

LAKEWOOD ELEMENTARY

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September 13, 2018

From the Principals Desk

Welcome to the new school year. Students have been placed in their new classes for the upcoming year. Student placement is a complicated process that begins in June and continues right up until students transition to their new classes. It is possible that your child may have been assigned to a single grade class or a combined class. In order for us to effectively organize within the resources available, both of these options are used when placing students. Additionally, all of our teachers take part in professional development opportunities that assist them with planning for diversity through effective instruction, assessment, evaluation and reporting processes. All of our teachers are experienced in differentiating curriculum to meet student needs. If you have any questions with regards to your child's educational program please talk to your classroom teacher. They also understand transitional anxiety that all children feel when entering a new classroom. We will work together to ensure that your child's education is challenging and meets their developmental learning needs. Enjoy learning about your child's new classroom and we are looking forward to an exciting year at Lakewood.

Bryan Johnson

Blended Classrooms

Parents generally do not have concerns when their child is placed in a "straight grade" classroom; however, some parents are concerned when their child is placed in a "multi-grade" or blended classroom. Often there are misconceptions with regards to how we configure combined classrooms. Let's say for example that we are building a grade 2/3 classroom. When this grade 2/3 class contains



19 grade twos and 5 grade threes, generally the concerns come from the parents of the children in the older grade. They believe that their child will be redoing grade two work and their learning needs will not be met.

That is simply not the case. Teaching professionals in both multi-age and straight grade classrooms differentiate the curriculum to ensure that the prescribed learning outcomes are taught for each grade level. Learning outcomes are scaffolded grade to grade repeating and building on learned skills from the previous year. Additionally, as a child progresses, teachers differentiate curriculum to ensure that learning is achievable, yet challenging for each child. Teachers are available to meet with any parents to discuss their child's educational program and provide suggestions and ways of supporting their child's learning at home. In addition to their own professional skills, classroom teachers also have a plethora of resource professionals at their finger-tips. Teachers have access to non-enrolling school based teaching professionals including Learning Support and Integration Support teachers who can assist the classroom teacher to ensure programs are developed to address individual and group learning needs. All school based professionals have access to School

District Curriculum Resource Professionals that offer additional support to ensure that each child's educational needs are met, regardless of the classroom configuration.

Much like a doctor that looks out for your child's well-being and healthcare needs, teaching professionals are entrusted to make decisions that are in the best interest of your child. This process begins each June when we conduct our class configuration meetings. All parents are

provided with the opportunity to participate in a collaborative discussion with administration prior to teacher's meeting to configure classrooms. This process is outlined in a document (Lakewood Student Placement Policy) that invites parents to provide input with regards to their child's classroom placement in the upcoming year. Although it does not guarantee that the parents requests will be met, it does ensure that their suggestions will be shared with teachers prior to the configuration process. The final decision on placement is ultimately at the discretion of the teaching professionals, based on their input in consultation with the principal. We make collaborative decisions regarding class placement that are in the best interest of your child, and support positive group dynamics in each classroom. Placing children with their friends unless for educationally sound reasons is not considered. Friendships are maintained regardless of class placement through recess times, classroom buddy activities, and other school community activities.

What are the benefits of multi-age classrooms?

- Research on learning in combined classes and our own experience over the years, is clear and consistent. Students in multi-age classes do as well or better than students in single grade classrooms in all academic areas. These same students often excel in social areas including independence, study habits and a positive attitude in school
- It provides older students the opportunity for leadership
- Builds a greater sense of classroom and school community (acceptance of other aged children)

- Creates a more nurturing and empathic school community accepting younger children
- Multiage classrooms enable teachers to provide scaffolded learning
- Provide teaching professionals with a greater number of placement possibilities to ensure balanced classes
- Leads to independent learning
- Multiage classrooms provide teaching professionals greater opportunity for collaborative teaching. This builds children's capacity with regards to different teaching styles and better prepares them for future years.

Transitional Anxiety...Helping your child adjust to their new classroom in September...

One of the primary characteristics of a Highly Sensitive Person (HSP) is difficulty processing change. The uncertainty of a new path generates anxiety. Your child may experience this as they have moved to their new classroom. This is not uncommon and it is important that both parents and their new teacher support the transition and make it successful for each student. For the most part, children tend to be anxious because they get separated from a friend or friends that are not in their new classroom. Additionally, it will take your child some time to adjust to a new teaching style as well as new class routines and grade level expectations.



Don't worry...here are some ways to support your child at home and at school.

- Remind your child that their friends are still attending Lakewood. **Help your child develop a before school, recess and lunch meeting area** so that they can meet up with their friends during the breaks throughout the day.

- Explain to your child that often classes go on field trips together or engage in buddy class activities so there is a good chance that they will have an opportunity to engage in learning activities throughout the year.
- Arrange playdates outside of the school so that your child can connect with their friends.
- Remind your child that they will make new friends, this is an important skill that they need to learn throughout life. Often children are separated from their friends in the classroom so that they become independent, not codependent.
- Make a drop off plan at home with your child, review the plan and stick to it. It is important that you meet the teacher at the door, and leave. It does not help your child or the teacher if you carry your child's gear, come into the classroom and take your child's coat off, hang up their bag etc. It will only foster their dependence rather than independence. It is important for your child to become independent and seek help from peers and their teacher. Your job is done at the door, a kiss, a hug and off you go. We ask that all parents arrange a meeting place outside of the building at the end of the day so your child develops confidence with dismissal routines also.
- As parents, please refrain from standing around staring into your child's classroom window. It doesn't help your child feel safe and can negatively impact their feelings of being able to cope on their own.
- Finally, feel free to set up a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss this further so that you can develop a shared plan to support your child. Your child's teacher will also be sending home information regarding classroom routines and schedules. Take the time to review these with your child and support them as they become familiar with their new classroom.

Student Agendas

Most Grade 2 - 5 classes will be using agendas this year to help your children develop, learn and build upon their organizational skills. Agendas have arrived and will be distributed to classroom teachers who requested them for their classes. The cost of the agenda is \$8.00. Please send the money in with your child to the attention of the classroom teacher. If you wish to send in a cheque to cover one or more agendas, please make the cheque out to Sooke School District #62. Thank you.



Good luck Mr. Sansom!

Congratulations to Mr. Sansom as he was nominated for the Post Foods Search for Goodness Teachers Edition Contest and is one of the ten finalists selected for the award. The judging panel is now in the process of selecting the contest winner. If he wins, \$5000 is provided to the school, and \$5000 is provided to Mr. Sansom. For more information go to: <https://searchforgoodness.ca/over.aspx>

Important Dates:

- Mon., Sept. 17th Pro D Day- No School
- Wed., Sept. 19th Meet the Staff Night
- Fri., Sept. 21st Terry Fox/Cops for Cancer Run
- Mon., Sept. 24th Fire Drill 10AM
- Wed., Sept. 26th Cross Country at Juan de Fuca
- Fri., Sept. 28th Orange Shirt Day
- Wed., Oct. 3rd Cross Country at Juan de Fuca
- Tues., Oct. 9th PAC Meeting Library 7:00PM
- Fri., Oct. 5th Turkey Trot
- Mon., Oct. 8th Thanksgiving (no school)
- Tues., Oct. 16th Picture Day
- Wed., Oct. 17th Parent Teacher Interviews
- Fri. Oct 19th Pro D Day - No School
- Wed Oct 24th Earthquake Drill 11:40AM

