

Chalmers Elementary Newsletter

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Issue #: 1

Date: September 8, 2020

Dear Parents:

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year! We hope that all of our families had a good summer and are looking forward to getting back to learning. We would also like to extend a special welcome to any families new to the Chalmers community! We know that you are going to enjoy and feel connected to your new school very quickly.

We understand that many families have had to make difficult decisions about sending their child(ren) back to school in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please be reassured that the school district is working with provincial health authorities, the Ministry of Education and individual schools themselves to make the school environments as safe as possible for everyone in our communities.

At Chalmers, we have adjusted many of the routines we typically follow to align with the district safety plan. While we will try and make the school experience as typical as possible, it will not be business as usual. Information on the many adjustments we are needing to make, as well as the responsibilities we ask of all members of our community, can be found described [in this document](#). **Please take the time to read through this information thoroughly as it is very important.**

Students may not view the changes as positive, as a lot of the activities that typically happen in school cannot. Please know these measures are to help ensure they have the safest environment possible to learn in. The changes are for now, not forever.

I know there may still be lots of questions from students and parents. There has been a large volume of information passed to families which can be overwhelming. Please see the district and school websites for information and read emails carefully. If further clarification is needed, please call the school; we are here to help.

Please note that we will send home another newsletter next week which will contain the more traditional content of the first communication of the school year.

We are truly looking forward to a great school year!

Mr. J. McCallum
Principal

Ms. T. Doukas
Vice Principal

School Hours

To help with social distancing, this year we will be operating a staggered schedule. Classes will be assigned to either Cohort A or Cohort B with the following bell schedules:

Cohort A

First Bell: 8:40am

Recess: 10:25 - 10:40am

Lunch: Play 12:00 -12:35pm

Eat 12:35-12:52pm

Dismissal: 3:00pm (2:00pm Wednesday)

Cohort B

First Bell: 8:50am

Recess: 10:45 – 11:00am

Lunch: Eat 12:35 – 12:52pm

Play 12:52 – 1:27pm

Dismissal: 3:10pm (2:10pm Wednesday)

Office hours: 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Teachers will inform students and families which Cohort they are a part of during the Student Orientation session on Thursday, September 10 and Friday, September 11.

School-Wide Medical Alert:

Several of our students have life-threatening allergies to eggs, peanuts, nuts (cashews, almonds, walnuts, pistachios, Brazil nuts, pecans, macadamias), and sesame seeds. Exposure to even tiny amounts of nut particles – residue on a desk, a book, a door handle, a computer keyboard, or a drinking fountain – may be enough to trigger a reaction. Please help us create a safe environment for them by keeping foods containing eggs, nuts, peanuts, and sesame seeds at home. Several companies are now making nut-free snacks and we encourage you to look for these new products when shopping. Other names for peanuts and other nuts include: arachide, arachis oil, beer nuts, goober nuts, goober peas, ground nuts, kernels, mandelonas, nut meals, valencias, anacardium nuts, calisson, marzipan, pinion, Queensland nut (macadamia). Label reading is the key to sending safe, egg-free and nut-free foods to school. Please do your part to ensure our school environment is a safe one for all our students. THANK YOU!!



Staff and Student Safety:

Safety is always at the forefront of our decision making. For this year, all school doors will remain in the locked position. Only staff and students will be permitted in the building during the school day. If a parent requires a meeting with a teacher or the principal, we ask that those take place over the telephone or by appointment so arrangements can be made to accommodate safety measures.

Occasionally, staff will be absent due to illness or other reasons. To limit the number of people entering schools, Chalmers will have a Teacher on Call (TOC) assigned to our building who will work here and in a limited cohort of schools if needed. In addition to this, the school district is clustering groups of Teachers-on-Call and assigning them to a small group of schools to limit the number of people working in our school.

Any staff, such as Education Assistants, Learning Support teachers, Administrators, or Teachers-on-Call who need to enter a learning cohort they are not assigned to will be required to wear a mask if physical distancing is not possible.

Families are required to complete a DAILY health check on students before sending them to school. If any symptoms are present, a child must stay at home. The Daily Health Check is available [here](#).

If a child becomes ill at school, they will be given a mask and will be isolated in a medical room until picked up. They will not return to school until healthy or medical advice has sought as per resources indicated on the daily health check. Please make arrangements to have someone available to pick up students at any time throughout the day should it be necessary.

Staff will continue the practice started last year of wearing district identification badges so that they are recognized as safe adults for students in the school and on the playground. Also, staff on supervision outside before school, at recess, lunch and after school will wear high visibility vests to make them easy for students to locate should they need assistance.

Administration of Medication:



Schools are required to maintain a safe procedure for dispensing medications. We would like to have information regarding medication administration within the first two weeks of school. If your child is required to take medication at school, please request a Request for Administration of Medication at School form from the office. These forms must be completed each year and are required to be signed by your physician.

Scent Sensitivity:

At Chalmers, we have staff who suffer from respiratory difficulties that are made worse by scented products. We ask that students, parents, and staff do what they can to avoid using scented aftershave, hair spray, cologne or other scented personal care products.

