

February 2017

Principal: Melinda Dempster, melinda.dempster@mpsd.ca | www.esrichards.mpsd.ca

Vice Principal: Sharon Widdows, Sharon.widdows@mpsd.ca

Dear ESR Families,

I have to say that as we once again approach report card time it is good to see the degree of academic and social learning taking place in classrooms. The degree to which children are learning is a reflection of both your work at home and ours here at the school. When children arrive to school on time, rested and with proper nutrition they are – as natural learning sponges – more able to succeed.

Here at the school I can say that it is rare to find such a dedicated, skilled and talented staff. Teachers are often here working into the evening, they spend extra hours collaborating and are willing to take time away from their own families – including weekends to attend Professional Development Conferences. Likewise Educational Assistants and Support Staff consistently give more than what is required in order to support student happiness and success. The staff at ESR are a group of individuals who are passionate about “growing” great children and I am so honored to work with them each day

I believe that the long waiting list of families who are willing to drive their children to ESR (and endure the parking lot!) is due in part to our Integrated Arts Focus. However, I believe it is also the combination of supportive families and exceptional staff – who work together -- that makes ESR a school that is so highly regarded.

Melinda Dempster, Principal

Parking Lot Woes

- **Please Do not park or “wait” in the drop off zone in front of the school** – if we can keep cars moving there traffic will not back up. If you use this zone children should be ready to hop in/out of your car fast.
- **Do not park in staff parking.** Education Assistants arrive close to the bell and need to be here for students.

You could consider:

- Parking a block or so away and walking your child to school (great time for conversation!)
- Arriving 10 minutes earlier or later (if it is really cold or rainy the foyer is available)

Please be courteous and watch that children exiting cars do so in a manner that is safe for them and those around them. There have been some reports of children opening car doors and hitting other vehicles.

Please know that I am working on some changes to the parking lot that will include a larger area for drop off / pick up and I am dearly hoping we will all have an easier time soon. In the meantime, Let's try and all remember to “choose kindness” and not block the path of emergency vehicles or other cars.

Important February & March Dates:

Aboriginal Cultural Day	February 1 st (morning)
Milk Day	February 1 st
Divisions 10 & 11 Field Trip	February 2 nd
Divisions 1, 4 & 5 Swimming	February 3 rd
Hot Lunch	February 8 th
Art Performance – Diana David	February 8 th 1:30
WITS Assembly	February 9 th 9:00
<i>Family Day – school not in session</i>	<i>February 13th</i>
Valentine's Cake Walk & PAC Meeting	February 14 th
Hot Lunch	February 16 th
<i>Provincial Pro D Day -- school not in session</i>	<i>February 17th</i>
Pink Day – wear Pink	February 22 nd
<i>Assessment – students dismissed at 11:03</i>	<i>February 24</i>
Parent / Student / Teacher Conferences	March 8 th 2:30 – 7:30 pm
Last day of school before Spring Break	March 9 th
<i>Day in lieu for conferences school not in session</i>	<i>March 10th</i>
First Day back to school from Spring Break	March 27 th

Thoughts on Pink Shirt / Anti Bullying Day

The *International Day of Pink* was started in Nova Scotia when 2 straight high school students saw a gay student wearing a pink shirt being bullied. The 2 students decided to purchase pink shirts, and a few days later got everyone at school to arrive wearing pink, standing in solidarity. The result was that an entire school took a stand and began working together to prevent homophobic & transphobic bullying. Since then schools have held “Pink Anti bullying Day events every year. While I wholeheartedly support peaceful communication and relationships and I think Pink Day is not a bad idea I do not think that setting aside one day a year is enough.

Firstly, **children will experience conflict**; this is one of the ways they learn. Here is an analogy: children topple and fall over as they learn to find their balance and walk. We help them through this by holding their hands and supporting them as they learn. Likewise, as they meet with conflict and opposition with others they depend on us to guide and teach them – everyday.

Your child spends every week day in a room with many other children. By learning strategies to get along with others who are rude or insensitive he or she will be able to navigate the teen and adult years more effectively. The best way I have found that teaches children how to respond is the WITS program. **WITS** stands for **W**alk away, **I**gnore, **T**alk it out, and **S**eek help. These strategies are helpful for most problems between all people.

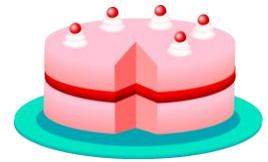
Bullying behavior is different than childhood conflict. The definition of bullying is from *Canada's Promoting Relationships and Eliminating Violence Network*: Bullying is repeated aggressive behavior in a relationship in which the person who bullies has more power than the person who is bullied. If you believe your child is being bullied please let the teacher and/or the school Principal know immediately.

On February 9th at 9:00 am. Constable Young from the RCMP will be joined by others in our introductory WITS assembly. Parents are most welcome to attend and if you are a member of a Police Force or are a Firefighter you are encouraged to attend in uniform. You may find out more about how WITS is used in schools and within the family at home at: www.witsprogram.ca

We will learn to use our WITS **and** also recognize anti-bullying day by wearing pink in all sorts of fun ways!

Valentine's Day Cake Walk

A PAC fundraising tradition at E.S.R. is the Valentine's Day Cake Walk. Be prepared to get out your measuring spoons and / or donate a cake and have your child bring something yummy home! The event is much like musical chairs and will take place throughout the day in the gym. Price for student participation is one Canadian Loonie. We have some amazing bakers in our ESR community of families and we can't wait to see the cakes roll in, however, please ensure you send a cake that does not require refrigeration on the morning of the 14th as we do not have the space to refrigerate or store cakes in advance. Thanks for supporting your school!



Performance

Through an Art Start Grant we are pleased to welcome Dianna David on February 8th at 1:30.

“Dianna is a Movement Storyteller who teaches through mime, street dance, prop-manipulation and interactive theatre. She travels world-wide delivering workshops, talks and performances that focus on connection, communication, creativity and community. Since 2008, Dianna's TAKE A CLOSER LOOK show is still in demand. Today, she's expanded with her Faculty of Freshness and their School of MOVES Show/workshop series. Together, they demonstrate that you can become a successful professional artist by doing what you love!”

Aboriginal Cultural Day

Every second year elementary schools in Mission are fortunate to host an Aboriginal Cultural Day. This year our day falls on February 1st and guests will visit the school to teach and show: Inuit Games, Button Blanket Dolls, Pow Wow Drumming, Slahal, Storytelling and an Archeology Dig. The events occur in the morning in classrooms and at 11:15 we will all meet in the gym for a closing.

Parent Advisory Council

The next meeting of the Parent Advisory Council is February 14th at 6:30 in the school library. This is a perfect date because we  our PAC here at ESR!