

Monday Memo for December 18 to December 20, 2023

Hello Families,

This is a short week for all- our last day of school before the break is Wednesday, December 20, 2023.

I would like to extend a thank you to our families and community members who attended the P-3 Holiday Concerts. All 4 shows were well attended, and we welcomed close to 1200 people to the event. Also, thank you for your Scholastic Book Fair support. We don't have a final dollar amount yet, but WBS library will benefit from your generosity.

Our **Spirit Week** continues this week with the following themes:

December 18th- Spirit Week- Festive Hat and Slipper Day

December 19th- Spirit Week- Festive Colours and Sequins Day

December 20th- Spirit Week- PJ's Day; Last Day of School

SAC Meeting: Tuesday, December 19, 2023 6:30-7:30 pm (the agenda will be posted on the school's website, under SAC on Monday, December 18, 2023.)

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude for your support, enthusiasm, questions, and feedback over the past 4 months. It is my privilege to be the Principal of West Bedford School.

Happy Holidays to all our families! We look forward to welcoming everyone back on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

Susan Casey
(Principal)

Past Memo Information:

A respectful workplace environment:

Despite sharing with the community what staff have been experiencing, we continued to experience verbal abuse and physical intimidation from some members of the school community during the morning drop off and afternoon pick up last week. We have contacted our School Liaison Officer, Constable Paul Desrochers and he will be following up with these incidents. If you choose to engage in verbal abuse or intimidation with a staff member, you will notice that your licence plate number, make and colour of your vehicle is being recorded. We will then be passing this information along to Cnst. Desrochers. Please note that these behaviours may result in a fine or if severe, a protection of property will be

served where you will no longer be allowed on campus. No one deserves to be treated in a way that they are fearful for their safety.

The procedures for drop off and pick up have been created to support the safety of ALL students. When cars park in the staff parking lot, in no parking zones, drive around to the back of the school, or run over the pylons, it creates an unsafe environment.

Parking on school grounds:

- Visitor Parking for 2023-2024 is in the lower parking lot by the field and large basketball court (High School side of the building). If you plan to drive your child to school, please park here in the morning and at end of day. You are welcome to walk with your child to their designated door for entry or to meet them at their designated door for exit and walk together.
- There are 6 designated Pre-Primary parking spots in front of their BLUE entrance door. You will need a PP tag visible on your dash to enter the PP parking area.
- All other parking spots around the school are designated for staff parking and are not available for families to park. Please respect this.

Kiss and Go Loop:

- We do have a quick drop off loop (it is the driveway entrance closest to the PP-8 side of the building). This loop is intended for cars to pull up, have the student get out and then the vehicle leaves (think of a drive thru). There is to be no parking or extended stay in the Kiss and Go Loop. **Please remain in your vehicle** and do your best to keep the line of cars moving smoothly.
- **Staff are no longer opening doors due to repeated experiences of verbal abuse and intimidation. Staff are also not permitted to unbuckle a student from a car seat. If your child cannot do this independently then please park in the family parking area and walk your child to their entry door.**
- **The Kiss and Go loop will be closed at dismissal time**

We suggest all families talk to their child(ren) and create a plan for how morning drop off and end of day dismissal is going to be for your family.

Bussing:

- At the end of the day, students in P-8 who ride a bus will be brought to the cafeteria where they will find an orange pylon with their bus number on it. Pre-Primary students will be brought to the gym by their teachers.
- Students will line up by their pylon
- When their bus number is called, an adult will lead the bus line out to the bus and supervise the students getting on.
- Bus Stop: It is helpful if you could show your child where they are getting off the bus at the end of the day.

- Students in PP-2 must have an authorized adult waiting at the bus stop to receive them. If a child does not have anyone at the bus stop to pick them up, the bus drivers MUST bring them back to the school.

For questions around transportation, please reach out to the Transportation Team at Transportation@hrce.ca; If for some reason, your child does not get off at their bus stop, please call the school at 902-405-0337 and the Transportation Team at 902-431-4723 to let us know. Your child's safety is important to us.

We ask that our school families respect the procedures that are in place!

Leaving School Property at Lunch:

We have noticed last week that students in grades 6-8 began leaving the property at lunch time to go to local businesses. We are responsible for the safety of students during lunch time, so leaving the property puts the students and the staff in a vulnerable position if anything were to happen.

Students are **not** to leave the property unless they go home for lunch **every day**. We have a list of students who do this, but it is not possible to maintain an accurate list of who is leaving and who is staying for each day of the week.

Please remind your child that they are not to leave school property at lunch.

WBS Culture and Climate: continued feedback topics

Phys Ed classes- Due to our large population, our phys ed times range from having 2-4 classes at one time. This arrangement is not ideal due to the noise level and the number of students in one space at the same time. Our Phys Ed team have been working through the logistics of this. The gym can easily accommodate 2 classes at a time. Thus, the team is now alternating taking a class outside for outdoor physical activity, using the High School gym when it is not in use, and using space in the cafeteria for phys ed classes.

We will continue to monitor how phys ed classes are going at WBS and adjust as needed. We want each student to experience a high-quality program.

Request from your Physical Education Team:

Hello everyone, now that the colder weather and snow is here, we have many students forgetting their proper physical education footwear. We would like every student to participate in Phys Ed so we are asking for shoe donations. If you have any gently used sneakers that you no longer need, please consider donating them to the PE department. We need all types of sizes, as we have students from P-8. This way a child who forgets their indoor shoes will be able to borrow a pair of shoes from us for their PE class! Thank you in advance for your help. The PE team.

