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January 2022 Newsletter

Character attribute for the month of January

Honesty - we behave in a sincere, trustworthy and truthful manner. More information about character education can be found here: www.scdsb.on.ca/about/character_education.

Significant days, holy days, holidays and heritage recognition occurring in the month of January



Daily COVID-19 self-assessment

All students and staff are required to complete the daily COVID-19 self-assessment prior to entering SCDSB schools and buildings, using the provincial self-assessment tool. Students or staff with symptoms must stay home from school. To access the COVID-19 self-assessment tool, please visit <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>.

Updates to the School Screening Tool for the 2021-22 school year - international travel

Recently, the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#) was updated to reflect the return to school requirements for students who are returning from international travel. Individuals who are unvaccinated and **returning from international travel may not attend school or child care for 14 days upon their return**. For further clarity, while unvaccinated children and those under the age of 12 are exempt from federal quarantine if they travelled with a fully vaccinated companion, **they may not attend school or child care for 14 days upon their return**. Individuals with all other quarantine exemptions (e.g. travelling for cross-border custody arrangements, travelling for medical treatment) may continue to attend school or child care.

January PA Day (elementary only)

Please note that Friday, Jan. 28 is a PA Day for elementary SCDSB students, both Learn@Home and in school. Please refer to the 2021-2022 School Year Calendar on the SCDSB website for more information: www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/school_year_calendar.

Inclement weather and bus cancellation information reminder

All information regarding cancelled buses in Simcoe County is posted on the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC)'s bus information website at www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca. Our school is in the **WEST** zone. When buses are cancelled, schools remain open for student learning, unless otherwise noted. School staff are expected to plan for such emergencies in order to transition students who are unable to attend due to inclement weather to their online platforms (Google Classroom and/or SCDSBhub [Brightspace by D2L]) and continue with academic programming. It is always a family decision whether or not it is safe for their child(ren) to leave for school under severe weather conditions.

The SCSTC and bus operators try to make the decision to cancel school buses before 6 a.m. and make every effort to post announcements before 7 a.m. Inclement weather cancellations are effective for the whole day and buses cancelled in the morning will not run at the end of the day. You can follow the SCSTC on Twitter [@SCSTC_SchoolBus](https://twitter.com/SCSTC_SchoolBus) for bus cancellations and other information. You can also subscribe to receive bus delay notifications here: <https://scstc.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx>.

Kindergarten registration for September 2022 is open!

Kindergarten is the beginning of a wonderful journey of learning and we want your child to begin their journey in a SCDSB school! Do you have a child who is turning four in 2022? If so, we invite you to register your child for kindergarten. To register online or for more information visit: www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/kindergarten.

High school information events for Grade 8 students

Is your child starting Grade 9 next year? High school information events will happen virtually this winter. Student leaders and staff at the school will give an overview of what's new and what to expect. Please visit your school's website for more information.

Interested in learning more about IEPs and school-based assessments? Join us for a virtual special education outreach session

In 2022, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is hosting virtual special education outreach sessions to assist parents/guardians in learning more about programs, supports and ways that we work together to support students with special education needs.

On Jan. 13, join us for the first session, 'IEPs and school-based assessments – information for parents/guardians.' This virtual presentation will run from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. and will include opportunities for participants to share their questions regarding IEPs and school-based assessments.

For more information and to register visit: https://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/special_education.

Join us! A learning series for parents/guardians

Mental health and well-being continues to be a key strategic priority within the SCDSB. We are pleased to announce a new three-year partnership with Pine River Institute (PRI). The Centre for Family Initiatives at Pine River Institute (CFI@PRI) will provide several multi-part learning series focused on student mental health and well-being to SCDSB families, staff and within the SCDSB's broader school communities.

There are three upcoming webinars in the learning series specifically planned for parents and guardians during this school year.

