November 1, 2026

BENCH NEWS

Phone: 250-743-5552 Principal – Mr. Mike Martin

Principal's Message

Fall has arrived! The changing colors of the season have been accompanied by the rhythmic routines of each class. The Fall season has also brought a lot of excitement to our school.

A big thank you to our Parent Advisory Committee for organizing such a fantastic Halloween Dance! Halloween always brings a lot of excitement and anticipation to our students. The pumpkin decorating challenge brought out some incredible imagination – thank you to everyone who participated and contributed to the spooky spirit! Events like these help make school life even more colorful.

Looking ahead, we're excited to share that Learning Summaries will be coming home on December 9th. These summaries will give you an insight into the hard work and learning progress each student has made in this year. We hope this provides a valuable opportunity for families to connect regarding their child's learning experience.

With the holiday season just around the corner, we're looking forward to all the festivities and community spirit that this time of year brings! Be sure to read through this newsletter carefully for important dates, as there are many events and activities planned in the coming weeks. This year, we will be continuing with our holiday Angel Tree. This project provides an opportunity for our school community to come together to support families in need. We thank you in advance for helping us spread good cheer!

As always, thank you for your support and partnership in your child's learning journey. November will be a busy and productive month, and we are grateful to have you alongside us.

Warm Regards,
Mike Martin, Principal

DATES TO REMEMBER

Nov. 05, Thursday – Picture Retake Day
Nov. 11, Wednesday – Remembrance Day (No School) Lest We Forget
Nov. 25, Wednesday – 2 hour early dismissal (12:20pm)
Nov. 27, Friday – Non Instructional Day (No School)

Safe Arrival

Please be aware that if you are marking your child as "late" in the Safe Arrival Program, the office will mark your child as absent, so you do not receive the phone call home. Once they arrive, your child needs to SIGN INTO the office, EVEN IF you have done so on the Safe Arrival Program. We do not mark them as late until we physically see them come in. If they do not sign into the office, this will reflect on their Learning Summaries that they are missing a half day instead of just being late.

Power Outages

Each year our school is typically impacted by power outages. Most power outages are resolved within 2 hours or less. The Superintendent at the Board Office will decide if students are to be sent home early or if parents/guardians are to be advised to come and pick up their children. Any parents/guardians who want to take their children home can certainly do so. However, please do not take any other children with you unless the parent/guardian of that student has authorized this with the school.

Winter Concert

Mark your calendar! The Bench Winter concerts will take place on Wednesday, December 16th for Divisions 2, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 16 & 17 and Thursday, December 17th for Divisions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14 & 15 (see attached calendar).
The times are 1pm and 6pm for each day. For the evening concerts, your child is asked to meet in their teacher's classroom between 5:30-5:45pm.

Permanent Daylight Savings Time

Beginning November 1, BC will remain on the same time year-round, meaning we won't turn our clocks back this fall. This means that winter mornings will be darker. As students walk, bike, and ride the bus to school, now is a great time to review safety habits, wear reflective gear, and make sure everyone is paying extra attention on the roads. A little visibility and a little patience can go a long way in keeping our school communities safe.

Picture Retakes

Say Cheese! Picture retakes are on November 5th. Choosing FREE Ship-to-School is the best way to help ensure your photos arrive at school on time. Please place your order at edgeimaging.ca/order using the portrait code and pass code on your proof. **Lost your portrait codes?** You can find them here:
https://online.edgeimaging.ca/single/webcode

Recycling

The garbage and recycling contractor for all school's has changed. Plastics from lunches can no longer be recycled through the school. We ask that all plastics sent in student lunches, make their way home for recycling.

Celebrating School Spirit and Athletics

A huge congratulations to our Jr. and Sr. Soccer Teams, Field Hockey Team, and Cross-Country Team! It has been wonderful to see so many of our students getting involved, representing our school, and taking part in the many athletic opportunities available throughout the year. Beyond the skills and effort shown on the field and course, our students have demonstrated outstanding school spirit, teamwork, and sportsmanship. We are incredibly proud of all our athletes and grateful to the coaches, volunteer drivers, and staff who make these opportunities possible. Way to go, everyone!

Remembrance Day Ceremony – Invitation to First Responders

We would like to extend a special invitation to local first responders who wish to attend our Remembrance Day Ceremony in uniform. We would be honoured to have you join us as we gather to remember and recognize those who have served and continue to serve our communities.
If you are planning to attend, please let the school know by
emailing benchheadsecretary@sd79.bc.ca so we can make the necessary arrangements and be prepared for your attendance. We look forward to welcoming you!

District Calendar

If you would like to subscribe to the school district's calendar, please visit:
https://sd79.bc.ca/calendar/

FROM OUR PAC

Dates of Interest

Nov. 3 - Chicken Orders Due
Nov. 5 - PAC MEETING 6:30 @ LIBRARY
Nov. 6 - Popcorn Day
Nov. 9 - Order Deadline for Nov. 17 Hot lunch
Nov. 16 - Christmas Emporium collection opens
Nov. 18 - Deadline for Purdy & Poinsettia fundraisers
Nov 19 - Chicken Orders Pick up

Dec. 4 - Popcorn Day
Dec. 4 - Order Deadline for Dec. 15th Hot lunch
Dec 4 - Purdy's Chocolate & Poinsettias Pick up
Dec. 7-11 - Christmas Emporium Event
Dec 16 & 17 - Winter Concert Bake Sale

THANK YOU to all our AMAZING volunteers who made the Bootacular event a huge success!
Thank you to Rachel Pugh & Liz Maco for all your awesome leadership through the Halloween festivities!
A special Thank you to our Grade 7 Leadership Team who helped us run the games.
And a MASSIVE Thank you to all of YOU - who baked, decorated, sold tickets, ran activities, games and cleaned up after the fun.

