

**Algonquin Ridge Elementary School**

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<http://alr.scdsb.on.ca>**Cory McKeown**

Principal

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**ALGONQUIN RIDGE NEWS JANUARY 2024**

Happy New Year and welcome back! It was great to see all the smiling faces return to our building, eager to see their friends and teachers, and return to the business of learning. While December is often full of fun and festivity it can also be a very busy and stressful time for many students and their families. January, on the other hand, is a good time to return to routine, focusing on getting caught up with responsibilities, and reestablishing the habits that lead to long term success. If you've read a January "Principal's Message" at Algonquin Ridge in the past, you may recall that I like to ask families to use this time of year to talk to their children about what changes they may want to make and goals they can set for themselves—this activity will also mesh nicely with your review of the Term 1 Report cards that you can expect on February 16. Attendance, walking to school, 'Learning Skills' and simply trying something new are all good areas to consider when thinking about goal setting.

To this point of the Fall/Winter we have been fortunate to have had very few extremely wet/rainy or cold days to contend with—our luck is bound to run out! This week classroom teachers will be reminding students of the importance of dressing for the weather. This includes wearing a warm coat with layers, having indoor and outdoor shoes at school every day (that they use) and a hat and mitts. The board policy clearly states that outdoor recesses will be cancelled when temperatures reach -25 C. We adhere to that policy at Algonquin Ridge so students should be prepared for 20 min outside, twice daily, when the temperature is above that threshold. Students are allowed to step inside the building to warm up when needed on cold days, but this does not reduce the responsibility of coming to school prepared. If dressing for the weather is a challenge, please let us know. Our School Council members have done some incredible work over the last several years gathering good condition winter gear so that we could provide it to anyone in need and we are confident that we can continue to help. The generosity of this community has never been in question—our challenge has sometimes been storage and distribution (**so please do not send in items unless we communicate a need**).

In closing, I'd like to once again ask that families make an effort to return to the 'walking to school routine' that made our school much safer through the Fall. In December we saw a significant increase in the number of cars accessing the parking lot each morning and afternoon--sometimes as many as 100! Students dressed for the Ontario winter, who are spending at least 40 minutes outside at school each day, should have no difficulty walking to school now, in the same way they did in September (or walking part of the way when dropped off a few blocks away). This is particularly true for our older students. If you choose to drive your children to school be patient, stay focused on all pedestrians, be respectful of your neighbours and follow the frequently communicated parking lot routines (e.g. pulling all the way forward in the Kiss-N-Ride).

*Cory McKeown*

Principal

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## CALENDAR

Jan 17<sup>th</sup> – Caribou Math begins.  
Jan 19<sup>th</sup> – Big/Little Reading Day  
Jan 25<sup>th</sup> – Comfy Clothes Day  
Jan 26<sup>th</sup> – PA Day – **no school**  
Feb 1<sup>st</sup> – Gr 5/6 – Hardwood Hills  
Feb 19<sup>th</sup> – Family Day – **no school**  
Feb 20<sup>th</sup> – Int Boys Bball/Girls Vball – Zones pm  
Feb 21 – 23<sup>rd</sup> – Grade 8 to Camp Kandalore  
Feb 21<sup>st</sup> – Chess Club – Area Tournament  
Feb 28<sup>th</sup> – Int Bball/GVBall – Regionals  
Feb 29<sup>th</sup> – Decades Day

## DAYS OF OBSERVANCE - JANUARY 2024

Jan 1-31<sup>st</sup> – Tamil Heritage Month  
Jan 1 – New Year's Day  
    Temple Day/Solar New Year (Buddhism)  
Jan 4 – World Braille Day  
Jan 6 – Epiphany (Christianity)  
Jan 7 – Christmas – (Eastern Orthodox Christianity)  
Jan 10 – Linji Memorial (Buddhism)  
Jan 13- Lohri (Hinduism)  
    Maghi  
Jan 14 – New Year's Day (Eastern Orthodox Christianity)  
Jan 15 – Makar Sankranti (Hinduism)  
    Thai Pongal (Hinduism - Tamil)  
Jan 19 – Epiphany (Eastern Orthodox Christianity)  
Jan 20 – Birth of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikhism)  
Jan 21 – Lincoln Alexander Day  
Jan 24 – International Day of Education  
    World Day for African and Afrodescendant Culture  
Jan 25 – Bell Let's Talk Day  
    Honen Shonin Memorial (Buddhism)  
    Mahayana New Year (Buddhism)  
Jan 27 – Family Literacy Day  
    International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust  
Jan 29 – National Day of Remembrance of the Quebec City Mosque Attack and Action Against Islamophobia

## PA DAY – FRIDAY, JANUARY 26, 2024

Please note that Friday, Jan. 26 is a PA Day for elementary SCDSB students. Please refer to the 2023-24 School Year Calendar on the SCDSB website for more information:  
[www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning\\_for\\_school/school\\_year\\_calendar](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/school_year_calendar).

