



BYRON SOMERSET PUBLIC SCHOOL

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Newsletter #3

December 1st, 2021

Principal's Message



Dear Parents,

It's hard to believe that the holiday season is once again upon us. The main office and hallways are getting decorated and there is a lot of excitement in the air. We'd like to wish Happy Hanukkah to our families who are celebrating the Festival of Lights from December 22nd-30th and Happy Kwanzaa celebrated December 26th-January 1st.



I would like to formally introduce Ms. Marie Merrimen who will be the new Principal assigned to Byron Somerset as of January 3, 2022. Marie is currently the Vice-Principal of Byron Northview and is stepping up to the position of Principal in the new year. We are thrilled to have Marie leading the Somerset team. She is very excited about her new position and will be making several visits during the month of December so that her transition to her new school is as smooth as possible. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank you for my time as Principal. Byron Somerset is a wonderful school with very polite, well-mannered children, fantastic teachers and extremely supportive parents. I have thoroughly enjoyed my 10 weeks of supporting your school.

Progress reports were sent home earlier this month for all of our students. Several parents had the opportunity to communicate with their child's teacher via email, phone or through a virtual conference.

Currently, we are hosting a number of teacher candidates from Western Faculty of Education. Also, we have a student from Fanshawe College who is on placement in our Kindergarten classroom. It is great that our staff can provide these mentoring opportunities to individuals who are in these programs.

As we near the holidays, there are opportunities for class celebrations and special treats. If you choose to send in treats for your child's class, they must be individually wrapped by the manufacturer prior to coming to school as per Covid regulations. Items such as: individually wrapped chocolate bars, smarties, skittles, treats/cookies wrapped in pre-packaged wrappers, twinkies, etc are the types of items permitted at school for distribution. Donuts, popcorn, chips are not permitted at this time. Thank you for your patience and consideration as we work through these strict measures.

We'd like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a restful holiday season! Our last day of school for 2021 will be on Friday, December 17. We look forward to seeing everyone back in class on Monday, January 3!

Festive Spirit Days!

As the holiday season approaches, we will celebrate it by having 3 festive Friday spirit days.

December 3rd - Holiday/Festive hat and sock day;

December 10th - Festive/Holiday sweater day;

December 17th - Festive/Holiday pyjama day.



Culture Corner

Happy Hanukkah!

Also known as the Jewish Festival of Lights, Hanukkah is celebrated from the evening of November 28 to December 6 in 2021. It commemorates the victory of the Maccabees over the Syrian army. During the battle, the temple's candelabrum burned for eight days and nights with only enough oil for one day. Each day, one candle on the menorah is lit, representing the miracle.



Happy Kwanzaa!

Kwanzaa is a celebration of African family, community, and culture that will take place from December 26, 2021 to January 1, 2022. Families celebrate with music, dance, and feasts. Seven candles are lit during Kwanzaa, representing African people, their struggles and hopes for the future.

Holiday Virtual Concert

This year we will be sending out a virtual performance of students singing within their individual classes and some solo performances as well. We are unable to mix cohorts at this time, which does not allow for a school choir or band. Mr. Lee will be recording the individual classes that he teaches and this will be put together in a virtual format and provided for our parents to view at their leisure closer to the Holiday.



Here's What's Happening on School Council 2021-2022

The School Council is focused on raising funds for the ongoing technology, literacy, arts, physical and classroom needs. This year, we are focused on supporting the need for primary grades for additional textiles given the increase in students, a musical option for the junior grades as Mr. Lee is unable to run the recorder program (due to covid rules) as well as the continued support of the grade 8 awards.

We have so many exciting ways to help fundraise this month!

First and foremost our next Byron Pizza – adopt a school night is Wednesday December 1st. \$5 from every family special sold will be donated back to the school.

The return of hot lunches and snack days are back and will continue to run throughout the school year. Our first one is on December 8th! All parent volunteers will need a Criminal Background check or sign a declaration if we already have a background check on file.

