OTTER NEWS

September 11, 2023

Parents,

It has been a busy week as we welcomed students back to the building and finalized our school divisions and classrooms. It was so great to see smiling faces and hear laughter in our building again. Thank you, parents, for taking the time to get your child back into “school mode” again. My own kids (like yours, I’m sure) have had a tough time getting back to routine and there were a lot of emotions as they found out about class placements and separation from their friends. It’s hard to hear as a parent, but if history has taught us anything, it is that they are resilient and always find joy no matter who they are with.

I have tried my best to keep the newsletter concise, as I know you have been receiving other emails from classroom teachers, as well as mine.

Thank you for all your support,

Mr. D. Woelders

Principal | North Otter

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| **Upcoming Events** |
| **Date** | **Event** |
| September 11 | Students begin in their new classrooms.  |
| September 14 | Grade 6/7 band registrations due. |
| September 18 | First full day of Kindergarten |
| September 19 | Meet the Teacher & Community BBQ |
| September 21 | School Photos |
| September 22 | Terry Fox Run |
| September 29 | Orange Shirt Day |
| September 30 | National Day for Truth & Reconciliation |
| October 2 | Stat Holiday |

**Class Placements**

Students will start the day in their permanent classrooms beginning Monday, September 12th. You should have received an email from your child’s teacher welcoming them to the class and where you can find their classroom. For those who have a child in a split class and are experiencing a bit of anxiety with that, we encourage you to read this article below. There are some incredible benefits to being in a combined class.

 <http://chriswejr.com/2012/09/09/will-my-child-be-ok-in-a-split-class/>

**Kindergarten classes will continue with gradual entry next week and will begin full day instruction September 18th.** **Kindergarten placements will be announced by the end of the week.**

**Space Constraints**

This year, we were disappointed to turn away some of our new families, as we have run out of space at North Otter. Less than 10 years ago, North Otter had less than 200 students across 9 divisions. Currently, we have 398 students enrolled at North Otter and not a single space available in our primary divisions. We are delighted to grow and welcome new community members, but we are certainly feeling a bit inflexible and tight on space. You may also be aware of our rotating on-call office staff, as we are still without a permanent admin assistant. As such, we appreciate the patience and support of our community as we settle students.

**Band at North Otter**

North Otter runs a beginner band program for any students in grade 6 or 7. No prior experience is required and grade 7s are welcome to join, even if they did not participate in grade 6. Mr. Follett has dropped off paper registration forms with students, but you can also find them online: <http://dwpoppymusic.com/elementaryband/> . We begin instrument fitting on Thursday, so we ask that all registrations be in before then. Student who do not take band will participate in an alternative exploration program. If there are any concerns about the cost of band, please know that we have supports to help with any expense of getting an instrument.

**Student Photos**

Please note the student photo day on September 21st. This is earlier than our typical photo day, but we were limited in dates from the photographer. Darby will be doing our photos again this year and order forms will be going out in October.

**Student Supplies and Fees**

You may have noticed that student fees have been posted to schoolcashonline. We have had a few families inquire about purchasing their own supplies. It is worth noting that supplies have been subsidized and fees will cover additional items that come up through the year. However, we are not trying to force anyone to purchase something they don’t see as a good value or something they can get at a cheaper cost. If you would like to purchase your own supplies, the classroom teacher can provide a class list. Please note, that there will be items added throughout the year as there becomes a need. If student fees have created a burden for any family, we encourage you to reach out to administration or the school office. We would be happy to work with any family to ensure their child has everything they need to be successful.

**Terry Fox Run**

We are excited to be back together to Run for Terry. North Otter students have been raising money to meet our goal of $1000 for cancer awareness and research. Students can donate either by cash or using [School Cash Online](https://sd35.schoolcashonline.com/Home/SignIn). We will be doing our traditional route around the block and on school grounds. Kindergarten classes will stay on school grounds and do the green field loop. Any parents who have concerns about their child participating are asked to contact the classroom teacher.

**Meet the Teacher BBQ, September 19, 4:00-6:00PM**

We are excited to meet our parents on Tuesday, September 19nd. The PAC has graciously offered to host a BBQ and serving food for those who will be visiting us between 4:00-6:00PM. We ask parents to enter the classroom using the classroom exterior doors when you are doing your tour of the classroom.

PAC is still looking for volunteers to help with this event. If you are able to help, please contact northotterpac@gmail.com

**Parking at North Otter**

Big thank you to all of our families for keeping our pick-up lanes and street parking so safe and calm. We know that bad weather results in more vehicles dropping students off but if we continue to implement the following strategies, we can keep the area moving.

* Reserve parking for parents of younger children that need to be walked to the classroom door.
* If you have intermediate students who know their way around the building, please drop them off earlier and/or down the street on 54th.
* Arrange a pick-up location at Steele Park or down the road on 54th so that you don’t need to park your vehicle for an extended period.
* If you have an older child that can pick up your younger child, please do so and have them meet you at the drop and go.
* If you are in walking distance, take advantage of the warm weather and walk your child to school.
* Carpool when possible.

**Pedestrians**

Like parking, we recognize that moving around the building when walking your child to class can be a challenge. Teachers spend a great deal of time talking to students about parking lot safety and to always use sidewalks. We encourage parents to help us by modelling this for our kids. Please use sidewalks when you walk around the front of the building and avoid crossing the bus lanes.

**Cyclists**

In order to keep everyone safe, we ask that cyclists please walk their bikes when using the crosswalk and moving through the school grounds.

**Staying Connected**

Much of the communication this year will come from school-wide emails and information posted on the school website. Please ensure that we have your most up-to-date email address on MyEd. The calendar on our [school website](https://outlook.office365.com/calendar/published/e8c2e8146cc24273acfa449acea45435%40sd35.bc.ca/aebcf7ae481b49f781b94ddc60737ee211005625143192193403/calendar.html) shows all the events as they are added or amended by our school staff and front office.

**Volunteers Welcome**

If you are interested in volunteering for future events, please complete a [volunteer form here](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ftrack.spe.schoolmessenger.com%2Ff%2Fa%2Frvr8njHOikVQ8CPhy9oO5A~~%2FAAAAAQA~%2FRgRk_9YVP0SEaHR0cHM6Ly9mb3Jtcy5vZmZpY2UuY29tL1BhZ2VzL1Jlc3BvbnNlUGFnZS5hc3B4P2lkPXJ2cXJfQXI0ZEUtMnA3b1Z3cVM3SkJKaUZ1WlU0b1pObWMzaWpwUFRXRGhVTmtreFVGWkpORmxTT1ZGUFdFa3hWRE5JVVU1Qk5UWTVVUzR1VwdzY2hvb2xtQgpjF5WiHmNsMfGvUhRkd29lbGRlcnNAc2QzNS5iYy5jYVgEAAAAAg~~&data=05%7C01%7Cdwoelders%40sd35.bc.ca%7C5ed961cb38124d30694808da946c0392%7Cfcabfaaef80a4f74b6a7ba15c2a4bb24%7C0%7C0%7C637985488879794122%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=cxfmapYo%2FJTGiF2iOnYs1uASjY3viT2cG%2BOCkVNYdro%3D&reserved=0)

**Otter Athletics**

We are excited to welcome back the volleyball and cross country teams at North Otter. This week we will be hosting a meeting for all grade 6 and 7 students interested in competing this year. Please encourage your child to attend the meeting and to give the sport a try. No prior experience is needed and it’s a great way to connect with new friends.

Athletic fees will be $20 and cover the cost of spirit wear and athletic gear (water bottle, bag, etc.).