

Victoria Cross Public School Newsletter

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February 2017

Term 2 Begins!

Term 1 of the school year has officially wrapped up and report cards come home on Wednesday, February 16th. Teachers communicate often with parents through agendas, phone calls, and informal conferencing throughout the school year. If you would like a formal interview with the teacher following the report card, please indicate on the tear-off form before you send it back to the school. We have a shared goal: We want to help your child to be successful.

Each year schools look at student data to determine what students' strengths and needs are. Using this information, school staffs develop a plan to improve in the areas of need. This year, VCPS staff has been working on identifying specific learning needs through diagnostics, and creating better questions throughout the curriculum to help students develop stronger thinking skills and to communicate their understanding. While all skills are important, "students need to learn to develop habits of mind that will equip them to be successful in the rapidly changing information age in which they live". These habits are what we refer to **higher order thinking skills**. When reading for example, students can be asked to recall information from the text or asked to summarize what they read. These skills are no doubt important but are considered lower level. Higher order thinking skills ask students to analyze and provide evidence from the text, or to synthesize information into a plan or a new product, and finally to evaluate information as they judge, recommend or defend the author's position. As a staff we are learning about higher order thinking skills and learning to ask more of these types of questions. As a parent if you want more information regarding these skills please talk to your child's teacher or contact me at 519-323-2460 ex 223.

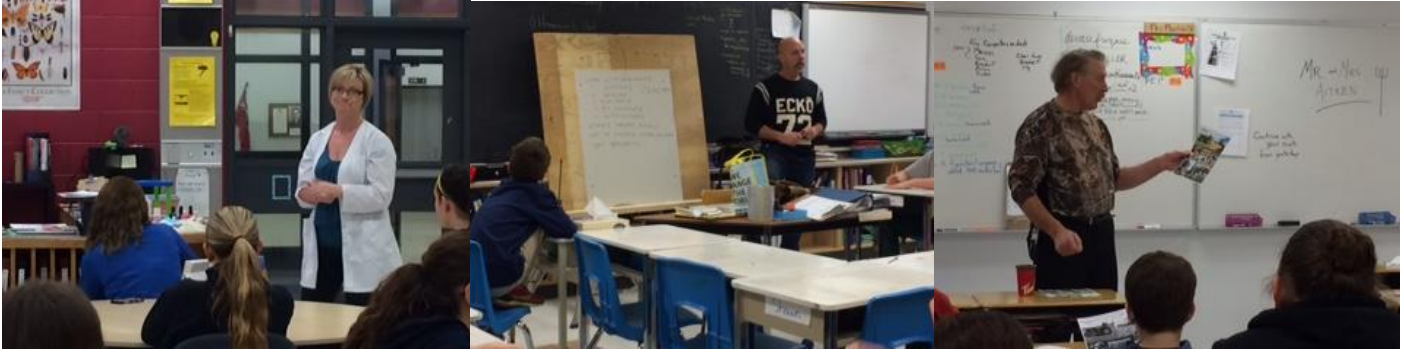
Best regards,

Karen Sims, Principal

Intermediate Students Learning About Careers

January 2017 was the beginning of a new endeavor at VCPS. We are inviting people from our community into our school once a month to discuss their chosen profession and education needed for this job. This month we invited Jennifer Morriss (esthetician), Dave Griffiths (carpenter) and Neil Aitken (farmer) to the school to talk to our grade 7 & 8 students about what their jobs are like. Students were given a choice of which presentation to attend and were asked to attend one of interest even if they were not interested in pursuing a career in that occupation. Students were asked to attend a presentation to listen to the person's journey to their occupation. Student feedback from the presentations was very positive. Our presenters did an amazing job! Next month we have three more speakers lined up. It is our hope to introduce students to three new occupations each month. If

you are a female in a non-traditional female role or work in the trades we would be interested in having you speak to our students. Please contact Karen Sims at 519-323-2460.



New Tech Shop Finally Opens

After months of construction the new Tech Shop finally got approval from the Board. Mr. Gauci has begun training students on safety prior to using the new equipment. The recent arrival of the 3-D printer has also sparked interest in the Science and Tech room. Students are beginning to create designs with the computer and to print these designs in 3-D. Actively creating, analyzing and evaluating are higher order thinking skills we want our students to develop.



Weather and our School Days

We are halfway through the school year, and, unfortunately, only about halfway through winter. Please continue to check the Board's website on mornings where the weather looks like it could be an issue (www.ugdsb.on.ca).

If buses are cancelled, the school is still open for all students who can safely get here. If conditions are safe in town, we encourage students to attend. **If buses are cancelled, we assume that bus students will not be here but that walkers will. If your child is a walker and is going to be absent on a "no bus" day, you must follow regular procedure and call the absence into the school.**

Snowbanks can be built up significantly between the streets and the sidewalks during the winter. Wherever possible, students should be using the sidewalks. Parents, please remind your child(ren) to stay off of the snowbanks when traveling to and from school.

