pm

Where: Duncan United Church Hall

Please register to attend at

www.rebrand.ly/whenlosttouchesyouth or email registrations@cowichanhospice.org for more info.

PIZZA

Cash pizza sales are available every Wednesday morning before the bell at Mr. Scargall's exterior door. Pizza is \$3 a slice and will be delivered to your child's classroom on Thursday at lunch. Please note that late orders cannot be accepted and no refunds will be issued. Thank you for supporting our Grade 7's with this fundraiser!

Personal Electronics - iPhone/iPad

Please note that student use of personal electronic devices is 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 their 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.

Visitors

A reminder that all adults visiting the school must enter through the main doors only, sign in and obtain a visitor lanyard for hallway access. Thank you for helping keep our school safe.

FROM OUR PAC

Dates of Interest

Thursday, May 7th - PAC concession at the Bench Track Meet

Friday, May 8th - PAC Coffee Chat

May 11th-22nd - Mystery Bag Donations

Thursday, May 14th - PAC Meeting @ 7pm and Island Poultry Pick Up

May 25th-May 28th - Plant Sale donations drop off @ Courtyard

Thursday, May 28th - FUN FAIR! (cake walk drop off in the morning)

Friday, June 12th - PAC Coffee Chat

Tuesday, June 16th - Hot Lunch (White Spot)

Thursday, June 18th - Final PAC Meeting & Mini AGM @ 7pm

Country Grocer Receipt Challenge is Back!

From now until June 12th the class that collects the most receipts will WIN a PAC supported "End of the Year Party" for your class! We receive Country Grocer gift cards for a percentage of the total value of receipts collected. These cards are incredibly helpful in supporting events, class activities and special needs as they arise.

FUN FAIR!

We are just a few weeks away from our annual FUN FAIR ON THURSDAY, MAY 28TH. There are many ways we are seeking parent/guardian/family involvement. These include your support and contributions to the Class Raffle Baskets, Mystery Bags, Photo Booth props, Plant Sale items and cakes for the Cake Walk! The Fun Fair is 100% "Parent Powered" with over 130 volunteer slots that need to be filled. We ask that every family plan to help out. One hour contributions and fun, fun, fun! If slots are left empty we simply must scale back on what we offer. Please use this link to sign up!



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A0B4BA9A62DA4FB6-63666353-2026>

1 Volunteer

This event can not happen without parent leadership! Seeking 130 amazing sign ups to volunteer and deliver the fun.

2 Raffle Baskets

Please help us fill our incredible 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 basket. These are a HUGE HIT at the Fun Fair!

3 Mystery Bags

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

How to Help: bring in a lunch sized paper bag with any clean, appropriate items of your choice. Decorate the bag if you choose & seal it up!

Example of contents: mini toys/cars, wrapped candy, marbles, stickers, bubbles, glitter, craft items...

DROP OFF MAY 11-22 @ office

4 Pre Purchased Tickets

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

Beat the lines, buy your ticket early!

5 Cake Walk

Students create and decorate their own cake that will be used as a prize in the Cake Walk. Judges will award 1st, 2nd & 3rd place prizes. Prizes awarded will be Fun Fair tickets.

Stay tuned for a Cake Flyer coming home with more details

6 Plant Sale

Seeking Donations! Annuals & Perennials, Vegetables, Herbs, Flowers, Small Shrubs.

Drop off in the school courtyard Mon. May 25th - 28th

Photo Booth Props Needed

Seeking FUN Props for our newly added FREE Photo booth!

Oversized Sunglasses • Boas & Leis • Hats of any kind • Masquerade eye masks
Bead necklaces • Small whiteboard (for message in photos) • Winter gear? (hats / gloves/scarves)
Kitchen items (apron, chef hat, wooden spoons) • Capes • Clip on bow ties
Wigs, fairy wings • Crowns / Tiaras • Props like mustaches, lips etc.

DONATION BOX outside the office

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



Memo



Wednesday April 1, 2026

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Bus registration is required annually and can be completed online from **April 15 - May 31, 2026**. Please read the following information carefully to ensure that you are registering your student correctly for the upcoming 2026/2027 school year.

As per AP 560 "1.1. A parent wishing for new or changed bus services for their student for the subsequent school year must apply annually by May 31."

RE-REGISTRATION (Verification Form)

If your information is the same as 2025/2026 (*Address, contacts, and school*), please use this [form](#). Confirmation of the current information for your student can be done via MyRide K-12.

CHANGE FORM

This [form](#) is for 2025/2026 registered riders who have changes to the upcoming 2026/2027 school year including change of address, contacts, and/or school.

NEW TO TRANSPORTATION (Online Registration Form)

If you are new to the Cowichan Valley School District and/or were NOT a registered rider in the 2025/2026 school year, including all Kindergarten students, please use the online [Registration Form](#).

Laptops are available at the Transportation Office during the regular school year 8:30am – 4:30pm. (Computer access is also available at your student's school location.)

Summer hours will be Monday, July 13th through to Friday, August 14th, Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 1:00pm.

IMPORTANT REMINDER:

Bus passes will not be reissued annually. Instead, your child will be expected to keep their current pass from 2025/2026 and reuse the same bus pass from year to year. Students who do not have a bus pass upon boarding the afternoon bus will be refused ridership at their school and will be left under the care of the school until an alternate method of transportation can be arranged.

**Transportation Department,
Cowichan Valley School District**

May 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 No School (Pro D Day)	2
3	4	5 Hot Lunch (Subway)	6	7 Track Meet (Grade 4-7)	8 Popcorn Day PAC Coffee Chat Senior Girls Soccer (Gr.7)	9
10 <i>Happy Mothers Day</i>	11 Try-a-Trade (Div.1)	12 Try-a-Trade (Div. 2&3 Gr. 7's)	13 Two Hour Early Dismissal (12:13pm)	14 Junior Girls Soccer (Gr. 6) PAC Meeting @ 7pm	15	16
17	18 No School (Victoria Day)	19	20 Young Entrepreneur Day	21 Grade 7 visit FKSS	22 Ready Set Learn! (new Kindergarten families)	23
24	25	26 Bake Sale BOOK FAIR	27	28	29	30
31				<i>FUN FAIR !!</i>		

