



Earl Kitchener Elementary School

Earl Kitchener Families

Fall (November/December) 2021

Hello everyone,

My apologies for getting away from creating monthly newsletters to share home as I realize that this has been a helpful way for families to have a good understanding of things that are happening at EK, even during a time where it can seem as though 'not much is happening' in general!

This one I am considering to be a 'fall' newsletter and in the new year, I will return to monthly communication that may also be sent home in 'hard copy' format and will definitely be posted to our EK website.

Please see below as there are a number of items to share!

School website ... please consider checking in on our website periodically as updates are posted regularly. If you '**subscribe**' to the site, you will also receive **notifications** alerting to you the fact that something new has been uploaded.

After school (dismissal) ... please remember that given current circumstances, schools are asking that families pick children up and disperse as quickly as is possible from school property (*including in front of the school*). The time will come again where this is not necessary however for now, please be mindful and regardless, please do not allow children to climb the trees out front as this is an ongoing safety concern.

Gym shoes ... with winter approaching, it is important to remember that wet shoes and boots cannot be worn in the gym (for safety). Please ensure that your child has 'inside' running shoes in order to ensure active participation in Phys Ed class (students are welcome to leave a pair at school).

Spirit Days ... we have a number of folks on staff who make up our 'EK Spirit Days Committee'. As a group, we discuss, determine and plan for days at the school that are framed around a focus on 'fun', community building and engagement ('Spirit'). Based on our ongoing learning and evolving related to equity, we are doing our best to have these events be 'accessible for all' and to have 'multiple options' for participation so as to ensure that all children can feel included. Our first Spirit Day this year included a brief outdoor 'dance party' that was also connected to some Halloween celebrations. Our next Spirit Day is Thursday, November 25th and our theme is 'Wellness' ... students will learn more about it in the coming days. Thank you Spirit Committee!

November PA Day ... Friday, November 26th is a Board wide PA Day. While there is no school for students on this day, staff will be involved in professional learning and development.

Choir ... Mme Prevec and Mr. Popek have been holding weekly choir practices in the gym for interested Grade 4 and 5 students during nutrition breaks. The appropriate layers of Public health safety measures are in place and once again, the choir performed for the school during our outdoor Remembrance Day program.

Intramurals ('open gym') ... while we continue to align our daily practice with Public Health guidelines, we are also very much focused on trying to find creative ways to continue with activities that we know are incredibly important for children and that they also love! We cannot 'cross-pollinate' groups currently (classes must always be their own 'cohort'), however classes have been given access to times in the gym during Nutrition Breaks where they can participate in extra-curricular activities starting the week of November 22nd. Given the number of classes that we have, not all will be able to participate initially and we will determine a 'rotation' as appropriate. Thank you Mme McColman for organizing and to all those on staff who have offered to supervise their classes in the gym for this opportunity.

Library ('Learning Commons') ... during the summer of 2020, a major renovation was done here at EK to convert the previous library/book room into a single, larger 'Learning Commons' space. Unfortunately, COVID made the use of this space not possible and then we also have had to use a portion of it as a 'classroom' from time to time until recently. We are now close to having the space prepared once again for its intended use and a Board library technician has been in several times now to complete a process of 'weeding' and inputting items into our circulation system for classes to begin book exchanges shortly.

Book Donations ... we have budget to continue making purchases of new books for our library however if ever you feel that you have 'current' books in good condition that you are finished with and interested in donating to the school, we are happy to receive! Use your judgement as to 'good condition' as these are items that could be added to library circulation or to classroom libraries. We are always looking for French and English 'graphic novels' (think of 'comic book style') and a comprehensive list of series/genres that we are always looking to increase has been posted to our website.

Construction Project (HVAC System) at EK ... last spring a massive construction project began here at the school to entirely remove and replace the existing HVAC system (boilers, duct work, etc.) with a new heat pump system. This system, once entirely operational, will provide cleaner, more efficient and balanced heat and air circulation throughout the school, and will also provide air conditioning during warmer months. Given the scale of the project (close to three million dollars when all is said and done), this has been in the works for years (it was not triggered by COVID) and it looks as though the vast majority of the work will be completed by the end of November. Since the start of this school year, crews have been working evenings (4:00 pm to 2:00 am) and on weekends and with things wrapping up, in the coming weeks you will see the removal of the various shipping containers and the repair/replacement of any fencing that was removed or altered to allow ease of access (on both the Stanley Street and Homewood Avenue sides).

School Council and Home and School Association ... these monthly meetings are currently being held 'virtually' on MS Teams. We do not hold December meetings and so the next will be on Tuesday, January 18th (from 7:00 - 8:00 pm and 8:00 - 9:00 pm). If you would like additional information, or are interested in joining us to learn more about what's happening here at EK, please reach out via email to;

earlkitchenerparentcouncil@gmail.com

Please also find included here (posted to our website as well) the **EK Home and School Association 'Year in Review'** for 2020/2021.

Fundraising ... traditionally, fundraising at EK has largely been by way of the annual 'Fright Night' event along with Scholastic Book Fairs. COVID has made these events not possible and in fact, a 'pause' was put on fundraising in general (by the HWDSB). Home and School Associations however, are still permitted to organize and facilitate fundraising initiatives provided that they don't require involvement from 'within' the school (collecting money, etc.) and we thank them for the tremendous work that goes into organizing such things. While we are always mindful of how frequently families are being asked to consider participating with monetary contributions, this year it was determined that several 'small' initiatives would take place in lieu of these aforementioned much larger events in the past with a plan to return to these once we are permitted.

At this point,

- A 'virtual' Scholastic Book Fair was initiated and wraps up as of this week.
- 'Hamilton is Earl Kitchener' t-shirt campaign runs from November 16th – December 1st (see additional information included here and on the EK website)
- 'My Kindness Calendar' campaign runs the week of November 22nd (see additional information included here and on the EK website)
- Information regarding any additional initiatives will be shared in the new year.

French Immersion Applications (for SK students) ... please visit the HWDSB website and/or our EK website for information regarding the application process for Grade 1 French Immersion (for September 2022). Important information along with deadline dates have been posted.

Finally ... please do your part to help the school and office run efficiently by ensuring that students **arrive on time**. Under the current circumstances, students who arrive late must wait outside with caregivers until staff are available to come down and let them in. **If for any reason you need to pick your child up early, PLEASE let the school know as soon as is possible in order that we can be prepared and thank you in advance!**

Please check the EK website (calendar) for additional events and dates to remember.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out ... thank you for the continued help and support in making Earl Kitchener School a safe and great place to be!

Mr. Thorne, Mrs. Macnab and the staff of Earl Kitchener School.