



WILLOW LANDING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

DECEMBER NEWS, Volume 2, issue 5

<http://wil.scdsb.on.ca>

From the Desk of Principal Peck

This will be our last official newsletter for 2016. 2016 seems to have gone by very quickly. When I was a child, the time between the arrival of the Sears Christmas Wish Catalogue and Christmas Day seemed like an eternity to me. Even Christmas Eve to Christmas Day seemed like an eternity. In contrast, my dad could never believe that another year was already coming to its close. Now I understand his perspective. When you're ten years old, 2016 represents ten percent of your life; when you're not ten...well let's just say 2016 was a bit less than two percent of my life. That's quite a difference.

Speaking of percents, at the end of December, 40% of the school year will be over. Students who are working hard are learning lots, but for those who are not working as hard as they could be, there's still 60% of the school year left to turn things around. Your child may need extra encouragement to push through December. Help them make it. Soon they will be able to enjoy a two week break and then come back refreshed for the next 60%. From my perspective, it will go fast. From theirs, maybe not. Either way, your child, his or her teacher, support staff, Mrs. Best and I are in this together to help your child succeed no matter how quickly (or slowly) the year goes.

Most of you celebrate Christmas. May yours be a very Merry one. If Christmas celebrations are not part of your family tradition, then I hope you will get a chance to spend some extra quantity and quality time with your children as they take a break from their school life. We'll see everyone again on Monday, January 9th, 2017. Wow! Where did that year go?

From the Desk of Vice-Principal Best - 5 Ways to Teach Your Child Gratitude

As parents, we can't demand that our children be grateful of us or anyone else. However, we can't simply accept an ungrateful attitude and a sense of entitlement from them either. So what are we to do? Here are five tips to help your child keep the importance of gratitude in mind.

1. Clarify the difference between rights and privileges. In today's world of modern conveniences, we take many things for granted. We don't realize that conveniences are privileges rather than our rights. For example, it's the right of our children to be clothed, but it's a privilege for them to wear name brand jeans. It's the right of our children to be educated, but it's a privilege for them to have access to after-school programs and activities that we as parents, provide. Our children don't need to earn their rights but they do need to earn their privileges. Help your child discover the blessings they have been given. This doesn't mean lecturing— but a discussion of news stories that show people's rights being violated or dinner conversation about those who do not have many privileges will help to make this distinction more obvious.
2. Be a model of gratitude. That means show it, recognize it, and appreciate it when you see it. Nothing feels better to your child than being appreciated for the little things such as putting the plates in the dishwasher without being asked or making the bed. In addition,

show gratitude for others when they help you. Our own gratitude shows our children that it's important to be grateful even for both small and grand gestures.

3. Keep a positive attitude and stop whining. It may sound corny, but a grateful, positive outlook tends to make life, well..more positive. Every morning, find something for which to be grateful; the snow falling or the smell of fresh coffee brewing. Notice something positive about your child. Compliment him/her, but don't overpraise. This could be as simple as telling your child how much you appreciate the hug he gives you every morning.
4. Acknowledge failure and frustration—both yours and your child's. Owning one's weakness is the first step to learning and improving. Adding humour to the situation when appropriate will help lighten things too. Say- "Oops, I guess I messed up, sorry about that," "I must have left my brain on my pillow this morning—I'll go get it," or "Everyone makes mistakes—we can be thankful that we have the ability to fix them." Then, end the conversation with hope: "Thank goodness, there's still tomorrow. We'll do better next time."
5. Find the good in the situation. Many situations which appear "bad," often can result in something good. It may be tough, but try to find the good and show your children how to do the same. For example, The Seemingly Bad: Your teen has to stay home on a Friday night and babysit her younger sibling. The Good? They find this movie on TV that was so funny that they had a blast watching it together. The Benefit? This will teach them to look for the good and not be so quick to complain. Gratitude is a state of mind. It takes a conscious mindset and a willingness to stop and take notice of everything that makes life better, more convenient, and more fulfilling. Surround your child with gratitude; grateful people, things to be grateful for, and models of gratitude and she'll surely get the picture. Children can seem like they're not paying attention but in reality, they carry our voices and our examples everywhere they go. So go ahead. They're watching and listening. And they want to talk to you. (Source: J.L. Mahoney)

Register your child for French Immersion, find out more at information sessions in January

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) offers French Immersion (FI) at select schools throughout the county beginning in Grade 1. This program gives students a bilingual education and the opportunity to become fluent in another language.

