

Burkevale Protestant Separate School

January Newsletter



Happy New Year! As we reflect on the close of 2024, we hope it was a season rich with the company of family and friends—an opportunity to focus on what truly matters, creating lasting memories with those we hold dear. In the whirlwind of our daily lives, it's easy to forget to carve out moments for ourselves and our loved ones, often thinking that tomorrow will offer more time. This year, our school community has faced some hard truths, reminding us all that tomorrow is never promised. As we step into the new year, we encourage you to make resolutions that prioritize living in the present, cherishing your own well-being, and nurturing the relationships that mean the most. May 2025 be a year of mindful living, where time spent with loved ones takes precedence, and we remember to value each moment.

The month of December was filled with many fun and exciting activities for the students:

Christmas Concert:

We were thrilled to host our annual Christmas Concert once again this year, and the turnout was truly remarkable, with an estimated 1,000 spectators across the four performances. A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated staff, students, and parents for their hard work and commitment in making this event so memorable. We also extend our gratitude to the board members who joined us, taking the time to connect with our families. And of course, a special thanks to our talented MCs, whose wit and eloquence brought an extra spark to each concert. Your contributions helped make this event a wonderful celebration for all!

Entrepreneur Fair:

The Entrepreneur Fair was held in the gymnasium on December 4th, offering a fantastic showcase of the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of our Grade 7 and 8 students. Through their hard work and innovation, they raised approximately \$1671.00, which will go toward funding their year-end trip and next year's startup costs. This event fosters valuable cross-curricular connections and has become a highlight for our intermediate students. A big thank you to both the students and staff for their dedication in making this event such a success!

Student Council:

The student council organized daily activities for the last week of school. Thanks to all student council members for such thoughtful and inclusive activities. One planned activity was the gingerbread house making contest where all of the classes showcased their incredible creative talents. A special thanks to Ms. Thompson, Ms. Cameron, Ms. and Ms. Moffat for leading our student council.

Food Drive and Adopt a Family:

A heartfelt thank you to Ms. Lahaie and the Grade 2 students for organizing this year's Food Drive. We are also deeply grateful to all the families and students who showed such kindness and generosity during this special time of year, whether through donating canned goods, contributing to our Adopt-a-Family initiative, or offering kind words of support. Thanks to your efforts, we have collected 1544 cans of food, and in a time when prices are higher than ever, we truly appreciate the thoughtfulness of everyone who gave so selflessly. Your contributions have made a meaningful difference!



Girls Volleyball and Boys Basketball: Beginning in January, the intermediate girls' volleyball and boys' basketball team tryouts will take place.

Skiing: We are looking into providing the grade 3-8 students with some form of cross-country skiing, but are still trying to negotiate pricing and availability. We will keep you posted!



Skating: Our grades 1 and 2 students will be continuing with skating in the new year.

Academics:

Term one will be wrapping up in late January with a PA Day scheduled for January 24th for report card writing. Report cards are scheduled to come home on February 14th.

Parking: As many of you are aware, parking around the school can sometimes be quite congested. Recently, we've noticed a few instances of vehicles being parked in the designated handicapped parking spot without the proper signage displayed. Since we have only one spot available for visitors, we kindly ask that this space be reserved exclusively for those who meet the criteria for accessible parking. Your cooperation in ensuring that this spot remains available for those who need it most is greatly appreciated.

Your Child's Immunization Record

The Ontario Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) requires the health unit to have up to date immunization records for all students attending school. According to ISPA (2014), students are required to be vaccinated against the following diseases:

- Tetanus, Diphtheria, Polio and Pertussis (whooping cough)
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (must have two doses after the first birthday)
- Meningococcal Disease
(must have one dose after the first birthday & Men-C-ACYW in Grade 7)
- Varicella (chickenpox) ***only required for those born 2010 and after.

The health unit does not receive immunization information directly from doctor's offices. Please contact the health unit each time your child receives a vaccine from their health care provider.



What you can do:

- Check Your child's yellow immunization card
- Contact Your child's health-care provider to obtain records, or to get missing vaccinations
- Share Go to immsonline to enter the complete record or fax a completed record to 705-726-3962.

Stay Healthy This School Year!

Respiratory infections, like a cold or influenza, can spread easily from person to person. These germs can spread quickly when someone coughs or sneezes directly on another person, or when germs land on hard surfaces like doorknobs, desks, and keyboards and then are touched by someone else. These germs can then enter the body through the eyes, nose, or mouth.

The most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick and stop the spread of germs is wash your hands! Wash with soap and warm running water for at least 15 seconds (or try singing "Happy Birthday twice"). If your hands are not visibly dirty you can use alcohol-based hand rub "hand sanitizer" for 15 seconds. Also, make sure you are up to date with your immunizations, cover coughs and sneezes and stay home for at least 24 hours if you are sick. Teach your kids to do the same!

