



# Balaclava Bulletin

## January 2018



### *From the Principal's Desk . . .*

Welcome back and **Happy New Year** to everyone in the Balaclava community. On behalf of the Balaclava Staff, I hope everyone had a relaxing break and was able to enjoy the time with family and friends.

December was a busy month and we finished the year with our **K-3 Concert** and **4-8 Play**. Our students, staff and volunteers put a lot of hard work into preparing! Thank-you also to our Band and Choir who have been practicing throughout the year, and were able to perform for



us. We are thankful for the family and friends

who were able to join us for our performances. A special thank-you to Mrs. Sharp and her dedicated crew! The Directors (Mrs. Sharp and Mrs. Stevenson) and the Costume, Stage and Production Support Team (Ms. Todoruck, Mr. Nicks, Ms. Clarke, Ms. Quinn, Ms. Pietrzak, Mrs. Millard, Ms. Hawryluk, Mrs. Hughson, Mrs. Georgakopolous, Mrs. Mummery, and Mrs. Dath) all worked diligently behind the scenes. Thanks to all who made our gr4-8 play such a great opportunity for our students to shine!

December was most definitely a month of generosity from our community. Thank you to everyone who donated to our **Toy Drive** for Queen Victoria School and **Food Drive** for the Flamborough Food Bank. It was very successful. A special thank-you to the Clairmont family. Thanks to our student helpers for collecting, counting, organizing and delivering our donations. Also thank-you to Mrs. Wright and the student leaders who delivered the items to the school and helped serve at the QV Turkey Lunch. Queen Victoria Staff and



Students were very grateful to receive such a generous donation! Overall, we collected **520 toys** and a **minivan full of canned food items**.



Over the next months we will be practicing our **Secure School drills** (Lockdown, Hold & Secure, Shelter in Place, and Bomb Threat). The goal of the practices is to minimize the risk for staff and students during a time of crisis. Staff, students, and parents will be given prior notice of these drills via information posted on our Balaclava Website (<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/balaclava>) and Twitter Account ([https://twitter.com/balaclava\\_hwdsb](https://twitter.com/balaclava_hwdsb)). As well, students/staff will be informed via announcements. Please

see additional information on page 5 of this newsletter.

Coming up **January 23** we will be welcoming **Chris Vollum** to Balaclava for his **Social Media Fitness** presentation. Our Gr4-8 classes will be participating during the school day. School Council has booked Chris for an evening presentation for parents and other community members (more details on page 2). Hope to see you there!

The staff at Balaclava look forward to 2018!

*M Wilson*  
principal

### *Save the Date . . .*

**January 9** (6:00pm)

- School Council Meeting

**January 16** (6:30pm)

- Home & School Meeting

New members are  
always welcome!

**January 23** (6:30pm)

- Social Media Fitness  
(Parent Presentation with  
guest Chris Vollum)

## Social Media - Parent Presentation - January 23

Balaclava School Council is excited to share with you that we will be hosting Chris Vol-lum for an adult information session called **Social Media Fitness**.

Chris is an experienced speaker with a wealth of knowledge to share. You will leave inspired, skilled and confident to support your family's journey through Social Media (Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and more).

Mark your calendar - Chris will be at Balaclava **Tuesday, January 23** at **6:30pm**.

All families and community members are welcome. Please invite your friends!

Should you require child-minding, please let us know at [SchoolCouncil016@hwsb.on.ca](mailto:SchoolCouncil016@hwsb.on.ca)!

Looking forward to seeing you there!

**social media fitness**



### Swim Team Fundraiser

Have you heard about the newly formed Balaclava Swim Team? Well the Juniors started off our season with a successful splash. So much so the Coaches and Assistant Coaches are holding a **"License to Chew Gum Day!"** for grade 1-8 students on **Friday, January 12**.

All proceeds from the Gum Day will be going towards new Balaclava Swim Caps. Our new senior swim team will be sporting these as they speed through the water leaving bubbles in their wake! So let's support our new sport and purchase a license to chew!

Students will be able to purchase a "gum license" Wednesday, January 10 and Thursday, January 11 to allow them to chew gum Friday, January 12. Licenses will be \$2.

Friday, January 12 gum will be on sale at school and students can also bring their own gum from home. Double Bubble Gum will be on sale - 5 pieces for \$1.



