



Bear Creek Newsletter

December 2023

Happy Winter/Holiday Season

December is a month of celebration for many people in our community, Bear Creek is an inclusive environment that welcomes the celebrations of all cultures and peoples. With that in mind it can also be a very hard time for many families in our community. We have several events this month that will help support Christmas Cheer, The Food Bank and families in our community. The K-Cup is our annual Hockey Tournament at the Sadlon Center (Dec 21) helps to raise thousands of dollars for Christmas Cheer. Our Winter Assembly will take place on December 20, money raised from this event will help benefit families within our school community. Our leadership classes just last week raised over 800 pounds of food for our local food bank. We just wanted to take a moment to thank all of those who have donated, you make a difference within our community. We are at our best when we all come together.

If you are able to donate to our families in need, we are accepting cash donations through School Cash Online and gift card donations. Donations will be accepted until Friday, December 15th. 100% of all donations will be shared with Bear Creek families in need. We cannot tell you how appreciative the families in our community are of this initiative. It is so incredibly amazing to see our community come together to support our students and families.

School Council

The next two scheduled School Council Meetings are Feb 22 and April 25 @ 5:30 in our school's library. All are welcome to attend.

Days of Awareness 2023-24

As you prepare your school's newsletter package, please review the Days of Awareness (NM1) www.scdsb.on.ca/about/equity_and_inclusion. Please include what is relevant to your school community in your October newsletter package.

Communication to families regarding inclement weather days

Please note that APM A3020 – Inclement Weather, 3.1.2 states that “parents/guardians are to be reminded, in writing at appropriate times (October and January) each school year, that it is their responsibility to decide whether or not it is safe for their child(ren) to leave for school under severe weather conditions.”

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 Central 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 Consortium 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 Consortium on Twitter [@SCSTC_SchoolBus](#) for bus cancellations and other information. You can also subscribe to receive bus delay notifications here: <https://scstc.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx>.

Culminating Task Days

From Dec 14-19 teachers will be conducting culminating activities in their classes, these activities will count towards student's final grades, attendance is strongly encouraged during this time, if a student is absent, please ensure that school is contacted and the absence excused.

Thursday December 14 – Period 1 Culminating Task
Friday December 15 – Period 2 Culminating Task
Monday December 18 – Period 3 Culminating Task
Tuesday December 19 – Period 4 Culminating Task

High school information events for Grade 8 students

Is your child starting Grade 9 next year? High school information events will take place in person this winter! Student leaders and staff at the school will give an overview of what's new and what to expect. Learn about courses offered, as well as information about teams and clubs. Please visit the SCDSB website at www.scdsb.on.ca/secondary/planning_for_high_school to find details on your high school's info night, and contact the school directly for more information.

Commencement ceremony for the Graduating Class of 2024!

Date: **Thursday, June 27th, Time: TBA**

Location: Sadlon Centre

1. **Grad Photos** will take place the January 15-19, 2024.

Students must book an appointment to have their photo taken. Students will be provided with a gown to use on the day of the photos.

A dress shirt and tie or white blouse would be ideal to wear underneath (this is not provided by the photographer).

Click the link [here](#) to access the booking site.

2. **Grad Hoodie/Crewneck Shirt** is available to purchase on School Cash Online. Once purchased students must select their size by clicking on the link for either a [screen printed logo](#) or an [embroidered logo](#). Please see attachment for additional details.

More information and links to purchase tickets, gown/accessories, and Grad Book will be sent in March. Please see estimated costs below to help you prepare:

- Students will each receive two free **tickets** for family members, and they will not need a ticket for entry themselves. We estimate that additional tickets will cost ~\$10 each.

- **Complete graduate gown package** including gown, stole, cap, and tassel will also be available to purchase for ~\$25. Stole, Cap, and tassel only for ~\$15.
- Graduate Book will be ~\$25

Grade 1 French Immersion information

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) offers French Immersion (FI) at select schools throughout Simcoe County beginning in Grade 1. The goal of the FI program is to enable students to communicate in French with a high level of proficiency, enabling them to function with ease in both French and English. Upon graduation from the program, students will communicate in French with confidence in a wide variety of real-life situations.

The SCDSB board-wide electronic applications for the Grade 1 FI program for all sites will open Friday, Dec. 1 at 9 a.m. and close at 4 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 15. Entry into the FI program is determined through a digitally randomized lottery system. To learn more, visit the SCDSB website:

<https://www.scdsb.on.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=210982&pageId=12587752>.

Join us! A learning series for parents/guardians with Pine River Institute

Mental health and well-being continues to be a key strategic priority within the SCDSB. We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Centre for Family Initiatives at Pine River Institute (CFI@PRI) to provide several curated learning sessions focused on student mental health and well-being to SCDSB families.

These webinars are specifically planned for parents/guardians and other caregivers during this school year.

Jan. 11, 2024	Sleep hygiene
Feb. 8, 2024	Self regulation for kids
Feb. 22, 2024	Self regulation for teens
March 28, 2024	Building parents' resiliency
April 18, 2024	Vaping, weed, and alcohol

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 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.