### **Below is a summary of the activities planned for the Jan. 26 PA Day:**

Length: Full day Topic: Evaluation and reporting

Host: Simcoe County District School Board

Educators will be working to complete the first provincial report card which will reflect students' achievement of curriculum expectations introduced and developed from September to January/February of the school year, as well as students' development of the learning skills and work habits during that period. This process includes both evaluation and reporting.

Elementary report cards will go home to parents/guardians on Friday, Feb. 16, 2024.

#### [INCLEMENT WEATHER AND BUS CANCELLATION INFORMATION REMINDER](#)

All information regarding cancelled buses in Simcoe County is posted on the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium (SCSTC)'s bus information website at [www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://www.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca). Our school is in the **CENTRAL** zone. When buses are cancelled, schools remain open for student learning, unless otherwise noted. School staff are expected to plan for such emergencies in order to transition students who are unable to attend due to inclement weather, to their online platforms (Google Classroom and/or SCDSBhub [Brightspace by D2L]) and continue with academic programming. It is always a family decision whether or not it is safe for their child(ren) to leave for school under severe weather conditions.

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 before 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/Login.aspx>.

#### [PARENTS' GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION AND REPORTING](#)

Learn to navigate the world of assessment, evaluation, and reporting with this new guide for parents/guardians. Created to support parents'/guardians' understanding of assessment, this guide was designed to effectively empower you to actively engage in your child's educational journey. The guide has been posted to the Simcoe County District School

Board's website and can be accessed at:

[https://cdns5-ss14.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_210898/File/Secondary/Parents-Guide-to-Assessment.pdf](https://cdns5-ss14.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_210898/File/Secondary/Parents-Guide-to-Assessment.pdf).

#### [SUBSCRIBE TO COMMUNITY CONNECTS!](#)

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is excited to launch Community Connects, a new bimonthly newsletter for the SCDSB community. Our shared goal with this new tool is to keep our community partners and stakeholders informed while nurturing relationships that are built on accountability, trust, and transparency.

To learn more and subscribe, visit the Community Connects page on the SCDSB website: [www.scdsb.on.ca/community/community\\_connects](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/community/community_connects).

#### [KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION](#)

Kindergarten registration for September 2024 is open! Kindergarten is the beginning of a wonderful journey of learning, and we want your child to begin their journey in a SCDSB school! Do you have a child who will turn four in 2024? If so, we invite you to register your child for Kindergarten. To register online or for more information visit: [www.scdsb.on.ca/kindergarten](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/kindergarten).

#### [KINDERGARTEN CONNECTIONS](#)

Subscribe to Kindergarten Connections! Will your child be turning four in 2024? If so, the SCDSB invites you to Kindergarten Connections! This is a monthly newsletter informing families of everything they need to know about preparing their child for school, as well as registering them for Kindergarten in the SCDSB. To learn more and subscribe, visit the Kindergarten page on the SCDSB website: [www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning\\_for\\_school/kindergarten](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/kindergarten).

#### [EARLYON CHILD AND FAMILY CENTRES](#)

The foundation for lifelong learning and health is built in the early years. EarlyON Child and Family Centres across Simcoe County offer programs for children prenatal to six years of age and their parents/guardians and caregivers. They offer access to play- and inquiry-based learning supported by How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the early years, information on child development and developmental screening including Early Referral Identification Kits (ERIKs), parent/guardian education, referrals to community resources, nutrition information, and post-natal resources. Check with your local EarlyON provider: <https://linktr.ee/earlyonsimcoe>.

### HOW IS YOUR INFANT, TODDLER, OR PRESCHOOL CHILD DEVELOPING?

Is your child meeting their milestones? Age-appropriate speech and language skills are critical to your child's ability to read, write, and be successful in school as well as to their ability to engage with their peers. Free services are available to support you with your child's development. Preschool speech and language programs are located across the County of Simcoe. Call 705-739-5696 or 1-800-675-1979 to complete a developmental screen. The earlier we work together the better!

### LICENSED WINTER BREAK SCHOOL-AGE CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

Child care programs for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 are provided by independent, third-party child care operators in some SCDSB schools. To support your child care needs, some operators offer child care on PA days and holidays including over the Winter Break and March Break. Registration in advance is required. Please contact the child care operator directly to discuss fees and to register. More information and contact numbers can be found by visiting: [www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning\\_for\\_school/childcare\\_before\\_after](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/childcare_before_after).

### STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR AND CONSEQUENCES FOR STUDENT ACTION RELATED TO RACISM, BIAS OR HATE

At the SCDSB, we are committed to maintaining safe, inviting, and supportive school environments, and recognize that all students have the right to be safe, and feel safe, in our schools. With this right comes the responsibility to contribute to a positive school climate.

We want you to know that any incident of racism, bias, or hate will not be tolerated. Any such incident is treated very seriously with immediate action and consequences in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act, and consistent with our values and obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Students who engage in acts of racism, bias, or hate will face severe consequences as a result of their actions. Please take a moment to review the SCDSB Code of Conduct with your child(ren). The Code of

Conduct sets clear standards of behaviour and specifies consequences for student actions that do not comply with these standards. Visit [www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/safe\\_schools](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/safe_schools) to learn more.

The SCDSB's Human Rights and Equity Office (HREO) has an advisory titled Prohibiting the Use of the N-word. Please take a moment to review this advisory with your child(ren) by visiting the HREO page on the SCDSB website <https://tinyurl.com/3jsvhan6>.

We are dedicated to educating our students and staff about the injustice and impact of systemic racism. We continue to work with students, staff, parents/guardians, and community partners to ensure that our schools are the safe places they are intended to be for all students.

### SCHOOL PLAYGROUND STRUCTURES ARE CLOSED FOR THE WINTER

Every winter, school playground structures are closed. Students are made aware of this during school hours through announcements and staff reminders during breaks. This may not be well known throughout the community, despite signs indicating that playground structures are a winter hazard and are closed. The Canadian Standards Association regulations make recommendations for the depth of ground cover required to minimize injuries (e.g., sand, pea gravel, or wood chips). These surfaces cannot be maintained when the ground freezes. Injuries from falling would be more significant on frozen ground. We strongly recommend that you do not allow your children to play on any structures while the ground is frozen.



### MATH @HOME PARENT AND CAREGIVER SERIES

It's back! The SCDSB math team is pleased to offer three virtual sessions for parents and caregivers of SCDSB students. These sessions will focus on practical and fun ways to support children with their mathematics learning and engagement at home. The first 200 registrants will receive a Math @Home kit of resources to use at home. Participants must pre-register for each of the sessions.

#### **Exploring the new SCDSB family math resources Tuesday, Feb. 6, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.**

This session is for parents and caregivers. Join members of the SCDSB math team for a guided exploration of the new SCDSB family math resources. Participants will have the opportunity to explore the resources that are available to support their child's math learning at home. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length. During the final 15 minutes, the math team will be available to answer questions about the resources available.

#### **Tips for engaging in math conversations with your child @Home Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.**

This session is for parents and caregivers and will explore opportunities to discuss math with their child(ren) at home. Participants will learn about how events such as shopping, preparing food, engaging in a building project, or going for a walk can be used as a starting point for math conversations, and will receive prompts to get the discussion rolling. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length. During the final 15 minutes, the math team will be available to answer questions about the session.

#### **Games to support your child's math learning @Home Thursday, April 4, 2024, 7 to 8 p.m.**

This session is for parents, caregivers, and their children. Playing games at home is a great way to support child(ren)'s math development. In this session, several games will be explored, and participants will have the opportunity to try the games with their children during the session. The guided portion of the session will be 45 minutes in length followed by 15 additional minutes for further game play or to ask questions of our math facilitators. Bring your child(ren) and your math kit to this session!

Participants must pre-register for the sessions they wish to attend. Registered participants will receive a kit of hands-on resources that will be sent to the school indicated on the registration form. Use this link to register:

<https://bit.ly/24MathAtHome>.

### INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE WAYS THAT THE SCDSB SUPPORTS STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND THEIR FAMILIES? JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL SPECIAL EDUCATION INFORMATION SERIES.

During the 2023-24 school year, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is hosting virtual special education outreach sessions to assist parents/guardians in learning more about programs, supports, and ways that we work together to support students with special education needs.

#### **Transition planning Feb. 13 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

#### **Reading strategies March 19 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) April 16 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

#### **Every day mental health strategies May 14 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.**

Participants are asked to register in advance. Information to access the sessions will be shared via email with individuals who have pre-registered. Learn more about each session and how to register on the SCDSB website:

[www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/special\\_education/special\\_education\\_outreach\\_sessions](http://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/special_education/special_education_outreach_sessions).





### [JOIN US!](#)

A learning series for parents/guardians with Pine River Institute Mental health and well-being continues to be a key strategic priority within the SCDSB. We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Centre for Family Initiatives at Pine River Institute (CFI@PRI) to provide several curated learning sessions focused on student mental health and well-being to SCDSB families. There are eight webinars specifically planned for parents/guardians and other caregivers during this school year. The remaining webinars are:

**Jan. 11, 2024 - Sleep hygiene**

**Feb. 8, 2024 - Self regulation for kids**

**Feb. 22, 2024 - Self regulation for teens**

**March 28, 2024 - Building parents' resiliency**

**April 18, 2024 - Vaping, weed, and alcohol**

We hope you save these dates in your calendar and join us for these learning opportunities. For more information and to register, please visit the SCDSB website: <https://bit.ly/3jGaC74>.

