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September 2016

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# Couchiching Heights

455 Laclie St N, Orillia

<http://cou.scdsb.on.ca/>

T: 705-325-9311



## Principal's Message:

Welcome back and Happy New Year everyone! I hope you all enjoyed the summer heat!

As you are aware, we have switched up a few things here at the school, with morning DPA for all, a switch to recess/nutrition break times and a few new staff. Please join me in welcoming Mrs. Laurin as our primary SERT/Learning centre teacher and Ms. Bagley as our gr 3 teacher for the year while Mrs. Lamondin is off on maternity leave.

Meanwhile, most things we have in place for student safety remain the same- the parking lot will remain closed during start/end times; we ask you to be respectful of this policy. Also, students require a written note to leave for lunch (2<sup>nd</sup> break- gr. 6-8 students only), and teachers will have or be communicating with you re: student cell phone guidelines here at school. Please remember that the school phone is the most reliable way to reach your child.

Finally, please know that if you have any questions, concerns or ideas, you can contact me at the number above, via email [abradshaw@scdsb.on.ca](mailto:abradshaw@scdsb.on.ca), by popping in to the office- or chatting with me on the driveway! Here's to a fabulous year!!

**After this month, newsletters will be electronic- email & website. Please let your child's teacher know if you need a hard copy. Thanks for helping us save trees!**



## Upcoming Events

**Sept. 12 –Parent Council, 6:30 pm Library**

**Sept.22 – Gr.7 & 8 vaccinations**

**Sept.21 –Meet & Greet 5:00-7:00pm**

**Sept.22- BOOKFAIR**

**Oct.17- School pictures**

**\*\*\*Follow us on FB or Twitter for more info\*\*\*\***

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## Friendly reminders;

-We are a NUT Free school; please don't send any nut products to school

-Please call Safe Arrival if your child will be absent 705-325-9311

-Cell phones or personal devices are fine at school for appropriate use- please see guidelines in the front of your child's agenda 7 notices from your child's teacher. Please do not text your child/ren during school hours- the office phone is the best way to reach them.

**Please note- we cannot be responsible for loss, theft or damage of any electronics at school.**

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## **School Council News:**

School Council would like to welcome families back and extend an invitation to visit our table at the *Welcome Back Meet & Greet* (**Sept.21 5-7 pm**) to learn more about council and volunteer opportunities. We will have Couchiching Heights PS school spirit water bottles for sale at the event. Council will be organizing a fun family soccer baseball game in the school field during this evening. Bring your family out to meet others and enjoy a friendly game of ball!

School Council is always looking for new members and volunteers. All are invited to attend council meetings which take place the first Monday of each month at 6:30pm in the school library.

To stay up to date on school happenings visit the school Facebook page called "In the Know" where staff and council post events, notices, meetings, bus cancellations, etc or follow us on Twitter @coustaff.

We are in for a great year!

### **Procedures help keep our school safe**

The safety and well-being of students is our top priority. We have a number of procedures in place to keep our school safe. You can help your child understand and feel safe by:

- talking to them about the situations below
- reminding them that emergencies are rare
- telling them it's important to follow staff instructions in these situations

Parents should talk about the following emergency drills with their children:

- **Shelter in place** is used when there is an environmental or weather-related situation, like a chemical spill outside the building, or a major storm. Activities continue inside the school. Students and staff are not allowed to leave the building. The ventilation system may be shut off.
- A **hold and secure** is used when there is a situation in the community, not related to the school, like a bank robbery nearby. Activities continue, but all doors are locked. No one is allowed to enter or exit the school.
- A **lockdown** is used when there is a major incident or a threat of violence related to the school. Students and staff move to secure areas, away from doors and windows. Doors are locked, lights are shut off and blinds are drawn. Students and staff remain quiet. We practice lockdown drills at least two times per year. In

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the unlikely event of an actual lockdown situation, police ask that parents do not go to the school. Information will be communicated through the school board social media sites

([www.facebook.com/SCDSB](http://www.facebook.com/SCDSB) and

[www.twitter.com/SCDSB\\_Schools](https://www.twitter.com/SCDSB_Schools)) and website

([www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca)), through local police and local media.