We are hosting a draw for a chance to win a \$200 Amazon gift card. During the week of December 6th to 10th send in a donation with your child for a chance to be entered into the draw! For every \$5 donation you will earn 1 chance to win. (ex. \$25 donation gives you 5 chances) Please note that tax receipts are available for donations \$25 or more.

We want to thank all the families that have participated in our school fundraisers so far! Collectively we've raised \$1056 and counting!

Still looking for ways to help fundraise? – Stay tuned for more fun to come in the New Year!

Don't forget to follow the [Byron Somerset Facebook page](#) for updates and reminders. And as always, please feel free to reach out to the School Council at any time at scbyronsomerset@tvpic.ca

Thank You Parent Council

A huge thank you to our School Council for their generous funding to Byron Somerset students. They recently approved funding for a Chromebook cart for our Junior and Intermediate students, a Tech Tub to hold 32 Ipads for our Primary classes and 3 new Ipads. They also approved the purchase of the Forest of Reading program for our library. In September, funds were donated to our Music Department to purchase 37 new ukuleles. We are so fortunate to have such a dedicated and hardworking School Council that not only raises amazing amounts for our school, but also generously gives it all away to our students. Thank you for your very kind donations. They will all come in very useful!



Ms. Kiekens' class and Ms. Pasko's class will be promoting a **school wide toy drive**. This community is always super generous so we know that together we can put smiles on many faces!

When: Monday, December 6th to Thursday, December 9th.

What: Donate **new toys/items** with tags still on the items.

Where: Bring your donation to school. On Friday, December 10th, the Toys for Tots volunteers will come to Somerset to pick up our donations and distribute them in the London area.

Note: While all items are welcome, this year, there is an additional focus on **infants and girls between 12 and 14**. These age groups often don't receive enough items for everyone. PJ's, onesies, infant toys, hair dryers, flat irons, hair accessories, earrings, etcetera are all fabulous ideas.

Donate Online: If you prefer, you can always donate directly to the London Branch Toys for Tots.

https://www.informationlondon.ca/Services/Other/Display/14875/London_Branch

**Wishing all of you a holiday season filled with kindness, love, and understanding.
Together, we are stronger.**



Elementary Daily COVID-19 Student and Child Care Screening

In order to support the importance of daily screening for COVID-19 and keeping TVDSB schools safe places to learn, starting on Monday, December 6, 2021 Thames Valley is asking that parents and caregivers of elementary students complete the daily COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool via an individualized process. The Ministry of Education has required school boards to have a process for this daily, student screening to be confirmed following the winter holidays for a two-week period. This NEW tool will allow TVDSB families to become familiar with this process prior to January 2022. A TVDSB Student COVID-19 Screening sticker with your child's login and password will be sent home shortly to allow parents and caregivers with the necessary information to complete this daily confirmation for each child in their household. We appreciate keeping this sticker and information in a secured location.



A reminder that student's username is represented by the first 4 characters of their last name, the first 4 characters of their first name, and the last 3 digits of their student number (e.g., John Smith 12345678 is smitjohn678).

Also, 5 Rapid Antigen Screening tools will be sent home with each child to complete during the holidays prior to returning to school. Thank you for ensuring this daily COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening is completed and that the directions provided from the screener are followed.

Boys Volleyball

The Somerset Boys' Volleyball Team has been practising hard since October and has been playing games for the last several weeks. The boys have been working hard and have made terrific progress throughout the season. The exhibition season has concluded, and the boys finished with a 7–2 record! An abbreviated playoff season will begin on November 30 and hopefully conclude with an appearance in the regional final on December 2. Thank you very much to all the parents who have driven players to and from games this season so far. Go Stars!



Team members: Anderson W., Tyson A., Connor L., Abdallah A., Jason S., Brody S., Matt Z., Riese C., Lucas K., Aiden H., Cooper S., Khaleel P., Harrison H., Mason D., Maksim T., Holden B., Hudson N. Coach: Mr. Thomson

It's Winter and It's Cold...