Grade 7&8 Fundraising

During the month of February the grade 7&8 students will be selling meat from Harriston Meat Packers. The sale will begin on February 1st and end on February 16th. Meat orders are to be picked up between 5 and 6 on March 2nd. If you are interested in purchasing meat please contact a gr. 7 or 8 student or visit the office for an order form.

Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registration was last month. It is not too late to register your child for Junior kindergarten. To do so please bring in birth certificate, proof of address and immunization to the main office between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. as soon as possible.

School Council

School council hopes 2017 has started well for our school community and wishes everyone a Happy Groundhog Day. Whether Wiarton Willy sees his shadow or not, school council has a busy year planned. This month will see our elective program start. In January, school council hosted educator, author and speaker Ron Morrish presentation of his talk "Real Discipline".

Our chocolate fundraiser is finally wrapped up and we raised \$9 850.00 – the highest total ever. At its January meeting, council voted to add \$6, 000.00 to our playground fund bringing the total raised to date to just over \$41 000.00. Our goal of \$50 000.00 is in sight!

An update on our Christmas float: we won the prize for Best Youth Float. Our float was designed by a school club. Congratulations and thank you to the design club and those families that participated in the build. As a treat, school council held a pizza party for the design club and students who participated in the build.

The next school council meeting is February 21, 2017 at 6:30 p.m. in the school library. Refreshments and childcare will be available. Come see how easy it is to get involved.

Dates to Note

January 31	Sub Day
February 1	Winter Walk to School Day
February 1	Harriston Meat Packer Fundraising Begins
February 2	Ground Hog Day
February 2	National Sweater Day –Wear your favourite sweater to school!!!!
February 7	Sub Day
February 9	Gryocopter Pilot Visits Kindergarten
February 10	Live Different Presentation
February 10	Cross Country Skiing Gr. 5/6 & 4/5
February 14	Hot Dog Day
February 15	Special Olympics
February 16	Floor Hockey Tournament
February 16	Report Cards Go Home
February 16	Meat Orders Due
February 17	Floor Hockey Snow Date
February 20	Family Day
February 21	Sub Day

February 21	School Council 6:30 p.m.
February 21	Gr. 6 to Mansfield
February 22	Gr. 6 back from Mansfield
March 2	Gr. 7&8 Meat Pick-Up Between 5 and 6 p.m.
March 3	Learning Skills Assembly
March 3	LIVE FREE day

Homework Help

Math is certainly different than when I was in school and I am an educator! Do you have a child in gr. 7 or 8 that sometimes brings home math work that you have no idea how to help them with? There is help online through Homework Help. Homework Help has tutors available to help your child with their homework on a daily basis. To access Homework Help your child needs to login into UGCloud, Click on Desire to Learn (D2L), Click on 'Select a course'.... from the top of the page and click on your library course, Click on the Homework Help icon. Another way to find Homework Help is to google it. You will need your child's OEN found on their report card in order to access the tutor. I have used this site to help my own child when I couldn't figure out the math myself and found it very user friendly. Give it a try.....You may even learn a few new things.

Bringing Healthy Food to Hungry Minds

Each year our school hosts a LIVE FREE day. Students are asked to make a live free promise of thing they will do without for the day and pledge money to support our Breakfast and Snack programs. This year our LIVE FREE day is March 3rd.

Parents may wish to support our Live Free Campaign that supports our Food & Friends student nutrition program by making a donation online (<http://www.livefreewdg.ca/donate>) or sending a donation with your child/youth on March 3, 2017. Every dollar raised at our school/agency comes back to support the breakfast and snack program at Victoria Cross P.S.

Winter Walk Day

We are excited to announce that Victoria Cross will be taking part in Winter Walk Day next Wednesday February 1!

Walking to school in winter has many potential benefits, including benefits for your child's health and well-being (like opportunities to learn and socialize on the way to school, and arriving to school alert and ready to learn), our community (reduced traffic congestion around the school) and the environment, too.

There will be hot chocolate available for all students that walk to school on Wednesday morning. Walk with your child to school next Wednesday to join in the celebration! If you're on your way somewhere else and plan on driving to your next destination, consider walking and taking transit (see Google maps for available transit routes to/from your destination: <https://www.google.ca/maps>), or park/drop your child off a block or two away from the school to walk the rest of the way in. If you're not able to join, encourage your child to walk with a friend.



To check out some Winter Walking Tips:

- Keep hands and head covered to prevent heat loss.
- On really cold days wear a scarf over your face and mouth.
- Wear warm, waterproof boots.
- Wear a warm coat that deflects the wind.
- Woolen clothing helps to retain the heat.
- Wear clothing or carry knapsacks with reflective material – it’s important to be seen.
- If possible, change wet clothes at school – tuck an extra pair of socks and mitts into knapsacks.