- All schools have **evacuation plans** in case of gas leaks, bomb threats or fire incidents that would require everyone to leave the school. Each school has an evacuation site. Ours is **Trillium Manor**. We hold drills to practice our evacuation plan. In a real evacuation, students and staff may go to the evacuation site, depending on the situation. Parents will be informed about pick-up procedures by the school, school board and local media.
- Elementary school main doors are locked during the school day. Visitors must use the **intercom system** to enter the building. **Staff may not be available to answer the door immediately, please be patient.** All visitors, including school volunteers, are required to **sign in** at the school office and wear **visitor identification**.
- Staff and volunteers must complete a **criminal record check** before having contact with students.
- We ask parents to contact us when their child will be absent from school as part of our **Safe Arrival** program. When we don't hear from a parent/guardian, and a student is absent, we will call home to find out the reason for the absence.
- At least two staff members in every school are trained in **first aid and CPR**. All Simcoe County District School Board schools **have Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)**.

When parents are at school during a drill or emergency event, they must follow direction from school staff, police, fire and/or emergency personnel. Parents may not have immediate access to their children during drills or emergencies. They may need to wait until the situation is resolved and school staff and/or emergency personnel release students into parent care.

It's important for you to know we'll always take whatever precautions are necessary to keep our school and students safe.

## There are lots of ways to dress for school: Learn about the new student dress code

The SCDSB is introducing a new student dress code this school year. The dress code was developed in consultation with staff and students. Students are expected to respect the guidelines when dressing for school. Our school is a safe space. We work to be equitable and inclusive, and understand that students may choose to express themselves through their clothing choices. Student clothing cannot pose a safety concern or conceal identity. Exceptions are granted to students who wear head coverings or other garments/objects for the purposes of religious observance, medical or sensory needs, or other reasons protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The SCDSB dress code is available in the student agenda and online at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca). If you have questions about the dress code, you can contact the principal or the SCDSB Equity and Inclusive Education Team at 705-728-7570.

## There are lots of ways to dress for school...



...but there are a few things that aren't okay.



Exposed underwear



Spiked or chained accessories



Offensive or inappropriate content

## School bus 'Bus Tag' program helps students get to and from school safely

The Simcoe County

Student Transportation Consortium's Bus Tag program supports safety for JK/SK and other school identified students. The program helps match students to their assigned afternoon school bus and identifies that they must be met by a parent or guardian at their afternoon bus stop.

The program provides a colour coded Bus Tag with the assigned p.m. route number to be attached to the student's backpack and a colour coded route card with route number in the windows of the school bus that the Bus Tag is matched to. The program can also provide tags for students who are walkers and/or who remain at an on-site daycare to make sure they don't get on a bus in error.

For more information, visit [main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) and click on the 'Safety' tab.

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## **Safety reminder from the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC)**

A reminder to drivers as children return to school this fall, and school buses are back on the roads:

- Take caution – be extra cautious in the vicinity of school buses and around school bus loading and unloading zones
- Pay attention – Watch for school buses' distinctive chrome yellow colouring, flashing red lights and stoparms. **Drivers travelling in both directions on a road without a median must stop for a stopped school bus** that has its upper red lights flashing
- Know the repercussions – Any driver that fails to stop for a school bus with its lights flashing is subject to a fine of up to \$2,000 and six demerit points for a first time offence
- Be empowered – Anyone who witnesses a driver failing to stop for a school bus can report the incident to the police

Visit the SCSTC web site at [www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) and click on the 'Home' button then the 'Safety' tab for more details.

## **Pay for field trips, lunch days, etc. with SchoolCash Online**

The SchoolCash Online program is available at our school. Parents can pay online for lunch days and other items. Parents who sign up will receive a notification when a new item becomes available for purchase. Items are personalized to each student. Parents use a secure online account to process payments, and can either make a one-time payment for each item as it occurs, or load money to carry a balance in the online account to make payments in the future. To create an online account, go to [simcoecounty.schoolcashionline.com](http://simcoecounty.schoolcashionline.com). Please contact the school office with any questions.