Building a West Bedford School culture and climate:

I would like to acknowledge that I am aware that there are some who are not happy with the how things are moving forward with the school. There are feelings of being “boxed out” from providing ideas and opinions to the Admin team. I want you to know that I value the information that our families have provided to date. There have been some great ideas raised and valid feedback provided to us. I want all within our WBS community to know that I am listening and working through matters with individual families or with our team, on broader student body matters, as they arise.

Opening a new school, offers many different opportunities, challenges, perspectives, priorities, and requests that need to be balanced within a large and diverse school community. I am listening and I do value input.

As the Principal, I work with my Admin team to review the feedback and prioritize our work. It will not always be possible to accept or action every suggestion or to do so within the timeframes that families might be expecting, but I do remain committed to listening, to continuous improvement, and to working through priorities with a focus on supporting students and their success, while also getting the school set up and established.

Feedback topics:

School Population:

As a school, we are 55 days old (as of December 1, 2023). We continue to enroll students, but we also have students moving away. Our current enrollment is 1276, PP-8. Our class numbers range from 17-29 students in Grades P-6 and 20-31 in Grades 7 & 8.

In September, WBS opened at 150% capacity. With the continued building development within the community, we know that our population will continue to grow, and this is not sustainable for the school.

As the administrator, I understand & share your concerns about growing enrolments and continued population growth in the area. I have met with our HRCE colleagues, and they are aware and are working to develop a long term plan. More concrete ideas will be communicated with the community after February- which is the registration month for 2024-2025- and once next year’s initial student numbers are known.

Universal Washrooms:

We have heard & we share your concern about unclean washrooms. We have established a more rigorous cleaning schedule for the bathrooms and have also provided lessons to our younger students on how to use the washroom properly - we are seeing progress, but we aren’t there yet. We’ll keep at it until all students have a clean washroom to use.

Pre- Primary Washrooms:

A privacy stall has been created in the Pre-Primary washrooms that still allows for students to be safely supervised and supported, but also provides privacy from others.

Operational Aspects:

Library: We would love to be able to accept parent volunteers to help us set up the shelving and books in the library, however, due to procurement rules we are only permitted to have our contracted suppliers to do this work. Rest assured we want the library set up ASAP too and are working with the supplier to get it done as soon as possible.

Cubbies: The timeline given to us for the additional cubbies will be December. Until they arrive, we are going to be asking students to put their outerwear on the back of their chair. We are also looking at costing out putting up temporary hooks in the hallway for student items.

Bike Racks: We are working with our HRCE Operations team to acquire more bike racks and have them placed in different locations around the perimeter of the WBS side of the building. It is wonderful to see how many students travel by bike or scooter to school.

O Canada and Announcements: We have been trying different times and ways O Canada and announcements are done at WBS. After hearing from some in the community and speaking with staff and some students, we have decided to go back to playing O Canada and sharing the daily announcements with the whole school at 8:30 am.

Volunteering at WBS:

We do believe that “many hands, make light work”. In the first few months of opening, it was difficult to know how to use volunteers within the school. As we move through the year, we are finding more volunteer opportunities for our community to be a part of. If you have your volunteer paperwork complete, please send it in to Katelynn.Armstrong@hrce.ca or MGale@hrce.ca. To complete your paperwork, please check out <https://www.hrce.ca/volunteer>

Volunteer opportunities:

1. Morning and afternoon parking lot attendants- we would welcome volunteers to help with the safe drop off and pick up of our students each day. The morning shift would be from 7:50-8:30 am and the afternoon shift would be from 2:00-2:40 pm. If this is something you would be able to help with please email wbs@hrce.ca.
2. Lunch time class monitor P-3- We are looking for people to be monitors in individual classrooms while students eat and then to support students to get ready to go outside. This position can be volunteer based or a paid position. If you would like to join the paid lunch monitors, please reach out to Courtney Smith at Courtney.Smith@hrce.ca. If you would like to volunteer, please email wbs@hrce.ca.

The time commitment would be 11:55-12:20 Monday to Friday; If you would like to volunteer to supervise outside as well, the time commitment would be 11:55-12:45 pm.

We will be continuing to look for more opportunities to welcome volunteers into WBS as the school year continues.

Did you know?

When student issues/conflicts are brought to the attention of the Admin team, we use the Provincial Code of Conduct <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/docs/provincialschoolcodeofconduct.pdf> to guide our decision making. The code of conduct provides us with options for consequences that we can assign to student behaviour. Along with the code of conduct, we also consider the student's age and cognitive capacity. We investigate all sides of the situation and provide the opportunity to hear from all who are involved. We then follow up with families to keep you in the loop.

West Bedford School Yearbook: West Bedford School has partnered with Jostens to produce the first ever WBS Yearbook!

(1) Starting December 1st, yearbooks will be sold for \$40.00, with an additional \$5.00 for personalization.

(2) Final sales will run from Feb 1st to March 8th. The yearbook will be sold at full price \$45.00 with additional \$5.00 for personalization options.

Please view the WBS website main page for the online sales link or click [here](#). Yearbooks will be delivered close to the end of the school year.

Upcoming dates

December 18th- Spirit Week- Festive Hat and Slipper Day

December 19th- Spirit Week- Festive Colours and Sequins Day; SAC Meeting 6:30-7:30 pm

December 20th- Spirit Week- PJ's Day; Last Day of School

January 2, 2024- First Day of School after Winter Break