McGirr Elementary School Newsletter
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November 2026

PRINCIPAL: Mr. Robbie Dhillon
VICE PRINCIPAL: Ms. Janet Nelson
SECRETARIES: Ms. Sandra Fox and Ms. Breonna Senini

https://mcgirr.sd68.bc.ca/

FROM THE OFFICE

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

October is now in our rear-view mirror and we have roared into November. November is a time for reflection, to appreciate the sacrifices of previous generations in preserving our cherished freedoms and way of life.

Our Remembrance Day Assembly took place this morning. We had five, Grade 7 students help us through the assembly: Cali, Maddy, Owen, Kaitlin and Leia. Our special guest was Past President of Legion 257, Mr. Gary Howk.

Mrs. Kraft's class shared some words about peace and how we can help to make the world a more peaceful place. In addition, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Mark, and Mr. Meadus, had The McGirr Choir performing: "Sing for Peace," and "Highway of Heroes," Both were very well done and certainly brought a tear to the eyes of many adults in the gym.

The wreaths our classes prepared were simply amazing. Thank you to Dover students: Jonah H, and Reesa C for performing "The Last Post."

With this time of year comes cold and/or wet weather. Please don't let your child(ren) leave home in the morning without proper clothes for the weather. We encourage students to play outdoors during our recess breaks in proper waterproof attire, including gloves and boots.

Many thanks for all that you do, as it really does take a village to raise a child.

Yours truly,

Mr. Robbie Dhillon (Principal)

2026-2027 CALENDAR

Remembrance Day (school closed)..... Wed Nov 11
Hot Lunch (PAC) (Pizza Hut/DQ)..... Mon Nov 23
PAC (6:15 PM) ..... Mon Nov 23
Progress Report Term #1 issued..... Wed Nov 25
Pro-D (school closed)..... Mon Nov 30

Hot Lunch (PAC) (Iron Works/Booster Juice)..... Mon Dec 7
Last Day before Holiday ..... Fri. Dec 18

First Day back ..... Mon Jan 4
Hot Lunch (PAC) (Pita Pit/Booser Juice) ..... Mon Jan 11
PAC (6:15 PM) ..... Mon Jan 18

Hot Lunch (PAC) (Katerinas')..... Mon Feb 1
Pro-D (students do not attend) ..... Fri Feb 12
BC Family Day (school closed) ..... Mon Feb 15

Hot Lunch (PAC) (OPA!)..... Mon Feb 22
PAC (6:15 PM)..... Mon Feb 22

Hot Lunch (PAC) (Bar Burrito/Booster Juice)..... Mon Mar 8
Progress Report Term #2 issued..... Wed Mar 10
Last Day before Spring Break ..... Fri. Mar 12
Good Friday..... Fri Mar 26
Easter Monday..... Mon Mar 29
First Day back..... Tues Mar 30

Hot Lunch (PAC) (Edo) ..... Mon Apr 5
PAC (6:15 PM)..... Mon Apr 12
Class photos (all divisions, plus Gr 7/staff pic)... Mon Apr 19
Pro-D (students do not attend)..... Mon Apr 26

Hot Lunch (PAC) (Subway/DQ) ..... Mon May 3
PAC (6:15 PM)..... Mon May 10
Curriculum Implementation Day (School closed) Fri May 21
Victoria Day (school closed) ..... Mon May 24

PAC Fun Fair (5-8 PM) ..... Fri Jun 4
Hot Lunch (PAC) (Papa John's/DQ)..... Mon Jun 7
PAC (6:15 pm)..... Mon Jun 14
Summative Reports ..... Tues Jun 29
Last Day of School (school dismissed at 2:13).... Tues Jun 29
Administration Day..... Wed Jun 30
if dates change these are communicated through the office

VOLUNTEER AND CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

Detailed information has been sent out many times and is routinely sent out on our listserve.

When volunteering to help support a class or function or activity school related, you must complete a Criminal Record Check (CRC)

- Criminal Record Check (CRC) is completed every 5 years.

In terms of the CRC, we suggest completing it when your child is in Kindergarten (or when your child starts McGirr) and in Grade 4. That will cover all of your years at McGirr. Your CRC must be done on-line:

• https://justice.gov.bc.ca/criminalrecordcheck

• Access Code: UQ4T7XXBHE



The process above can take up to 3 weeks to finalize. Actually doing it on line will take about 5-10 minutes for most adults and you are encouraged to do this when your child starts Kindergarten (or their first year here) and again at the start of Grade 4 (the check is good for 5 years). This will ensure you are covered for all 8 years at McGirr.

GREAT NANAIMO TOY DRIVE

The Great Nanaimo Toy Drive is getting ready for another holiday season, and we want families in our community to know that registration for 2026 begins soon.