Parents' Guide to Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

Learn to navigate the world of assessment, evaluation, and reporting with this new guide for parents/guardians. Created to support parents'/guardians' understanding of assessment, this guide was designed to effectively empower you to actively engage in your child's educational journey. The guide has been posted to the Simcoe County District School Board's website and can be accessed at

<https://tinyurl.com/2urcm2tm>.

Subscribe to Community Connects!

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is excited to launch Community Connects, a new bimonthly newsletter for the SCDSB community. Our shared goal with this new tool is to keep our community partners and stakeholders informed while nurturing relationships that are built on accountability, trust, and transparency.

To learn more and subscribe, visit the Community Connects page on the SCDSB website:

https://www.scdsb.on.ca/community/community_connects.

Subscribe to Kindergarten Connections!

Will your child be turning four in 2024? If so, the SCDSB invites you to Kindergarten Connections! This is a monthly newsletter informing families of everything they need to know about preparing their child for school, as well as registering them for Kindergarten in the SCDSB. To learn more and subscribe, visit the Kindergarten page on the SCDSB website:

www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/kindergarten.

EarlyON Child and Family Centres

The foundation for lifelong learning and health is built in the early years. EarlyON Child and Family Centres across Simcoe County offer programs for children prenatal to six years of age and their parents/guardians and caregivers. They offer access to play- and inquiry-based learning supported by *How Does Learning Happen?* Ontario's pedagogy for the early years, information on child development and developmental screening including Early Referral Identification Kits (ERIKs), parent/guardian education, referrals to community resources, nutrition information, and post-natal resources. Check with your local EarlyON provider: <https://linktr.ee/earlyonsimcoe>.

How is your infant, toddler, or preschool child developing?

Is your child meeting their milestones? Age-appropriate speech and language skills are critical to your child's ability to read, write, and be successful in school as well as to their ability to engage with their peers. Free services are available to support you with your child's development. Preschool speech and language programs are located across the County of Simcoe. Call 705-739-5696 or 1-800-675-1979 to complete a developmental screen. The earlier we work together the better!

Licensed Winter Break school-age child care programs

Child care programs for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 are provided by independent, third-party child care operators in some SCDSB schools. To support your child care needs, some operators offer child care on PA days and holidays including over the Winter Break. Registration in advance is required. Please contact the child care operator directly to discuss fees and to register. More information and contact numbers can be found by visiting:

www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/childcare_before_after.

Feedback, recovery, and improvement days

At the end of each semester, all secondary schools will run feedback, recovery, and improvement days for students. Culminating assessments such as portfolios, essays, examinations, and interviews will take place during instructional days and will be returned to students with feedback.

The last day of regular instruction for students in semester one is Monday, Jan. 29, 2024. The period from Tuesday, Jan. 30 to Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024 is reserved for students who require an opportunity to

receive feedback from an assessment, to rescue or recover a credit, or to improve on an area of missed expectations. Teachers and support staff will communicate with students who will benefit most from attending this opportunity; however, all students will be invited to attend. There will be no new instruction these days. Feedback, recovery, and improvement days are an opportunity for students to work closely with their teacher if they require feedback, credit recovery, or an opportunity to improve on an area of missed expectations.

Programs available through the SCDSB's Adult and Continuing Education Learning Centers

The Simcoe County District School Board's Adult and Continuing Education department offers a variety of programming including day school, night school, summer school, correspondence, and co-op. Courses may be online, hybrid, or in-person and are based on sufficient enrollment. For current high school students, we offer travel for credit, summer school, and night school programs. For adults, we offer credit courses towards completion of an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) including credits granted for prior learning and experiences (PLAR). In support of many of the adult learners in our communities, we also offer non-credit classes in English as a second language (ESL) and literacy and essential skills (LES) both of which can support learners towards paths of employment, continued education, and citizenship. Please visit us at www.thelearningcentres.com to learn more.

School playground structures are closed for the winter

Every winter, school playground structures are closed. Students are made aware of this during school hours through announcements and staff reminders during breaks. This may not be well known throughout the community, despite signs indicating that playground structures are a winter hazard and are closed. The Canadian Standards Association regulations make recommendations for the depth of ground cover required to minimize injuries (e.g., sand, pea gravel or wood chips). These surfaces cannot be maintained when the ground freezes. Injuries from falling would be more significant on frozen ground. We strongly recommend that you do not allow your children to play on any structures while the ground is frozen.

Mental health strategy of the month - Emotion Charades

Well-being is a Strategic Priority in the Simcoe County District School Board, and our mental health and well-being department provides monthly strategies to support student and family well-being.

This month's strategy is *Emotion Charades*. This practice helps students practice expressing emotions with their whole body and recognize body language and facial expressions in others. To practice *Emotion Charades* at home, on slips of paper, write or draw different feelings depending on the age of your child. For instance, happy, sad, angry, scared, worried, sleepy, frustrated, etc. Place the papers in a bowl/container.