Information sessions will be held in January for parents of students in Senior Kindergarten. A letter will be sent home to those parents with more details. Information session dates will be posted at www.scdsb.on.ca under Programs, French as a Second Language.

The FI online application form will be available from 9 a.m. on Monday, Jan. 23, until 9 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 25, 2017 at www.scdsb.on.ca under Programs, French as a Second Language.

While every effort is made to accommodate all FI applications, available space and staffing will determine how many students can be registered in the program. **Applications will be processed in the order they are received electronically.**

Please contact the school if you do not have Internet access at home or require assistance accessing the online application. Please note that the host sites for FI may change during your child's time in the program, and your child may need to move schools. This may also include splitting the program between two different sites.

High School information nights coming soon to a high school near you

Is your child starting Grade 9 next year? High school information nights happen this winter. Information nights give an overview of what's new and what to expect, and are a chance to ask questions. High school is an exciting time—there are so many programs, clubs and activities for students to try. Attend an information night to find out what's offered at your local high school. See the info night schedule and more information on the SCDSB's website at www.scdsb.on.ca/highschool. Innisdale's Information Night is December 7 at 7:00 PM.

It's almost winter: Bus cancellation information for parents

- Winter is just around the corner in Simcoe County, and with it comes the possibility of severe weather, challenging winter driving conditions and possible bus and school event cancellations.
- All information regarding cancelled buses in Simcoe County is posted on the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium's bus information website at www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca. Our school is in the **CENTRAL** zone. When buses are cancelled, schools are still open for student learning, unless otherwise noted.
- The Consortium and bus operators try to make the decision to cancel school buses before 6 a.m. and make every effort to post announcements between 6 and 7 a.m. Inclement weather cancellations are effective for the whole day and buses cancelled in the morning will not run at the end of the day. You can follow the Consortium on Twitter @SCSTC_SchoolBus for bus cancellations and other information. You can also subscribe to receive bus delay notifications here: <https://scstc.ca/Subscriptions>
- For school event cancellations in case of inclement weather, follow our school's Twitter account @WillowLandingES or listen to local radio for event cancellation information.

Some Sad News (for us) and Happy News (for Ms. Bethune)

Dear Students, Parents and Friends,

I would like to share with you the news that I am checking out of the library! After many years of having the absolute honour and privilege of being your Teacher Librarian at the best school in Simcoe County, I will be retiring at the end of December. I am excited to begin the next chapter! I truly believe that I am the luckiest person to have had the opportunity to do what I love doing best: teaching your children; sharing my love of books; embracing new technologies, and working with an always amazingly dedicated and supportive staff!

I also, honestly, am leaving with a roller-coaster of emotions, so I am going to be bossy and insist on a few things here:

- *For the Willow parents: please read with your children every day! It is the greatest gift that you can give them. Even when your children are older, spend the time sharing a great book with them! In such a digitized, busy world it is imperative to slow down and spend quality time with your children which in turn will foster their love of stories and learning which will make them better people!*

- *For the Willow students please: (Now I will be really, really bossy!) READ! READ! READ! Reading is your passport to great things in life! Also, students, you need to promise me to return those library books promptly so others can have the pleasure of spending time with them! (We are not Chapters, you don't get to keep the books!) After all, I am still the "Library Dragon" for a few more weeks!*

And finally, students, families and staff: I leave the Willow Library in the very capable hands of Mrs. Gilliland and Mrs. Fletcher, whom I know will continue to guard and protect your library, be champions of literacy, who will continue to foster the enjoyment of wonderful books and will keep the library evolving with great programmes and technologies! They will be your new "Library Dragons"! These two exceptional teachers have been entrusted to be your advocates for the best school library in Simcoe County!