For more tips to keep you and your family healthy this school year, contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit at 1-877-721-7520 or visit www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

Grandfather Teachings for the Month of January:



For the month of January, our school community will focus on the grandfather teacher of **WISDOM**. Everyone has a special gift. We can show wisdom by using this gift. How can we show wisdom? Help out a friend who is struggling, gain knowledge by asking questions, be attentive and share your knowledge by answering questions. The beaver represents wisdom because he uses his natural gift wisely for his survival.

Welcoming 2025: We are so grateful for this great school community, the students, families, staff and Trustees that support Burkevale. We are wishing everyone a very Happy New Year! We are focusing again this year on kindness at Burkevale and it's really great to see so much kindness in the halls and rippling out to the community. Ms. Laura (CYW) provides support to our students including one on one counseling, small group options and social emotional learning. These supports are available at the school several days a week, so don't hesitate to get in touch if your student is struggling, you can email Laura lleslie@pssbp.ca or the Mental Health Lead Christy Hamill chamill@pssbp.ca for more information.

Your provincial team that supports Burkevale has some great resources for family and youth available at: <https://smho-smso.ca>. School Mental Health Ontario supports our grade 7 & 8 students with mental health modules as part of the curriculum, you can find more information about the here: [SMH-ON Mental Health Literacy Modules for Grades 7 and 8 - introduction](#)

Children's Mental Health Ontario has a great page with tips on how to support you and your family's mental health over the winter months [Winter mental health tips](#). It's a time of less sun exposure so you can talk to your doctor about taking vitamin D to support your mental and physical health. The basics for physical health and mental health are the same, we need to get enough sleep, eat regularly, connect with others and movement (simply walking) can help buffer stress and low mood. Research shows that the impact of movement on your mood and overall mental health is very significant, and moving/exercising with family or friends outdoors has extra boosts for your mood.

Please remember that we have community partners who are ready to help as well.

- The Youth Hub is active and provides some really great and innovative support for youth aged 12 and up; <https://youthhubs.ca/en/sites/north-simcoe/>. Youth can call the hub phone line at 1-705-427-5639 and hub staff will provide navigation support and a warm hand-off to other hub partners and/or community services. They also have a van service that can help get youth to the variety of services they have available.
- Catholic Family Services (you don't have to be Catholic to use) provide family counseling and also have had some fantastic workshops and resources, you can check them out here: [Group Counselling | Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County](#)
- New Path has quick access counseling sessions for youth and families at any age. You just call to connect with a counselor: 705-725-7656 or 1-866-566-7656, <https://newpath.ca/quick-access-child-and-youth-mental-health-clinic/>
- Kinark is also offering family and youth counseling services as well as services for families who may need guidance with Autism supports, you just have to call: 1-888-454-6275 <https://www.kinark.on.ca>
- Kids Help Phone has been working hard to offer easy to access adult and child resources: <https://kidshelpphone.ca>, or call anytime 1-800-668-6868
- One Stop Talk <https://onestoptalk.ca> free counselling can help you create a plan to support your child's mental health, for youth under 18.



Ready to take on **WINTER**

Expert Advice for Child and Youth Mental Health

Recognizing that this winter may be a difficult time for a lot of families, especially those whose children have mental illness, we have rounded up expert child and youth mental health tips to help you through the season.



Focus on Gratitude

Take a few minutes to think of the things you are grateful for and encourage children to do the same. That is not to take away from how challenging things have been over this last year, but rather, it's an opportunity to recognize that some good things have been happening, too.



Embrace Winter

Having a positive mindset about winter may encourage you and your family to think of new ways to get outside more.



Collaborate with Kids on Plans

Take time to collaborate with your kids and family on activities to stay busy. If your teen is feeling unmotivated to go out, try to really understand what's behind their feelings. Ask if there is anything new that they are interested in trying. It gives you a chance to help them shift how they may be feeling.



Stay Connected

Talk to children and teens and ask what methods of connecting with friends is best for them. Is there a virtual program they could do? Depending on your child's interests, it could be something like a shared online yoga or dance program.



Stay Active

Going out, even on cloudy days, will give you a dose of much-needed natural light.



Keep Healthy Habits and Routines

Prioritize the healthy habits that you normally have, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthily, and exercising regularly. Routines – and knowing what to expect in the day – can be especially helpful to children with mental health issues.



Reach out for help

If you are not sure what your child is experiencing is normal or if they need help, reach out to a child and youth mental health centre in your community. Help is available from child and mental health experts who can talk to your child or you, or both.



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