Then:

- Decide who will go first. Have that person pick a piece of paper from the bowl.
- Have them read the feeling to themselves, or, if needed, help your child read the feeling.
- Now they will act out the feeling without words while the other players try to guess what it is.
- Once someone gets the right answer, it's the next person's turn to pick a piece of paper and act out the feeling.

This is a fun activity that everyone in the family can play!

Emotion Charades link to School Mental Health Ontario parent sheet: <https://smho-smso.ca/online-resources/easy-and-fun-mental-health-activities-for-home/>

Find more information to support your child's mental health here: <https://smho-smso.ca/parents-and-caregivers/>

Emotion Charades:

Elementary - <https://smho-smso.ca/emhc/identification-and-management-of-emotions/recognizing/emotion-charades/>

Secondary - <https://smho-smso.ca/emhcsecondary/identification-and-management-of-emotions/recognizing/emotional-awareness/>

Follow the Mental Health and Well-being social media accounts (@SCDSB_MHWP) to see how well-being is being supported in our schools.

Math @Home parent and caregiver series

It's back! The SCDSB math team is pleased to offer three virtual sessions for parents and caregivers of SCDSB students. These sessions will focus on practical and fun ways to support children with their mathematics learning and engagement at home. The first 200 registrants will receive a Math @Home kit of resources to use at home. Participants must pre-register for each of the sessions.

Exploring the new SCDSB family math resources

Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.

This session is for parents and caregivers. Join members of the SCDSB math team for a guided exploration of the new SCDSB family math resources. Participants will have the opportunity to explore the resources that are available to support their child's math learning at home. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length. During the final 15 minutes, the math team will be available to answer questions about the resources available.

Tips for engaging in math conversations with your child @Home

Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.

This session is for parents and caregivers and will explore opportunities to discuss math with their child(ren) at home. Participants will learn about how events such as shopping, preparing food, engaging in a building project, or going for a walk can be used as a starting point for math conversations, and will receive prompts to get the discussion rolling. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length. During the final 15 minutes, the math team will be available to answer questions about the session.

Games to support your child's math learning @Home

Thursday, April 4, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.

This session is for parents, caregivers, and their children. Playing games at home is a great way to support child(ren)'s math development. In this session, several games will be explored, and participants will have the opportunity to try the games with their children during the session. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length followed by 15 additional minutes for further game play or to ask questions of our math facilitators. Bring your child(ren) and your math kit to this session!

Participants must pre-register for the sessions they wish to attend. Registered participants will receive a kit of hands-on resources that will be sent to the school indicated on the registration form. Use this link to register: <https://bit.ly/24MathAtHome>.

Head lice treatment and prevention

Anyone can get head lice. Having head lice does not mean a person is unclean or lives in a dirty home. While they are a nuisance, head lice do not spread disease or cause illness. Head lice spreads easily,

especially where people are in close contact and are very common among school-aged children or children in childcare.

Head lice spreads through direct hair-to-hair contact or indirectly by sharing hats, combs, hairbrushes, and headphones. To help prevent the spread of head lice, it's important to educate students about avoiding head-to-head contact and discourage sharing combs, hairbrushes, tuques, hats, or hair accessories.

Parents/guardians, caregivers, and families can visit <https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/PP2B/RaisingChildren/YourGrowingChild/HeadLice> for more information about head lice treatment and prevention. Or call Health Connection at 1-877-721-7520 to speak to a public health nurse.

Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

Did you know it's illegal to vape or smoke anywhere on school property, inside the school or outside within 20m of school property, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year?

The law applies to everyone on school property, students, staff, and visitors. It also means it is illegal to vape or smoke on school athletic fields during afterhours activities or vape or smoke in school washrooms. There is a fine of \$305 for vaping or smoking on school property.

But why do youth vape at school? Vapes contain nicotine, which is a highly addictive drug. Nicotine addiction is extremely powerful, develops quickly, and youth may not realize they are addicted. Once addicted, they need nicotine regularly or they will experience withdrawal, making it hard to get through the school day. Help them take back control – there are supports to help youth quit! Talk to your child about vaping, they listen more than you think. Learn more at NotAnExperiment.ca/parents.

Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions is seeking compassionate and skilled professionals with specialized experience to apply to become foster care providers

The goal of this program is to meet the needs of youth through a therapeutically supported parenting approach within a structured environment, where they are supported and guided by a multi-disciplinary treatment team. The youth will remain, or become connected to, their family/kin/community whenever possible. Treatment services will be individualized based on the needs of the youth, and the knowledge of those who know the youth best in collaboration with community partners. This will allow youth to reside in a family-based setting and remain in their home community of Simcoe Muskoka, staying connected to important relationships and supports that may already be in place.

The homes approved under this strategy are designed to create clinically informed care plans that will support the youth directly, in addition to the continued support of their care providers. Youth will be supported by a multi-disciplinary team and will be available to implement and design parenting and support to address the needs of the youth.

Compensation packages will be offered to experienced foster care providers, as well as clinical support to both care providers and youth.

If you or someone you know is looking for more information or would like to apply, contact Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions by email at bruna.figliuzzi@familyconnexions.ca or call [705-716.4664](tel:705-716-4664).

Information provided by Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions