

# Burkevale Protestant Separate School - September Newsletter

## BACK TO SCHOOL



A parent recently shared a story with one of our staff members that brought joy to my heart. She said, “What do you mean you’re not sure what school you’re bringing your daughter to? Burkevale is the best and only school to send your kids. There really is no other choice if you want the most caring environment and staff, and the best education around.” For years, I have felt this way about our staff and students, and it’s fantastic to hear it echoed by our parent community. Thank you!

It seems like forever since we have been together and so many staff have commented on how much they’ve missed the students. This year will be like no other, but in true Burkevale community fashion, I am confident that our students, families and staff will work together to make this a positive learning experience for everyone. We are committed to supporting the entire child - social, emotional, physical, mental and academic. We have put structures in place to engage/ re-engage students as the new school year begins to help make this year amazing!

### **Mental Health and Well-Being** (From the desk of Ms. Hamill)

We begin this school year hopeful and so happy to see you back or online. Once again, we know that this is a different start to the school year with more procedures and safety measures in place to protect everyone. We know that this year may begin with more anxiety for students. We are doing many things to support a mentally healthy return to school and are ready to welcome students.



We ask that you stay patient and flexible as we begin the year with so many changes. We appreciate your concerns and will continue to post answers to frequently asked questions on our website. We will also be providing resources and information on Twitter so please follow the posts @BurkevalePSS.

There are some fantastic resources available for families and students on the School Mental Health Ontario website

<https://smho-smso.ca/covid-19/parents-and-families/>. We have a mental health lead available to support our staff and coordinate any resources that students may need. We will continue to work with community supports to make sure that counselling is available when needed.

As you get ready to return to school online or at home some of the usual tips will be especially helpful and needed this year such as:

- Establishing a bedtime routine and getting 9-11 hours of sleep a night and waking at the time you would for school
- Having no screen time at least one hour before bed to support the body in preparing for sleep, the blue light in screens can interrupt your body's preparation for sleep
- Talking about what school will be like this year, much of it is the same. But there will be social distancing and hand washing/sanitizing added multiple times throughout the day
- Talking with your child about any worries they might have

Here's a tip sheet with helpful tips on going back to school:

<https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Supporting-Mental-Health-and-Wellness-during-the-Return-to-School-Tip-Sheet-EN.pdf>

The ministry and our board and school have a stronger focus on mental health this year to support this uncertain time; we will be focused on building resilience through connection and community, online and home.

## Celebrating our Bi-Lingual Province

Friday September 24th, Burkevale families and staff are encouraged to wear GREEN (representing summer) and WHITE (representing winter) to celebrate "La journée des Francos-Ontariens". Students will participate in creating a Franco-Ontarian flag with two vertical bands. The first band is GREEN with a white fleur-de-lys (lily) representing the French speaking community worldwide. The second band is WHITE with a green trillium symbolizing the provincial flower of Ontario.



**SAFETY: DAILY SELF ASSESSMENT IS A REQUIREMENT FOR ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS AT  
THE SCHOOL**

**All students MUST be assessed at home prior to arrival to school each day. If students are displaying any of the following symptoms (persisting for more than a few hours, and not related to other pre-existing conditions), *they must stay home and should be tested for COVID-19.***

**Symptoms:**

- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- Cough or barking cough
- Shortness of breath
- Decrease or loss of taste or smell
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain

**You must screen your child for symptoms every day before they come to school.** You can use the screening tool found on the SMDHU website under the following link: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> If your child has any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are ill, they should not attend school. Students who become ill during the day will be isolated and must be picked up from school as soon as possible. Symptomatic students will not be able to use student transportation. **(Please ensure that all contact information is up-to-date with proper phone numbers, email addresses and emergency contacts)**

We are working with our local Public Health Unit to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our school and will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available. To reduce the risk of COVID-19 in our school, multiple measures have been implemented, for example, enhanced cleaning and reducing the number of contacts among individuals in the school, including students, staff, and others.

The Ontario Ministry of Health advises everyone to take an active role in protecting themselves from COVID-19. Here are a few things that you and your family can do:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home and **isolate** if you or anyone in your household is sick

For more information on COVID-19 please visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus). **Now, more than ever, it is imperative to notify the school immediately about a student's absence. Please call 705-549-7456 for our Safe Arrival Program and leave a message indicating the reason for absence to ensure we are keeping all students and staff as safe as possible.**

## SCHOOL SCHEDULE:

8:50:ARRIVAL - SCHOOL BEGINS - NO BEFORE SCHOOL RECESS  
8:50-10:40 LEARNING BLOCK 1  
10:40 - 11:00 RECESS/SNACK  
11:00-11:20 RECESS/SNACK  
11:20-12:40 LEARNING BLOCK 2  
12:40-1:00 RECESS/LUNCH  
1:00-1:20 RECESS/LUNCH  
1:20-3:10 LEARNING BLOCK 3  
3:10 DEPARTURE



**\*\*\*PLEASE BE AWARE OF GATE PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF LOCATIONS AND RESPECT SOCIAL DISTANCING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE\*\*\***

### NEW STAFF AND STUDENTS:

Each year brings new changes, and this year is no exception. We would like to welcome all new students to Burkevale - some are new to education, while others have moved into our area part way through their educational journey. We are thrilled to have you choose our unique board and school. We would also like to welcome some new staff members as well. Ms. Moffat and Ms. Caldwell have returned from maternity leaves and will be assuming positions in Special Education and as a literacy/ESL and Empower teacher. A warm welcome to Ms. Der who will be teaching with Mrs. Archer in Kindergarten beginning in the fall. Ms. Higgins is coming back part time as an educational assistant in the fall and we are thrilled she is returning.

### First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education

Orange Shirt Day will now be known as The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30th. The day has been recognized to focus our attention and commemorate the legacy of residential schools and all 150,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit children forced to attend and those children who never returned home. The thought of having such a day was one of the 94 recommendations in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report.



The link is a child friendly version of the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

[https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/child\\_friendly\\_calls\\_to\\_action\\_web.pdf](https://fncaringsociety.com/sites/default/files/child_friendly_calls_to_action_web.pdf)

For this day of recognition and reflection all staff and students are invited to wear Orange on September 30th and share in our classroom activities. The shirts the staff will be wearing were designed by a local artist named Lisa Grenier.



We will be using the digital administrator, School-Day, again in the upcoming year. All new students will receive a registration letter within the first week of school that has a unique registration code for each child in the household. Please ensure you register as soon as possible, as many forms, notes etc. are posted through this platform. We hope to drastically reduce the use of paper, and to make completing forms and payments much easier for you! Thanks for collaborating with us, as we continue to move digitally. For those families without wifi, we will have options available at the school. Please feel free to contact the office at your convenience.

**School Closures/Bus Cancellations:** All notifications will be communicated with our local radio stations, Kicks 106, and Rock 95 when buses are substantially delayed, or cancelled. **WHEN BUSES ARE CANCELLED, THE SCHOOL WILL BE CLOSED FOR SAFETY REASONS DURING THE PANDEMIC. THIS INCLUDES THE YMCA BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM.** Additionally, a communication message will be sent to families through email or phone.

**Pediculosis:** Parents are urged to complete head checks for head lice on a regular basis throughout the year.



The purpose of the school council is to “improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.” (School Councils – A Guide to Members) Enclosed with the beginning of the school year forms was a nomination form for up and coming council members. Please feel free to join us virtually for our very first meeting on Tuesday, September 15th, at 6:30pm where council positions will be determined. By being a council member, you will have the benefit of: being an important partner in the education system whose views are valued; contributing to the shared goal of improving student achievement; having a vehicle through which to express opinions; being able to keep informed about what is happening at the school and the board. Hope to see you all there! If you are a first time interested member, please let us know so that we are able to send out an electronic invitation for our Google Meet meeting.

## Paperwork and Forms



The following forms need to be returned to the school, in paper copy, no later than Friday, September 10th, 2021:

- Emergency Medical Form/FNMI Identification Form
- School Council Nomination Form
- Student Information Sheet

The following forms need to be approved on School Days no later than Friday, September 10th, 2021:

- Responsible use of technology by students agreement - Primary and/or Junior/Intermediate
- Element of Risk Form/Informed Consent/Trips/Cell Phone Use/Media Permission
- Code of Conduct

The following booklets/information will be posted on School Days in files for you to peruse:

- School Calendar
- Student Insurance Booklet
- School Information Booklet

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

**Eat Well to Excel:** The Eat Well to Excel program will be supporting healthy snack "Grab and Go bags" for students in the school. Donations are always welcome. This will begin in late September.



**Concussion Policy:** Burkevale's concussion policy may be found on the board website at [www.pssbp.ca](http://www.pssbp.ca). Within the first couple of weeks of school, all grades 1-8 classroom teachers will review information around safety and concussions with all students in grades 1-8.

**Ryan's Law:** Under Ryan's Law 2015, every elementary school student in Ontario schools will now be permitted to carry asthma medication, provided they have written parental consent.

**Peanut Free Environment:** Due to allergies in our school community, Burkevale continues to strive to be a peanut-free environment. Please check all labels before sending products to school to ensure that foods are peanut-free.



## NEW PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS (EVER CHANGING AND EMERGING):

In an effort to best support our students, staff, families and Burkevale community, many modifications are still in place for the upcoming school year through the guidance and support of the ministry. PLEASE BE SURE TO READ THIS CAREFULLY. We know that more changes will evolve as the school year progresses, and we adapt to the needs in the school and province. We appreciate your support and understanding in this period of uncertainty. We are still travelling in unknown waters, but please know that every decision made is done so with the intent of keeping us all safe. Below are a list of changes, in no particular order, for you to be aware of for the upcoming school year.

1) Students will have assigned gates to enter and exit in an effort to reduce congestion in these areas. As we observe how this unfolds over the first couple of weeks, we may need to tweak this for some.

2) There will be no outdoor recess time before school. Students are to arrive for class as close to 8:50 as possible and meet their classrooms either in the yard, at a designated spot, or at a portable door.

3) No students will be permitted to go out for lunch. In the past, older students, with a note, were permitted to leave the school grounds at the second lunch/recess break. At this time, this will not be an option.

4) The buses are arriving slightly after the bell in the morning and students will depart for the bus slightly before the bell at the end of the day in an attempt to reduce congestion at the gates.

5) Students will have assigned seats on the bus in an attempt to keep as many cohorts as possible together on the bus. The buses will not be running at capacity.

6) Students will have assigned seats in the classroom during eating times, and every attempt has been made to social distance within cohorts, but this is not entirely feasible.

7) All assigned seats for classes and buses will be stored electronically for contact tracing purposes, should an outbreak be declared in the school by the Public Health Unit.

8) All teachers will be wearing medical grade masks while inside the building working with students (medical exceptions) and shields when working within 2 metres of students who are unmasked.



- 9) Attempts will be made to have students' classes enter the school one class at a time to restrict contact in the hallways.
- 10) Students in grades K-8 will be required to bring their own masks to school and wear them (medical exceptions). These masks are to be worn in the school and on the bus.
- 11) While eating, or when outside, students will not be required to wear masks or shields.
- 12) Bathroom capacity has been limited to 4 per bathroom, and 1 per bathroom in the single stall bathroom.
- 13) Signage and arrows have been posted throughout and outside of the school.
- 14) NO PARENTS WILL BE PERMITTED IN THE SCHOOL OR ON THE YARD. IF YOU ARE PICKING A STUDENT UP EARLY OR DROPPING OFF LATE, PLEASE USE THE BUZZER AT THE FRONT OF THE SCHOOL. WE REALIZE THAT EARLY DEPARTURES AND LATE DROP-OFFS ARE NOT ALWAYS UNAVOIDABLE, BUT WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT IN PUNCTUALITY AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.
- 15) Any maintenance workers, professionals/paraprofessionals in the school will be required to complete a COVID assessment before coming in to do work in the school.
- 16) There will be no milk, pizza or Pita Pit days again this year.
- 17) All garbage from lunches will be sent home. Please try to send a litterless lunch.
- 18) Hand sanitizing stations have been set up inside or outside of each classroom, entry/exit doors and bathrooms. Students are permitted to bring their own hand sanitizers provided they are **unscented** and comply with public health regulations.



*Thanks in advance for your continued support and cooperation. We are so excited to be working alongside the students this year and are looking forward to a productive and passionate year ahead.*