Jan. 25, 2022 Understanding and Managing Screen Time

March 29, 2022 Connection and Empathy in Response to Behaviour

May 19, 2022 Understanding Addiction and Addictive Behaviours

We hope you save these dates in your calendar and join us for these learning opportunities. For more information and to register, please visit the mental health and well-being page on the SCDSB website: <https://bit.ly/3jGaC74>.

Pine River Institute is a live-in treatment centre and outdoor leadership experience for youth aged 13 to 19 struggling with addictive behaviours and often other mental health issues. Combining therapy with a fully-accredited education program, PRI reinforces the healthy life skills required for a successful future. CFI@PRI extends PRI's knowledge, experience and evidence-informed treatment approach to families and care providers in the community to support youth mental wellness and prevent the need for more intensive interventions. Learn more about PRI by visiting their website at www.pineriverinstitute.com.

Math @Home parent series

Thank you to everyone who completed the parent survey. The winners of the prizes will be notified in January. The SCDSB math department is offering three evening virtual sessions for caregivers of SCDSB students. These sessions will focus on practical and fun ways to support students with their mathematics learning and engagement at home. Participants will receive a math pack of resources to use at home, and must pre-register for each of the sessions by visiting <https://bit.ly/SCDSBMathAtHomeRegistration>.

Having fun with math facts @Home

Thursday, Feb. 17, 2022

7 to 8 p.m.

This session will explore practical, intentional and fun ways to practice math facts at home. Participants will leave with ideas, games and activities to support their child in becoming fluent with their math facts.

Making math connections @Home

Thursday, March 24, 2022

7 to 8 p.m.

This session will explore where we find numbers, patterns, measures and shapes in our daily lives.

Participants will learn about practical ways to help their child notice and wonder about the math in their world.

Problem solving @Home

Wednesday, April 26, 2022

7 to 8 p.m.

This session will explore how to encourage children to be active thinkers and problem solvers, both in math and around the house. Participants will learn about how solving problems at home can help their children solve problems in math class.

Participants must pre-register for the sessions they wish to attend. Registered participants will receive a Math @Home pack of hands-on resources that will be sent to the school indicated on the registration form.

The Power of Play

Playing with our children is sometimes a hard thing to carve out time for. Between work and school hours, extra-curricular activities and the enduring pace of meals, dishes, laundry, homework and tidying up toys, there are sometimes very few moments left to engage with our children in a fun and playful way. Especially if it is right before bed and you don't want to wind them up!

What we don't always remember when our children are asking us to play hide and go seek for the one-hundredth time is that these playful moments can help our children in so many healthy ways.

A micro-gesture is a term that refers to the little pieces of guidance, support, empathy and safety we offer our children on a daily basis. These are part of a very special emotional bond that you create and one that allows your child to feel comfortable as well as the freedom and confidence in exploring their little world in fun and tangible ways.

For smaller aged children, a quick game of 'Alligator' (try to jump over you without getting 'snapped') or a little sensory game of flap a sheet over their bodies while they lie down can bring laughter, calm and connection. For the older kids, a quick and playful prank that brings about connection, a snow fort building session or an intentional sit down to play a game can help you maintain a connection and bond as they begin their teen years. These little playful moments can also help guide and role model what playing looks like (and doesn't) with friends, siblings or other families.

If your child seems to be sensory seeking or asking repeatedly to play and connect with you, the underlying message they are trying to convey is usually “Can you see me? Can you notice my worth? Can you express delight in me? Can you help me create a joyful moment?”

Expressing delight “Wow, did you see that! Look how fast you can go!” is a basic attachment need that is primal in us and one that we seek out as children and adults on a daily basis.

Raising a Secure Child by Kent Hoffman, Glen Cooper and Bert Powell highlights some of these pieces and emphasizes the emotional resilience we cultivate in our children when we spend time attending to these attachment needs. When we focus on these pieces, there tends to be a change in their little brain from one that presents as insecure or anxious to one that becomes calm and full of self-worth.

As this new year begins, I wish you all some playful micro-gestured time with your children that help them feel confident, emotionally or psychologically safe, worthwhile and valued!

Gwen Jamieson, MSW RSW