

September 2020

Welcome to Grade 3!

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Dear Parents,

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your child back to school. I hope you had an enjoyable and restful summer break. I can tell the students are just as excited as am I to begin this school year. Before things start to get busy, I would like to go over a few items so that the classroom routines will run smoothly and efficiently all year long.

Communication

- ★ The most important item I would like to mention is communication. As a teacher, I highly value and rely on your perspective and understanding of your child as it helps me to form a deeper connection with him/her as a learner. Please email me at grainnekinsella@spev.ca with any questions, additional information or suggestions over the coming months. I look forward to working with you this year to make your child's experience in Grade 3 a holistic one.

School Bags

- Please ensure that your child has a good sized school bag. They will need to take folders, their lunch and gym gear to and from school each day. Students are not allowed to carry items out of the classroom in their hands; all items must be in their bags when they leave school. This will really help to decrease the number of lost items, folders and projects.

Gym Gear

- Due to the change in circumstances this year, students will have two scheduled P.E. periods each week. Students are asked to come to school wearing their gym strip on the days listed below. The students will need to have a full gym strip (including white socks) in order to go to P.E. It is extremely important that each piece of your child's uniform and gym gear, including socks have a clear label on them. Items of clothing such as socks, gym shirts, shorts etc will be put in the lost and found box should they have no label on them. Having all items labeled allows me to return expensive uniform pieces.

The students will have PE on ***Mondays and Wednesdays.***

- Students will have scheduled DPA times on the days they do not have P.E. There is no need to wear a gym strip on these days. However, I do recommend that students bring their runners to school so they can change into them for DPA.

Homework

- This year the students will not be using their planners, for hygiene purposes. Therefore, all homework assignments will be posted on **Google Classroom** each afternoon under a dedicated section entitled 'Homework'.
- The students will be asked to complete at least one assignment on Google Classroom each week in order to maintain the skills they developed at the end of last year and further gain independence in using this software. The assignments will be straight forward for the month of September as the main aim will be to give the students the opportunity to practice accessing, completing, uploading and submitting assignments. Thank you in advance for your technical support in this area on the homefront!
- If you are in need of a refresher or require any technical assistance, please email me at grainnekinsella@spev.ca. If this is an issue I cannot personally resolve, I will seek further assistance and reply to you as soon as possible.
- The students will be assigned homework almost everyday and will also be taking home any work that he/she should have completed during class time. This will help your child to keep up with the class and not fall behind.
- Regular homework assignments should not take more than **30-40 minutes** to complete. If your child is having difficulty completing their homework or is taking more than this recommended time, it is important that you inform me via email. Most of the homework assignments will be a continuation or review of an activity or concept covered in class. If your child continually gets frustrated over a certain assignment, it is important that I know so that we can give them the extra support they need to understand the concept. Your communication is crucial and much appreciated here, especially as I take time to get to know the individual needs of each student throughout the month of September.

Supplies

- Student supplies have been purchased in bulk this year and have been placed in your child's desk with labels on each item. Students are asked to bring in their own pencil box, scissors and ruler from home.
- Due to the current circumstances, students will not be sharing resources in the classroom. Students have been given individual 'Math packs' (a collection of important materials needed to explore Math concepts this term in a large zip-lock bag e.g. base ten materials, a place value template, a 100 square chart, dice, unifix cubes and pattern blocks). These packs will be kept in their desks and used throughout the term in class.

Lunches

- The students are asked to bring a healthy lunch from home. What a student eats at recess and lunch really affects their energy levels and behaviour throughout the day. We will be learning about a balanced diet, healthy eating and the Food Pyramid in class over the coming weeks. I encourage you to talk about these topics with your child at home, as they help you to prepare their lunch each day/as you do your weekly shop in the supermarket.
- The students are not allowed to drink pop. Water is the only permitted drink for students to have throughout the day. Please note that Saint Patrick's is completely nut free. There are many students with severe allergies. This means peanut butter, Nutella and any other bars containing nuts are not permitted at school for safety reasons. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

→ This year, recess and lunch times have been staggered and students will only socialise with other students in their learning group. Grade 3 has been partnered with Grade 2 for this purpose. Students will not be eating lunch outside on the playground this year. I will schedule a time for students to sit in the classroom and eat their snack before recess. Students will have 20 minutes to eat their lunch as usual. Students will not be permitted to share lunches. Lunch drop offs are also discouraged this year. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we make necessary adaptations this year.

A note about air circulation

- Each morning when I open the classroom, I will also open all of the windows. These windows will remain open throughout the day to provide air circulation. Even as the months get colder, we, as a staff, have still been asked to do this. Therefore, it is important that students come to school with a sweater each day to avoid feeling cold and uncomfortable during seated independent work.
- In addition to this, an air purification system has been purchased and placed in the classroom.

A note about mental health

- Now, more than ever before, our mental health has been challenged on a global scale. This has had an enormous impact on children's anxiety. I am aware that students are returning to school with complex emotions this September, not knowing what lies ahead. In order to support each student, mental health content and check-ins will be incorporated into the school day. This will involve mental health homework at times, even checking in with family members and asking questions etc. It is my hope that this will benefit you and your child this year.

The Redesigned BC Curriculum

- The students have been introduced to the new BC curriculum since Kindergarten, when this curriculum was in its 'phasing in' process. You will notice some differences in the redesign, most specifically, a focus on three 'Core Competencies': **(1) Communication, (2) Thinking and (3) Personal and Social competencies**. These competencies are a set of intellectual, personal and socio-emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep and lifelong learning.
- We will spend September reviewing the language specific to each competency and students will be encouraged to use these terminologies to describe their learning. This will serve as a foundation for the meta-cognitive work that will take place this year. Their attention will be drawn to their own progress and learning through self-assessment.

I am a Gift from God

- Grade 3 will be engaging in the 'I am a Gift from God' programme shortly after Christmas. This programme is designed to help children to develop the understanding that the human body, as a gift from God, is to be respected. Parental involvement at home, as with all curricular areas, is integral to the implementation of this programme. More information will be given to you about this programme in January.

I look forward to working with you all this coming year!

Respectfully,
Ms. Kinsella.