Thank you to all the students, staff, families and volunteers who have enriched my life in so many ways on this journey!

*Keep reading Pumpkins,
Love you all to bits,
Ms. Bethune*

Kindergarten registration opens in January

Do you (or someone you know) have a child who was born in 2013? If so, it's almost time to register them for Kindergarten in the SCDSB! Beginning on January 23, 2017, Simcoe County's public schools will register children for Kindergarten for the 2017-18 school year. Required registration documents include birthdate documentation, proof of address and record of immunization. Visit www.scdsb.on.ca/kindergarten for more information.

Message from the Health Unit: Is Bedtime Stressing You Out?

Kids need 10 to 12 hours of sleep every night but sometimes getting them to bed can be frustrating. You can help create a regular sleep schedule for your child by setting a clear bedtime and sticking to the same time every night. Start getting ready an hour before bed: turn off the TV, computers and phones. Spend quality time talking or reading stories to help them unwind. Agree on how many books you'll read before you start! Keep their room dark, cool and quiet - a nightlight is fine. Remember, making sure your child gets enough rest will help improve their mood, behaviour and ability to learn. For more bedtime tips, contact Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 to speak with a public health nurse or visit the health unit website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Big Bay Point Road is about to get BUSIER

With the closing of a section of Mapleview Drive south of our school, the traffic on our road is most likely to increase. PLEASE be extra careful and drive with great vigilance if you drive your children to school. Pay closer attention to our entrance, exit and crosswalk area. This might be a good time to start a new habit of walking.

Thank You from School Council Volunteers

Thanks very much to those parents who are using our Cash Online Payment System. It is saving our volunteers oodles of time. As well, it's safer than sending cash or cheques to school. Please sign up. If you need assistance to sign up, please call the office.

School Council is on Facebook and Twitter

Check out this link: <https://www.facebook.com/WillowLanding-School-Council-1328400890533300/>

Follow School Council: @WillowLandingSC

Changes to Safe Arrival Calls

Safe Arrival calls are soon to be automated. Starting on Wednesday, December 7, we will implement our new system. Please read the attached letter for a full explanation of the changes. When calling Safe Arrival, please do so as early as possible during the morning of the absence, or even the night before. The sooner the better. Safe Arrival is "manned" by an auto-attendant. Always call as early as possible. Thanks for your cooperation.

Going Outside in "Bad" Weather

Both the Ministry of Education and our School Board are encouraging more outdoor play; research and common sense indicate that there are multiple health and learning benefits to being in the outdoors. Please dress your children for the weather. As cold weather approaches, remember this:

Both the Canadian Paediatric Society and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) recommend minimum temperature limits for outdoor play. These organizations and the SCDSB recommend that children be kept indoors if the temperature falls below -25°C, or if the wind chill is -28°C or greater (Canadian Paediatric Society, 2009).

As Ms. O. once said, "There is no poor weather, just poor clothing choices."

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

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| December 6 | Dairy Presentation - Grade 2s |
| December 7 | Innisdale Information Session and Tour at 7:00 PM |
| December 7 | Barrie Colts Assembly |
| December 14 | Holiday Show - 11:30 a.m. (Parents & guests welcome!) |
| December 15 | Holiday Show - 6:45 p.m. (Parents & guests welcome!) |
| December 21 | Character Assembly 9:00 a.m. |
| December 23 | Last Day of School for 2016! Happy Holidays! See you Mon. Jan. 9th, 2017 |
| January 7 | Willow Landing Night at Barrie Colts Game |