## **Schools are available for community use**

Through our Community Use of Schools program, almost all of our schools are available outside of school hours for not-for-profit community groups. Our gyms, fields, auditoriums and classrooms are available for your sporting events, concerts, recitals and more.

You can apply online. A Permit Clerk will process the application and advise if the facility is available at the requested time. Once an application is approved, a rental contract will be issued and the applicant will be invoiced.

For more information, visit [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca), click on 'Schools' and then 'Community Use of Schools.'

## **Free International Languages classes – registration for fall program available now**

Would your child like to learn a new language or maintain their first language? These courses are FREE and open to any student in Grades 1 to 8. Classes run Saturday mornings from 9 to 11:30 a.m. beginning Sept. 17, 2016. Registration forms can be found at

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[www.thelearningcentres.com](http://www.thelearningcentres.com) or call 705-725-8360 x45151 or 45160 if you have any questions.

### **Reminder from the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit: Packing a healthy school lunch**

A school lunch should give children the energy and nutrients they need to be ready to learn, be more alert and perform better at school. When planning lunches keep these tips in mind:

- Include one serving from at least three of the four food groups from Canada's Food Guide
- Rather than buying pre-made lunch kits, make your own healthy lunch kit with divided containers and small 'bite-sized' cheese cubes, left over chicken chunks, veggie sticks or fruit slices
- Get your kids to eat more veggies! Send cucumber coins, zucchini sticks and pepper strips with dip
- Fill whole wheat or multi grain wrap/pits/tortilla shells with your child's favourite foods such as hummus and grated carrot or sliced turkey with honey mustard.
- Water is the best option for hydration

Looking for more information to help keep you and your family healthy? Call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit the health unit's website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

### **Active and Safe Routes to School**

Walking or cycling to school is a great way to help your child get the 60 minutes of recommended daily physical activity. It also teaches them to be aware of their own safety, builds responsibility and independence, and helps them to feel more connected to the community. And it's good for their physical and mental health!

More walkers also means less car traffic around our school, which will help keep students safe and improve outdoor air quality too. Committing to even one day a week of walking or cycling to school can make a big difference!

To find out more about the recommendations for physical activity and how to make Active and Safe Routes to School happen in your school community, visit [www.saferoutestoschool.ca](http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca).

### **Reminder from the Health Unit: School grounds are smoke free 24/7**

Protect yourself and your children from the health hazards of secondhand smoke. Remember, it is against the law to smoke ANYWHERE on school property at ANY TIME. This includes smoking in your vehicle while picking up or dropping off students. It is also

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against the law to smoke or hold lit tobacco in a vehicle carrying anyone under age 16. The fine for ignoring the law is \$250. For more information contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

## **GIFTED SCREENING PROCESS**

Some children who display an unusually advanced degree of general intellectual ability may require additional program support in order to reach their educational potential.

In consultation with parents, the school staff determines who these students are through the gifted screening process.

Parents of a student who is in or above Grade 3 in this school year, who wish the school to consider their child for screening are asked to contact Mrs deVeth **on or before Sept.30, 2016**

The gifted screening process consists of three components:

1. a Teacher Rating Scale;
2. a Parent Questionnaire;
3. standardized test results (usually the Otis Lennon School Ability Test)

After signing a permission form, parents/legal guardian will complete the Parent Questionnaire. Information obtained from this questionnaire will help the school gain a better understanding of your child's early development as well as his/her strengths, interests, needs and abilities, which the standardized test may not identify. The teacher will complete a Rating Scale, which examines areas such as learning, motivation, creativity and leadership, which he/she has observed in the classroom. Group testing will be completed and the results will provide a standardized measure of school abilities. The information gathered from all three components will assist the school in programming for your child.

If you require information about the gifted screening process, please contact the school.

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## **Food News:**

We are getting started with our food & milk programs in the next few weeks, as follows:

- Milk orders are available online (schoolcashonline) & are due this Fri Sept.16<sup>th</sup>
- Pizza orders will be starting in the next few weeks, once we choose a vendor.
- Pitas may be happening- we need a parent volunteer to run this.
- Breakfast club will also be starting soon- stay tuned for more news.