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**Welcome Back Newsletter**

**September 2023**

**Parents/Students,**

We are excited to welcome you all back to North Otter Elementary School and continue the amazing work that students, staff and parents have invested into this community. It is here, at the school, where we build relationships and provide experiences that support the ethical, social, intellectual, emotional, and physical growth and well-being of the students that are the future of Langley.

In addition to building relationships, the elementary experience is about curiosity and play, and exploring and pursuing our passions. It is our goal that all students find a place at NOE where they feel a sense of belonging and where their talents flourish. To that end, we encourage students to take advantage of the many opportunities we hope to provide this year, including music/band, sports teams, and school clubs. We also encourage our parent community to seek ways to get involved in the school by coaching, supporting classrooms, and volunteering with our PAC. It is through these shared experiences where we work together, build relationships, and strengthen our connections.

**Special Welcome**

Since last June, there are a few updates regarding our staff at North Otter. We have an amazing team and feel that our new assignments and new staff only strengthen our team.

* **Ms. Davenport , Vice-principal** – It is with joy that we announce a new position that has been assigned to our growing school community. Ms. Davenport comes to us from the Abbotsford school district, where she taught Kindergarten, Grade 2, and Grade 3 since 2014. She recently completely her Masters degree in educational leadership. Along with her work in administration, Ms. Davenport will also be teaching primary math, resource, and learning assistance.
* **Mr. Goulet, Grade 6** – Mr. Goulet is coming from HD Stafford as a seasoned middle school teacher, working with grades 4-7 for more than 15 years. Prior to HD Stafford, Mr. Goulet worked at Peter Ewart Middle and multiple schools in the Abbotsford school district.
* **Mrs. Threlfall, Grade 5/6** – Most of our families know how lucky we are to keep Mrs. Threlfall at North Otter, after an incredibly successful year working with our grade 1s last year. Despite her expertise at primary, Mrs. Threlfall has a passion for intermediate classrooms and has already had a tremendous impact on our older students, serving at last year’s girls’ basketball coach.
* **Ms. Tegart, Grade 3** – Ms. Tegart worked previously at Wix-Brown Elementary, teaching grade 3-4. Ms. Tegart comes with expertise in early childhood education and social-emotional learning.
* **Ms. Raphael, Grade 2/3** ­– Ms. Raphael comes to us from Langley Meadows Elementary, where she has taught grade 1 for the past year, with a focus around early literacy. In addition to her work in the district, Ms. Raphael has also worked in the independent education system.
* **Ms. Simmie & Ms. Robertson, Grade 2 –** Ms. Simmie and Ms. Robertson previously worked at Gordon Greenwood Elementary. Ms. Simmie has a well-rounded background in grade 2, 3, 7, and special education. Ms. Robertson was Ms. Simmie’s previous job share partner, along with work in grade 5.
* **Ms. Mitchell, K/Grade 1 –** Many of our families are familiar with Ms. Mitchell, who completed her practicum at North Otter a few years ago with Ms. Tocol. Ms. Mitchell went on to teach at Upland Elementary, teaching Grade 1-3. Ms. Mitchell has tremendous insight in early education and literacy.
* **Ms. Carich, Kindergarten** – Ms. Carich has eagerly been awaiting her opportunity to return to North Otter this year. Previously, Ms. Carich assisted in special education from 2014 -2020 before completing her teaching certificate and continuing on to Noel Booth, Parkside, and Coghlan Elementary, teaching kindergarten, grade 1, and grade 2.
* **Ms. Christiaanse, YCW** – Ms. C is stepping into the role as youth care worker, filling in for Mrs. Attwood while she is on her maternity leave. Ms. C was able to join our staff at the end of the year and is excited to join our amazing support staff.

**Bell Schedule Changes**

The bell schedule has not changed this year. **This bell schedule will begin on Wednesday, September 6th.**

**Warning bell 8:20**

**Start of instructional time 8:25**

**Beginning of recess 10:15**

**End of recess 10:30**

**Beginning of lunch 11:45**

**End of lunch 12:18**

**End of school day 2:08**

**Student Enrolment**

If you are receiving this email, your child is currently enrolled at North Otter. If your family has moved or your child is registered at another school, we ask that you contact our office as soon as possible or email [noefacilitator@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:noefacilitator@sd35.bc.ca). We have many families currently on our waitlist, so it is important that we are aware of every seat that has become available.

**First Week of School**

As we have done in past years, the first week will be a great time for us to re-connect with students, welcome our newest Otters and set a positive tone for the year. We also use this time to finalize registrations, compose classes and get students with their teachers in a timely fashion. Students will be placed into this year’s finalized classroom no later than Monday, September 11th.

**Monday, September 4th - Labour Day – No students in session**

**Tuesday September 5th**

* Students in Grade 1-7 will attend **8:25 – 9:55.** A warning bell will sound at 8:20 each morning. **Please note that we are only in session for 90 minutes.** Buses should be running to meet these hours. Transportation should have communicated with parents if you have secured a spot on the bus.
* **PAC will be hosting a coffee and treats station at the back of the school from 8:30-10:00 for any parents that would like to reconnect and meet our amazing PAC.**

**New Students in Grade 1-7**

* If your grade 1-7 child is new to North Otter this year or was home schooled last year, you will receive an email from our office indicating your placement for the first week. If you are unsure of the location or you haven’t received an email, we ask that you arrive around 8:15 at the office so that we can walk you and your child to where they will be meeting for the first week.