Other ways to help our PAC:

Hot Lunch platform
https://benchpac.hotlunches.net
PAC email: benchpac@sd79.bc.ca
Bench Spirit Wear:
https://www.urbanvalleytees.com/bench-elem
Co-op Gas membership # 132941
Island Return It bottle depot (Fisher Rd) acct: Bench PAC
Country Grocer receipts please hold on to these for an upcoming class challenge!

PAC email address: benchpac@sd79.bc.ca

NOVEMBER 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 PAC Chicken Orders Due	4	5 Picture Retakes PAC meeting 6:30 in school library	6 PAC popcorn day	7
8	9 PAC hot lunch order deadline for Nov. 17 Hot lunch	10	11 Remembrance Day (No School)	12	13 School Run @ 1:30 (Remembrance Run)	14
15	16 PAC Christmas Emporium collection opens	17 PAC Hot lunch (Hot Dog)	18 PAC deadline for Purdy & Poinsettia fundraisers	19 PAC Chicken Order pick up, 1:30 – 3pm in school gym	20	21
22	23	24	25 Two hour early dismissal (12:20pm)	26	27 Non-Instructional Day (No School)	28
29	30					

Winter Concerts, 1pm & 6 pm – December 16 (Scargall, Tan, Uzzell, Barber, Johnstone, McDonald, Boechler, Nielsen)
December 17 (Gignac, Koop/Merrick, Dodd, Ingram, Paziuk, Coleman, Kimmerly, Wilson, Dougan)

COWICHAN VALLEY
School District

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

October 29, 2026

INCLEMENT WEATHER INFORMATION

Dear Parents/Guardians:

With the winter season fast approaching, it is time to share the School District's procedures regarding inclement weather. There may be times when bus routes will not be operating as usual, or where schools in the district are closed.

BUS CANCELLATIONS

The most likely reason for cancellation of bus service will be for severe winter weather conditions, in which case one or more bus routes in the district may be cancelled. It will be determined by approximately 5:45 a.m. whether to cancel one or more bus routes. This is done in consultation with transportation staff who carefully assess local road conditions after severe weather warnings or events.

It is especially important that you take note of what route(s) your child(ren) ride on.

BUS OPERATIONS DURING INCLEMENT WEATHER

During inclement weather events, there are roadways that are part of regular routing that are initially less maintained. Some of these roadways may be considered unsafe to drive for district school buses. If this determination is made, following the careful assessment by transportation staff, communication will go out to district ridership. The messaging will include affected routes, and **if applicable**, will also outline alternate safe pick-up locations for affected routes. Communications will be provided through **My Ride K-12** and will be posted to the district Facebook page.

If bus routes are running more than 15 minutes behind schedule, drivers will notify the transportation office. The transportation team will then advise the Principals and Vice-Principals of affected schools. Information regarding bus routes running more than 15 minutes behind schedule will also be found on **My Ride K-12** and the district Facebook page.

It is recommended to download the **My Ride K-12** app for timely updates.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

The closure of schools in the district may occur when we are experiencing severe winter weather conditions, or when it is simply unsafe to drive. Again, it will be determined by approximately 5:45 a.m. whether to close schools in the district after assessing the situation.

Please note:
Schools may need to close early due to weather events after the school day has started. In these situations, parents and guardians will need to make arrangements for their children if buses are unable to operate.

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WHERE TO FIND BUS ROUTE AND SCHOOL CANCELLATION NOTIFICATIONS

Any notice of official school closures due to weather will be posted to the district Facebook and Instagram accounts.

We will notify local radio and TV media outlets prior to 6 a.m. with information regarding bus or route cancellations and school closures. News announcements usually begin after 6 a.m. Media partners will not be notified about individual route changes.

The following local radio stations will be notified about inclement weather notifications:

- The Q! (100.3 FM)
- The Zone (91.3 FM)
- CBC (90.5 FM)
- SUN-FM (89.7 FM)
- CFAX (1070 AM)

The following TV stations will also be notified:

- CTV Vancouver Island
- Global BC
- CHEK News

The school district website (www.sd79.bc.ca) will also be updated with a banner informing you of any closures.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to keep safety in mind when determining whether to take your child(ren) to school in the event the district is open during winter weather conditions. You have the final decision whether or not to keep your child(ren) at home if you feel it is the safest choice. When able, students and families should come to the school grounds in suitable winter footwear, use designated walkways, and only park in designated drop off locations.

Thank you for your patience during these days as we navigate the challenges of bus routing and school closures to ensure that students are taken care of. Let us work together to ensure winter weather days can be safe for everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Darlene Reynolds

Darlene Reynolds
Superintendent (Acting)
Cowichan Valley School District