

Monday Memo for January 22 to January 26, 2024

Hello Families,

Parking:

We experienced rude and unacceptable behaviour this week from some drivers. Please note that we have reached out to our School Liaison Officer who will be in contact with them. Driving over pylons, disregarding the directions of staff, or being verbally aggressive when asked to follow the school's protocols will not be accepted. We all have a responsibility to keep each student safe during drop off and pick up each day.

Reminder again: There is no parking in the High School parking lot. The High School Parking lot is located right in front of the PP-8 main doors. Please park in the designated family parking area in the lower parking lot.

2024-2025 School Year- REGISTRATION for Pre-Primary (English Program only), Grade Primary (English Program or Early French Immersion Program), Grade 7 (English Program, Late French Immersion Program, continuation in Early French Immersion Program) will be in February 2024 for the upcoming school year.

Pre-Primary- We encourage families to register their child for Pre-Primary (turning 4 years old by December 31, 2024). More information around Pre-Primary will be shared in the coming months. For current Pre-Primary information, please visit:

<https://www.hrce.ca/students/elementary/provincial-pre-primary-program>

Primary- A child who is turning 5 years old by December 31, 2024, is eligible for Grade Primary. We will have a Primary Orientation meeting for families in February (date still to be determined).

Grade 7 Late French Immersion Program- Students in our Grade 6 English Program at West Bedford School will have the opportunity to enter the Late French Immersion Program starting in Grade 7. A Grade 7 registration form will be accessible to all grade 6 WBS Families in February to select the program of study: English, Late French Immersion, or continuing in Early French Immersion. There will be a Grade 7 information session for families in February (date still to be determined).

February is an important month for schools as we start to prepare for the next school year. The student enrollment numbers throughout February and at the end of February impacts our initial staffing allotment (how many teachers and classes we will have) and initial decisions about what our school configuration may look like next year. Once the online registration form for the 2024-2025 is open, I will send out the link to all families and link it to our school website.

2024-2025 Excel program

Information around registration for next year's school year will be coming out shortly. If you would like more information about the Excel program, please visit

<https://www.hrce.ca/families/families/excel>

Lunch time volunteers- We are looking for family volunteers to support our Primary to Grade 3 classes while they eat. Ideally, we would like to have one adult in each classroom to support students while they are eating and getting ready to go outside. The time commitment would be from 11:55-12:25 pm Monday to Friday. Those who have current criminal records check and child abuse registry checks on file at WBS are eligible to volunteer. Please email Courtney Smith, VP for Grades P-3 at Courtney.Smith@hrce.ca to express your interest in this opportunity.

Upcoming Events:

February 19- Heritage Day in Nova Scotia- Schools are closed

February 20- SAC Meeting at WBS Library 6:30-8:00 pm

March 11-15- March Break- Schools are closed

March 18- Assessment & Evaluation Day- No School for Students

March 29- Good Friday- Schools are closed

April 1- Easter Monday- Schools are closed

April 4- PD for staff in the morning and Parent-Family Meetings in the afternoon and evening

April 16- SAC Meeting at WBS Library 6:30-8:30 pm

May 20- Victoria Day- Schools are closed

May 21- SAC Meeting at WBS Library 6:30-8:00 pm

June 18- SAC Meeting at WBS library 6:30-8:00 pm

June 24-26 (dates to be confirmed)- Grade 6 Closing Ceremony & a Grade 8 Closing Ceremony

June 27- Assessment & Evaluation Day- No school for Students

June 28- last day of school

Have a wonderful week everyone!

Kind regards,
Susan Casey
(Principal)

Past Memo Information:

I continue to share the WBS student population with my supervisor and senior staff, as they begin their conversations and planning for next year.

As a staff, we continue to focus on our student success plan by meeting with families, and determining next steps to ensure the needs of our students are being met. Please reach out to your child's teacher or Vice Principal if you have any questions about your child's academic and/or social/emotional learning.

Parking:

I have been asked by the High School Admin team to remind our families that the High School parking lot is not open to family parking. The High School lot is located right in front of the PP-8 main doors. The high school administration has let us know that their staff have been arriving to begin their day and have not been able to park due to our PP-8 families parking there. Please Park in the designated family parking area in the lower parking lot.

Food Product Recall:

We wanted to make sure that families were aware that the Government of Canada has announced a voluntary food product recall of granola bars. Please follow this [link](#) to review the complete list of Quaker products that are recalled from the marketplace due to possible salmonella contamination. If you have one of these products, you must check the UPC barcode located on the box(es), as well as the expiration date. The product UPC barcodes that correspond with each affected product are found in the product list table. Expiration dates range from January to October 2024.

Cubbies- We expected to have additional cubbies installed for students over the break, but this did not happen. We have now been given the timeline of February for installation. It is no longer reasonable to have students keep their outerwear on the floor outside their classroom, so I have met with our operations team to find a temporary solution until the cubbies are installed. We are ordering clothing racks and boot mats for classrooms on the third floor, which will allow students to hang up their winter gear and store their winter footwear in an organized and safe manner.

Communication- We discovered this past week that some emails being sent are being blocked by the server firewalls in place. We know for sure that we are not receiving emails from Hotmail and some gmail accounts. There may be other email accounts that are being blocked as well. If you send a staff member an email and do not hear a response within 2 business days, please call the school at 902-405-0337. There is a possibility that the email was not received and that is why there has not been a response.

School Culture and Climate- we will be working on developing a well-being survey for students, staff, and families over the next few weeks. The information that is gathered will provide West Bedford School staff with feedback on how we can focus our energies to work together to create a positive culture and climate. This information will be incorporated into the School's Success Plan (SSP) Well-being goal and strategies. There will be a follow up survey near the end of May for students, staff, and families to measure the impact of the work that has been done.

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.