If your family could use a little extra help making the holidays special for your children this year, we encourage you to register.

🎁 Online Registration: November 20 – December 10, 2026

📞 Phone Registration: November 23 – December 10, 2026

Visit www.thegreatnanaimotoydrive.ca to register online or to find information about phone registration, including available days and times.

Eligible families with children ages 0–17 by the end of December 2026 are welcome to apply.

LOAVES AND FISHES

This year, Loaves and Fishes will be continuing their regular Free Food Market program and providing grocery gift cards as a Christmas bonus.

Gift cards will be available from December 9 through December 22. Households that regularly attend one of their Free Food Market locations during that time will receive a gift card along with their food.

The full Free Food Market schedule can be viewed here: **Loaves & Fishes Nanaimo Markets**

HOW TO REGISTER FOR GROCERY GIFT CARDS:

If families do not already attend one of their regular Free Food Market locations, and feel a grocery gift card would be helpful this holiday season, please make an appointment at The Centre, where grocery gift cards will be available on December 11 and December 18.

Appointments for December 11 will open on December 3 and appointments for December 18 will open on December 10, with times becoming available throughout the day on a rolling basis.

Families can book online through their website as soon as your preferred appointment time becomes available.

https://www.vifoodbank.org/

Everyday Anxiety Strategies for Educators (EASE) – share with staff and with community.

EASE is a collection of evidence-informed anxiety prevention and resilience-building resources for use with students in grades K-7. The resources use cognitive behavioural strategies to address the thoughts, feelings and behaviours associated with anxiety. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EASE classroom activities were adapted for use at home by parents and caregivers to support children's mental health and continuous learning.

These fun and practical strategies help guide parents and caregivers in managing their children's anxiety and worries in the comfort of their home.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health/ease

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Important! Action required: Make sure you are able to get district communications about school closures, emergencies

If the school district has to close schools for any reason, emails and text messages are sent to all parents.

However…if you are not receiving district emails and you have not opted in to receive text messages from the school district- you WON'T get these messages! Sometimes parents and caregivers have chosen to unsubscribe from district emails. This means you won't get messages about emergencies either. We don't send a lot of emails from the district- just ones that have important information for all parents and caregivers.

How to know if you are getting district emails:

The last email sent from the school district was on October 23, 2026 with the subject: News from Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools. If you got this email- you're good to go! If you did NOT get this email- please reach out to your child's office to let them know and we can check to see if you have blocked our emails and can get you added again.

Make sure you have opted in to text messages from the school district:

Text YES to 978338. You'll get a text response that you have signed up for School Messenger. This means you'll get texts messages during closures or emergencies going forward.

It is that time of year again, when the school district would like to remind parents about school closure procedures. The most common reasons that schools might be closed are dangerous road conditions due to a heavy snowfall or ice. If you are wondering if schools are open on a particular day, for the most current updates listen to local radio stations (WAVE 102.3 FM and WOLF 106.9 FM) in the mornings.



We also attempt to put an announcement of any school closure on the school district website, www.sd68.bc.ca, and on Twitter and Facebook, but our ability to do so could be affected by such things as power outages and technical issues. If there is no announcement on the website or social media, please be sure to listen to local radio stations.

We would like to remind parents that it is their right to make the final decision as to whether it is safe for their children to travel to school on any given day. While the district strives to make the best decision possible for students across the district, there may be circumstances in your neighbourhood that lead you to decide to keep your children home, even though schools are open.

YOU CAN HELP THE OFFICE BE MORE EFFICIENT BY CONTINUING TO:

- Email student absences to info.mg@sd68.bc.ca is the communication for general student absences. (**please include your child's first and last name, teacher name** and reason if needed. Please also copy this email to your child's teacher as well.



- Or call the school in advance (**preferably before 8 AM**) and leaving a message on the answering machine if you know your child will not be in attendance

- **Non Emergency Early pick up**: email info.mg@sd68.bc.ca (also copied to your child's teacher) as early as possible (**on the day of**) so we can ensure your child's teacher is aware. (include your child's first/last name and time of pick up).

- **Non-Emergency Pick up at end of day (1:50--2:13).** We are a large school, with a busy parking lot, and students are not always in their assigned classrooms towards the end of the day. From gym, to library, to outside PE, buddies, music, band, support rooms, the list goes on, so this email is a crucial part in allowing us to have the time to have your child ready as quickly as possible. If you are showing up without this notice, there will be a longer wait**. If requesting non-emergency early dismissal close to the end of the day bell (ie 1:50-2:13**) please ensure you have given the office good lead time.. **In an ideal day, students would not need to leave early during that last part of the day.**