Jr Team 2017/18 Coaches: Mrs. Cassidy, Ms Keyte

Jr Team 2017/18 Assistant Coaches: Stephanie, Paige, Alex

### Balaclava Band & Choir



December 20 the Balaclava Band & Choir visited the Juravinski Hospital to play for staff, visitors, and patients under the direction of Ms. Clarke. They did a great job entertaining and representing Balaclava! Way to spread



some cheer and smiles! And there was even a surprise appearance by Santa.

**Recycle your  
Christmas  
Cards!**

**Mrs. DeLong  
would greatly ap-  
preciate your  
Christmas Cards  
for future  
projects!**

**Kindergarten Registration begins February 5, 2018**

Your child is eligible for:

- Junior Kindergarten if they are age four by December 31 (born in 2014), or
- Senior Kindergarten if they are age five by December 31 (born in 2013)



**Please contact the school to pre-register!** If you have neighbours with kindergarten aged children, please share this information with them and encourage them to register. Mrs. Nelligan will request the following information:

- ◇ Student's Name
- ◇ Date of Birth
- ◇ Parents' Names
- ◇ Address
- ◇ Telephone Numbers
- ◇ E-mail Address

Once parents contact the office, forms will be sent home to complete the registration process.

No out of catchment applications will be accepted at Balaclava for the 2018/2019 school year.

**Please remind your children to check the **Lost and Found** regularly for missing items.** Thanks to Home & School for looking after our Lost & Found. They check labels to find the owner of items. They then wash and donate unclaimed items at the end of each month.

**School Excursions**

Please remember that we must all follow the "due date" on the excursion forms. As of the due date, staff tally the numbers and then confirm busing arrangements and submit final numbers to the destination for billing. Once the due date passes, we will not be able to accept forms or money for a trip.

Trips are automatically removed from School Cash at midnight on the due date. Thanks to all of our families who have signed up and use School Cash to help us with collecting funds. If you need help signing up for School Cash, please talk to Mrs. Nelligan.

In the event of a situation where a family is experiencing a hardship related to a class trip (or other school expense), please contact Ms. Wilson ahead of a due date to confidentially work out a plan for participation. We believe that the excursions we plan are valuable extensions of the learning that is happening in the classroom and that each child should have the opportunity to participate.

**Reading Specialists in HWDSB**

At Balaclava, we're committed to supporting a goal where every child is reading by the end of Grade 1, where developmentally appropriate.

A child who is reading by the end of Grade 1 is set up for positive academic outcomes and future success.

In September 2017, HWDSB celebrated the deployment of 48 Reading Specialists across the district to work directly with students and educators in all Kindergarten and Grade 1 classrooms. Reading Specialists are working with children within classrooms, alongside classroom educators, to deliver appropriate strategies and/or interventions. They support reading acquisition and respond to student learning needs.

We're pleased to welcome Mrs. MacLachlan as our Reading Specialist in our school this year. If you have any questions about the Reading Specialists and their role, please contact the school.

### **Inclement Weather and School Closures**

The decision to cancel School and Board Administrative Operations is often a difficult call to make. Please be assured that the decision to remain open or to close is always made with the safety and security of our students and staff in mind.

In the event of inclement weather, our Transportation Department advises our carriers to drive predetermined routes to assess the condition of the roads. The decision to close our schools is made in conjunction with our colleagues at the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board based on relevant information at that time.

School Boards across Ontario have varying policies about the cancellation of schools. At HWDSB, the cancellation of transportation due to **inclement weather** immediately triggers the closure of our schools. However, at its meeting of November 2014, the Board of Trustees approved a resolution that allows the Director, the discretion to keep schools open in the event transportation is cancelled due to **extreme cold temperatures**.

Please remember, as a parent/guardian you always have the choice on whether or not to send your child to school.

HWDSB will NOT post a weather alert on its website to signal that schools are open. School Closure Hotline 905.521.2535

### **Outdoor Recess in Cold Weather**



On cold days, we monitor the weather prior to each outdoor break. Depending on the conditions, we determine if an outdoor, indoor or shortened recess is suitable.

The City of Hamilton's Public Health and Community Services Department recommends individuals stay indoors when the temperature drops below minus 15 degrees Celsius without wind chill. We will follow the Public Health recommendation and keep the students inside on these days.

On other cold days, staff and administration on outdoor supervision monitor the students and the conditions to make the decision to shorten outdoor time if necessary. Teachers will help to remind students to wear all their outdoor accessories (hat, scarf, gloves, snowpants, etc.).

### **Drinking Water Testing and Drinking Water Fixture Signage**

Ontario is continuing to protect children's health with new regulation changes aimed at improving drinking water testing in child care centres and schools to minimize children's exposure to lead.