**Kindergarten Students**

* Kindergarten students follow the gradual entry schedule and start on Friday, September 8th. You should have received an email indicating which group your child belonged to, along with the gradual entry schedule.
* September 6th and 7th are reserved for kindergarten interviews. Most of these interviews occurred in June. If you have not met with our kindergarten team or you would like a follow up meeting, we ask that you contact [kbehboudi@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:kbehboudi@sd35.bc.ca) to arrange a time on Wednesday-Friday with our kindergarten team.

**Grade 1-7 students returning**

* On the first day of school, Grade 1-7 studentswill return to last year’s classroom location to meet with last year’s teacher unless specified below. Please note cases where your child’s class may not be returning to the same room and a new location has been assigned (see map below)
* Beginning on Wednesday, most students will move to a teacher that teaches their current grade. **Please note where they will attend class from Wednesday – Friday.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022/23 Grade | 2022/23 Teacher | Tuesday , September 5th  Report to… | Wed-Fri, Sept 6-8th  Report to… |
| 6 | Ms. Giger | Ms. Russell (rm 34) | Ms. Russell (rm 34) |
| 6 | Mr. Woelders | Mr. Woelders (rm 33) | Mr. Woelders (rm 33) |
| 5/6 | Ms. Russell | Ms. Russell (rm 34) | Ms. Russell (rm 34) |
| 5 | Mr. Josephson | Mr. Josephson (rm 36) | Mr. Goulet (rm 32) |
| 4/5 | Mr. Harris | Mr. Harris (rm 38) | Mrs. Threlfall (Portable) |
| 4 | Ms. Popil | Ms. Popil (rm 37) | Mr. Josephson (rm 36) |
| 3 | Ms. Jordan | Ms. Tegart (rm 21) | Ms. Popil (rm 37) |
| 3 | Mr. Garland | Mr. Garland (rm 13) | Mr. Harris (rm 38) |
| 2 | Ms. Thiessen | Ms. Simmie (rm 10) | Mr. Garland (rm 13) |
| 2 | Ms. Ewert | Ms. Ewert (room 15) | Ms. Tegart (rm 21) |
| 1 | Mrs. Threlfall | Mrs. Threlfall (portable\*) | Ms. Raphael (rm 12) |
| 1 | Ms. Osborne | Ms. Osborne (room 14) | Ms. Ewert (rm 15) |
| 1 | Ms. Tocol | Ms. Tocol (room 11) | Ms. Simmie (rm 10) |
| K | Mrs. Malish | Ms. Sutlow (rm 40) | Ms. Sutlow/Resource (rm 40) |
| K | Ms. Behboudi | Mrs. Behboudi/Ms. Raphael (room 39) | Ms. Tocol (rm 11) |
| K | Ms. Smith | Ms. Peterson/Mr. Goulet (room 42) | Ms. Osborne (rm 14) |

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**Wednesday – Friday, September 7-9th**

* Grade 1-7 students attend from 8:25 – 2:08
* Students will stay with their cohort, but will attend a classroom with one of the teachers in their current grade. Please note that this is not their permanent placement. This just allows their potential teachers to begin to get to know the students.

**Note: If we can finalize enrolment before Monday, we will move students into their homeroom as early as Friday. An email will be sent out if we are able to settle into classes any earlier.**

**What to bring...**

* As mentioned in a previous letter, school supplies will be provided by the school. This cost has been built into student fees that can be paid using schoolcashonline. If finances are an obstacle for your family, please let us know and we will look to provide financial assistance.
* Tuesday, September 5th - Students **will not** need a lunch.
* Starting Wednesday, September 6th - Students will need a snack for recess and a lunch. We will continue to be a litter-free school and we will ask that all garbage produced from snacks and lunches be returned home in the student’s lunch bag. We recommend using reusable storage containers.

**Reporting Absences**

***If your child is going to be absent, arriving late, away or leaving early due to an appointment, please notify the school of your child’s absence by email or call the school. These absences are particularly important as we count our enrollment over the first few days.***

To report an absence by email, send information including student first name and last name, grade, division, length of absence, and reason to [noefaciliator@sd35.bc.ca](mailto:noefaciliator@sd35.bc.ca). To report an absence by phone, call 604-856-3355 and follow the prompts for the attendance line to leave a message with information including student first name and last name, grade, division, length of absence, and reason. You can see these instructions on our school webpage <https://northotter.sd35.bc.ca/> . If you have any questions about attendance/absence procedures, contact the school office.

**Communication With Families:**

It is important to us that we have open communication with our community to share information from the school, celebrate what is happening at NOE each day, as well as discuss student progress. Our doors are always open, whether in person or electronically. Please feel free to reach out to staff and/or administration if you have anything you wish to discuss.

Throughout the year, we will use the following platforms to share information with the community and celebrate our school:

* School Messenger - This is our main format for sharing information including our newsletter. School messenger allows us to email and text the community. We can also use it to call you with an automated message in emergency situations.
* NOE Website: We work to update our website on a regular basis throughout the year. It is a great place to get general information about the school <https://northotter.sd35.bc.ca>

**Parking at North Otter**

Historically parking during drop-off and pick-up has been a challenge at North Otter. Admin and PAC are looking at some solutions to make this a more efficient process. In the meantime, please exercise patience and expect delays when dropping off your children. To help ease congestion, we recommend the following...

* 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 down the road on 54th so that you don’t need to park your vehicle for extended period. Leave the parking spots for parents of younger children.
* 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.

Please review the North Otter Parking Map Guidelines on the map below.