We have now entered winter season. That means that it is going to be cold and we will have snow and ice and all of the other fun things that come along with winter. Please ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather as part of the day is spent outdoors unless the wind chill factor is such that they cannot go outside. Hats, coats, boots and scarves are all needed to keep warm and toasty. Please be cautious, however, of very long scarves which can present a danger should they get entangled in something.



At this time, we are forced to close the climbers for the season as the snow is here to stay for awhile and the ground is frozen. We enforce this during our recesses and lunch hours but then along comes 3:30 dismissal and many parents allow their children to play on the climbers after school. This is dangerous as the structure is very slippery and the wood chips are frozen and does not provide the limited amount of cushioning that it normally provides.

Parking

Thank you to all of our parents for the care they take in dropping off or picking up their children daily. As a reminder, the area at the front of the school is a 'kiss and ride' zone and the back of the parking lot is not a parking area. We are having cars park at the curve in the parking lot, preventing our mini buses access to dropping off our students. Please drop your children off at the 'kiss and ride' and we will ensure their safety in getting to class. The ONLY area you are permitted to drop your children off, is up at the front of the school, in between the green frogs, by the flagpole. Parents of primary aged students, please DO NOT drop your children off at the back end of the parking lot by the garbage dumpsters. We have no staff supervision in this area; therefore, we cannot ensure student safety.



Winter Hat & Mitten Drive

Our Hat and Mitten Drive was a huge success. Thank you Byron Somerset community for your generosity and support. We are happy to drop off almost 500 hats and mittens to the Anova Women's shelter this week.



Portables

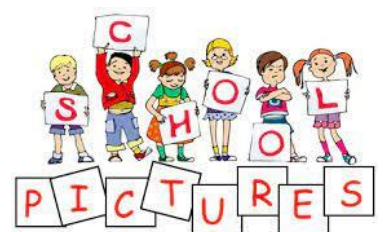
Our two portables are almost ready for occupancy! The electrical, cement work, and IT have completed their work, wooden stairs have been built, inspection is done and our custodial staff are now cleaning and waxing the floors. We will be able to plan the moves from classrooms very shortly. Ms. Kiekens and Ms. Armeniakos will be moving to the portables once we have the “all clear”. After they’re moved in, we will schedule the moves from the Learning Commons and lunchroom (Grade ½ Noddle and Grade 2/3 Crukley) to rooms 168 and 175. We look forward to having students and staff settled and comfortable in their new “homes” for the rest of the school year.

Videotaping students

We wanted to make parents aware that some of our students are not permitted to be photographed or videotaped as per parental request. We have some parents videotaping children off school property during recess and lunch hours which is not permitted. Thank you for your consideration in this privacy.

Student Photographs in December and January!

We appreciate your patience as families have been waiting for our process to support student photographs this year. Our **Grade 8 Graduation photos** been booked for **Thursday, December 2nd in the morning**. Our **JK to Grade 8 individual and class photos** will be on Tuesday, January 18th and Wednesday, January 19th. A information flyer will be sent home in the next couple of weeks informing all parents of the specific dates for each grade.



Lost & Found

We have a large number of items in our lost and found bins at school. Please encourage your children to take a look if they have lost any hats, mitts, coats or snowpants. We will have all ‘lost’ items displayed in front of our Learning Commons before the Holidays. All classes will have an opportunity to view these items as a class before they are donated to Good Will.



Kids in the Kitchen

Looking for some extra help in the kitchen? Try involving your children. Helping out in the kitchen can help kids be healthier eaters. When you ask your children to help, you will get to spend time with them and they will learn about making food, where food comes from, and basic cooking skills.

The kitchen is like a classroom in your home. In the kitchen kids can:

- practice math skills by counting, sorting and measuring ingredients.
- use their reading skills by following recipes and reading labels.
- practice their social skills by working together to make a recipe.

Tips for success:

- Food Safety - teach your kids how to wash their hands properly and prepare a recipe safely.
- Supervise- Be sure to supervise your kids at all times when in the kitchen.
- Time and patience - your children are learning a new skill and this takes time.
- Simplify - keep the tasks simple and age appropriate so your children will be successful.