Pine River Institute is a live-in treatment centre and outdoor leadership experience for youth aged 13 to 19 struggling with addictive behaviours and often other mental health issues. Combining therapy with a fully accredited education program, PRI reinforces the healthy life skills required for a successful future. CFI@PRI extends PRI's knowledge, experience and evidence-informed treatment approach to families and care providers in the community to support youth mental wellness and prevent the need for more intensive interventions. Learn more about PRI by visiting their website at [www.pineriverinstitute.com](http://www.pineriverinstitute.com). Reporting achievement in language Student achievement in language will be reported as one overall grade or mark on the term one report card. The mark will reflect a student's integrated learning across the four strands:

- Strand A - Literacy Connections and Applications
- Strand B - Foundations of Language
- Strand C - Comprehension; Understanding and Responding to Texts
- Strand D - Composition; Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts

The grade will be accompanied by supporting comments that will indicate the student's strengths, describe growth in learning, and identify next steps for improvement. For more information regarding the revised Language curriculum, visit [www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/key-changes-language](http://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/key-changes-language) to view a guide for parents/guardians on the Ministry of Education website. Mental health promotion strategy of the month - 2 x 10 Connecting Well-being is a strategic priority in the Simcoe County District School Board, and our mental health and well-being department provides monthly strategies to support student and family well-being.

This month's strategy is 2 x 10 Connecting. This practice helps to build rapport and the relationship between a caring adult and student, and to let the student see they are genuinely cared about as a person.

To practice 2x10 Connecting at home, find a consistent time each day to spend two minutes talking to your child about anything they would like to talk about for a period of 10 days. If you have more than one child, switch who spends that time talking with you every 10 days or find different times in the day to spend 2 minutes with each child.

Find more information to support your child's mental health here: <https://smho-smso.ca/parents-and-caregivers/>.

2x10 Connecting resources: Elementary - <https://smho-smso.ca/emhc/self-awareness-and-sense-of-identity/mattering/2-x-10/>

Secondary - <https://smho-smso.ca/emhcsecondary/healthy-relationship-skills/being-a-good-friend/connecting/>

Follow the Mental Health and Well-being social media accounts (@SCDSB\_MHWP) to see how well-being is being supported in our schools.

### KEEPING YOUR INFORMATION PRIVATE

As parents/guardians, we work to support our children's well-being and to protect them from harm. At a time when internet use can pose risk to our children, how can we support them in keeping their information private and secure when using social media, games, and/or other digital apps? Each month we will highlight one cyber awareness topic to support parents/guardians with the information and tools they need to navigate these topics with their children.

January's theme is Keeping your information private. For helpful tips related to managing your child's privacy and security settings on mobile devices, read through the info sheet from the Educational Collaborative Network of Ontario (ECNO) by visiting [https://ecno.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ECNO-CAM-Calendar-23-Aug3023\\_KeepInformationPrivate.pdf](https://ecno.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/ECNO-CAM-Calendar-23-Aug3023_KeepInformationPrivate.pdf).

For additional activities and information, please refer to the Digital Citizenship resources for parents/guardians that are available on the SCDSB website [https://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/safe\\_schools](https://www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/safe_schools) (see button for Mental Health & Well-being in Online Environments).

### STAY HEALTHY THIS SCHOOL YEAR

COVID and other respiratory infections 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 sanitizer for 15 seconds. Also, make sure you are up to date with your immunizations, cover coughs and sneezes, and stay home 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 Health Connection at 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org).

Information provided by The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

### PARENT/GUARDIAN SELF-CARE

As parents and caregivers, it is important that we take time to check in with ourselves. When you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, take time for yourself, even if it is just a few minutes. Working through your own feelings will make it easier for you to support and reassure your child.

Self-care does not need to be complicated. Take a few minutes to do something you enjoy, connect with a friend, or move your body. It is not selfish, it is self-preservation.

For more information, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

Information provided by The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. The importance of an open door (Secondary)

### TEENS WHO HAVE POSITIVE COMMUNICATION WITH THEIR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS FEEL BETTER ABOUT THEMSELVES AND DO BETTER AT SCHOOL AND IN LIFE.

§ Ask your teen about what's going on in their life, and how they feel about things.

§ Allow them to express their worries and fears without being judged.

§ Try to see things from their perspective.

§ When your teen confides in you, tell them you appreciate their trust.

§ Work together to find solutions to problems, letting them decide what they feel would