New amendments to Ontario Regulation 243/07 that took effect July 1, 2017, now require lead testing within these facilities for all fixtures used to provide drinking water and/or prepare food or drink for children under 18. There is a three-year period to test at elementary schools and child care centres, and a five-year period to complete testing at secondary schools.

Ontario Regulation 243/07 also requires testing to measure the presence of lead in drinking water against the provincial drinking water quality standard of 10 micrograms per litre, based on a national guideline set by Health Canada.

As we go through testing each year at Balaclava you may notice stickers around certain sinks in the school. Any water fixture that is meant to provide water for consumption or for food preparation will be clearly labelled with a sign illustrating that the water is provided for drinking purposes. Water fountains will not have these signs as their intended purpose is for drinking.





## **Secure Schools**

Although one can never predict when a violent or potentially harmful situation may arise, schools can prepare for responding to such an incident through intentional, scheduled practices. The goal of the practices is to minimize the risk for staff and students during a time of crisis. Like at all HWDSB schools, at Balaclava we hold Fire, Lockdown, Hold & Secure, Shelter in Place and Bomb Threat/Evacuation drills each year.

**“Hold and Secure”** is used when the school is secured due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school (e.g. bank robbery near a school).

- the school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors locked until the situation is resolved
- staff members posted at each entrance restrict all movement in and out of the school
- where possible, exterior facing windows will be covered or blinds drawn, and lights dimmed
- the school would most likely to be notified by Hamilton Police Services

**“Shelter In Place”** is used for an environmental, or weather related situation, where it is necessary to keep all occupants within the school to protect them (e.g., chemical spills, extreme weather conditions)

- people enter and remain in the building with the doors and windows closed
- fans, heating/air conditioning units are turned off to prevent air from outside entering the building
- normal operations may continue within the building

**“Lockdown”** is used when there is a major incident or threat of school violence within the school, or in relation to the school. The threat is inside the school, or is on school property, and poses an immediate threat to the students and staff

- follow current lockdown procedures (blinds closed, door locked, lights off, everyone is quiet/out of sight)
- all movement in and out of the school and within the school is restricted
- in the event of a "real" situation, the Hamilton Police Services will be responding

**“Evacuation/Bomb Threat”** is used when there is a potential situation (e.g., a bomb threat) requiring exit from the building. For the safety of all, this information is not shared with students or the public during the evacuation time (it will be communicated by police/principal under direction from HWDSB).

- follow current evacuation procedures (exit the building following staff direction)
- in the event of a “real” situation, the Hamilton Police Services will be responding

**Over the next months we will be practicing these types of drills. Staff, students, and parents will be given prior notice of these drills on our Balaclava Website (<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/balaclava/>) and Twitter Account ([https://twitter.com/balaclava\\_hwdsb](https://twitter.com/balaclava_hwdsb)). As well, students/staff will be informed via announcements.**

**“Fire”** is used when there is a fire or smoke at the school and requires exit from the building.

- follow current evacuation procedures (exit the building following staff direction)
- in the event of a “real” situation, the Hamilton Fire and Police Services will be responding

**In the fall and spring, we will continue practicing fire drills. Students will be informed after the drill that it was a drill.**

Along with practices at school, we encourage parents/guardians to talk with their children about the importance of being well prepared for emergency situations. Reassure your child that:

- these drills, like fire drills, are just to practice how to stay safe in the extremely unlikely event that someone dangerous enters the school.
- the adults at school work together to keep them safe
- practising means we are prepared and can feel confident that we all know what to do just in case.
- having a plan like this and practicing means that we don’t have to worry about these concerns and instead we can focus on having fun and learning at school.

Balaclava Staff remind the students of these points as well. We talk about all the things that we do to keep safe at school and that practising certain drills help us to know what to do if an unsafe situation happens. Students understand that for a fire drill we need to leave the building, while during a lockdown drill we practice staying safe in our classrooms. For most students, especially the youngest ones, the language above will be sufficient. However, as students get older they may ask specific questions, speculate about the reasons for such a drill, or share some knowledge with the teacher about situations that have happened elsewhere. Teachers will re-direct to the language above (e.g., practising means that we should feel confident that we’re prepared) and not encourage more discussion on the “what-ifs”. If it seems necessary, a teacher in the younger grades may use an example such as: if a large animal that shouldn’t be inside came into our school, we would stay safe in our classroom until the experts could come and take it where it belongs.