Monthly Environmental Activities to help celebrate our planet



February 2nd is National Sweater Day!

It is vital to teach our children to respect and take care of the environment.

Celebrate International Sweater Day on February 2nd!

“National Sweater Day is a fun way to learn about the importance of saving energy and to inspire you to use less heat all winter. Heating accounts for 80% of residential energy use in Canada and is a significant source of emissions. If all Canadians lowered their thermostats by just 2 degrees Celsius this winter, it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 4 megatons – that’s equivalent to shutting down a 600 mega watt coal-fired power station or taking nearly 700,000 cars off the road!” http://www.wwf.ca/events/sweater_day/

“National Sweater Day is about valuing energy. It’s a chance to think differently about how we use energy, where our energy comes from and how we can play an important role in fighting climate change by using energy wisely, not wastefully. It is designed to help raise awareness about renewable energy and change behaviours around energy consumption in Canada.” -- World Wildlife Fund Canada

Ideas for your family to celebrate Sweater Day!

- **Turn down your thermostat and wear a sweater!**
- **Ask your children to brainstorm with you about ways to save energy at home. Make a pledge to implement as many as you can.**
- **Research the differences between climate and weather.** Ask your child to characterize some different climate types (polar, tropical, coastal, etc.).
- **Read a children’s book on conservation** such as: *Why Should I Save Energy?* by Jen Green. Encourage lots of discussion and questions.
- **Valentine’s Day is just around the corner** - use recycled materials to create a your cards this year!

Talking About Mental Health – February 2017 Tests and Stress

Taking tests is stressful for most students. However, there are lots of ways that your child and youth (and you!) can decrease the stress related to tests.

Anticipate stress and be ready for it.

- ✓ Practice relaxing activities every day so during stressful times you already know how to cope.

Eat well

- ✓ Learning and remembering takes a lot of energy. Keep healthy snacks close by so you can refuel easily with what your body needs to feel good and think clearly.

Sleep

- ✓ During sleep, our brains make connections and consolidate our learning. Research has shown that during sleep, our brain cleans out toxins to allow for more learning to occur the next day.

Drink lots of water

- ✓ Hydration is very important for good brain function. Cut down on caffeine, which contributes to the stress response and to poor sleep.

Move

- ✓ Activity increases energy, stimulates brain growth and increases mood. Take regular active breaks; even 5 minutes of walking outdoors can make a difference.

Pause and relax

- ✓ Take time to relax. Do some deep breathing. Listen to music. Meditate. Go outside. Write in a journal. Do some stretches. Go for a walk. Draw or doodle.
<http://youth.anxietybc.com/relaxation> has some great examples of how to relax.

Connect

- ✓ Talk to your friends.
- ✓ Talk to your parent or a caring adult about how you are feeling.
- ✓ At school, you can talk to your teacher, principal or CYC for support.

Laugh!

- ✓ Laughter is a great release and allows our brains to recharge and reset.

*Dr. Lynn Woodford is the Mental Health Lead for the Upper Grand District School Board.
Follow me on Twitter @drlynnwoodford.*

Engaging Your Child in Science at Home!

As parents we have the wonderful opportunity and responsibility for nurturing our children's growth. Parents play a key role in the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of their child. As parents we can usually find time to read a story to our children, thereby instilling a love of literature, but we are often at a loss as to how to instill a love and appreciation for Science. Science encourages problem solving skills, curiosity and questioning, creative and critical thinking, observational skills and reinforces both literacy and math skills....and it's FUN! Here are some ideas for fostering Scientific skills in your children.

6 Tips to foster Scientific Thinking at Home

1-See science everywhere. Parents can take opportunities to ask "What would happen if ...?" questions or present brainteasers to encourage children to be curious and seek out answers. Children need to know that science isn't just a subject, but it is a way of understanding the world around us.

2-Lead family discussions on science-related topics. Dinnertime might be an ideal time for your family to have discussions about news stories that are science based, like space shuttle missions, severe weather conditions, or new medical breakthroughs. Over time, children will develop a better understanding of science and how it affects many facets of our lives. Movies and TV shows with science-related storylines are also great topics for discussion.

3-Encourage girls and boys equally. Many girls are left out of challenging activities simply because of their gender. Be aware that both girls and boys need to be encouraged and exposed to a variety of subjects at a very early age.

4-Do science together. Children, especially elementary-age children, learn better by investigating and experimenting. Simple investigations done together in the home can bolster what your child is learning in the classroom. Check with your child's teacher on what your child is currently learning in class and what activities you can explore at home.

5-Connect science with a family vacation. Family vacations are a great way to explore science. It could be a hiking trip where you explore nature or a discussion on tides during a beach vacation.

6-Show excitement for Science!

Reference:

"NSTA Science Matters: Tips for Busy Parents - National Science"

<http://www.nsta.org/sciencematters/tips.aspx>.