



Birchland Elementary

Mr. D. Shannon, Principal

Telephone: 604-941-3428

Website: [Home - Birchland Elementary School](#)

"We belong. We care. We matter."

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

September	14	Hometown Terry Fox Run (begins at 10:00am; onsite registration tables open at 8:00am and you can also register in advance)
	15	Kindergarten students begin attending full days
	18	Early Dismissal 12:03pm; Welcoming Conversations grs. 1-5
	19	Professional Development Day (district)
	26	Teddy Bear Picnic (details to follow)
	29	Orange Shirt Day
	30	Truth and Reconciliation Day - school is closed
October	2	Photo Day (Individual Photos)

Meet our 2025/26 staff

Mrs. Akbari	EA	Mrs. Al-Rubaie	EA	Mrs. Bayat Manesh	LST
Mrs. Blue	EA	Ms. Burnett	EA	Ms. Campagna	EA
Mrs. Cherry	2/3	Mrs. Chuang	NHS	Mr. Chun	AMC
Ms. Ersek	PMC	Ms. Frisk	Library	Ms. Hertanto	EA
Mrs. Karen	YW	Mrs. Katie	Counselor	Ms. Jang	SS
Ms. Kim	4/5	Ms. Kossack	LC	Mrs. Liski	LST
Ms. Lueck	K/1	Mrs. Mankoo	4/5	Mrs. Moon (Choe)	2/3
Ms. Myran	IYW	Ms. Nonis	EA	Ms. Novack	EA
Mrs. Odberg	K/1	Ms. Pakozdy	LISW	Ms. Persuhn	EA
Mr. Raghoobarsingh	4/5	Ms. Samadi	NHS	Ms. Scholz	SLP
Mr. Shannon Principal		Mrs. Stapelmann	2/3	Ms. Strang	EA
Ms. Thandi	DP	Mrs. Tjernagel	LST	Mrs. Williamson	Secretary
Mrs. Wrocklage	EA				

EA=Educational Assistant

AMC=Morning Caretaker

SS=Strong Start

LISW=Learning Inclusion Support Worker

DP=District Psychologist

LST=Learning Support Teacher

PMC=Afternoon Caretaker

LC=Learning Centre (district)

SLP=Speech Language Pathologist

NHS=Noon Hour Supervisor

YW=Youth Worker

IYW=Indigenous Youth Worker

A View from the Office - Resiliency

One of the biggest things we can do for our students and children is to teach them how to be resilient. The Oxford Dictionary defines resilience as, "the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness." It is our hope that through the work we do, our students will learn to be able to handle difficult situations that they are faced with and know that they have the ability to persevere through tough times and make it through.

In this process, there will be many times when we are faced with what we believe are big challenges, and in some cases, we may even convince ourselves that we will not get through them. A personal example comes to mind about this. Each year, when I was in University, on the first day of classes I would take the itinerary of all the classes I was taking and plot all the assignments, papers, tests, presentations, etc. for each term and every single time I did this, I heard a voice in my head saying, "You'll never get through this." That voice resonated with me throughout the term yet in each term, I got through it with all the work completed. So why would I keep thinking this each term when I had ample evidence that I in fact was able to handle the pressures I put on myself? Because it was a habit that had been formed and it was difficult for me to shake. It also showed me (in hindsight and upon reflection) that when we feel pressure, it is easier to fool ourselves into thinking that we cannot handle something when in fact we can.

Now, I do not want to imply that changing one's mindset is easy. It often isn't. What I can say is that the shift in mindset from, "I'll never get through this," to "I can handle this" meant that anytime something shifted or changed, it did not worry or bother me because I knew that regardless of the little (or big) things that present themselves as obstacles, getting upset or frustrated would just take away from moving forward to plan what was needed to be done. Maintaining a positive focus allowed for much less stress through the process.

When faced with challenges, what do you do? Do you stay positive and work through the challenge(s), knowing that sometimes this can be more difficult than giving up? And what do you do for our students, your children, when they are faced with a challenge? Do we encourage them and let them know that they can work through the challenge(s), knowing that they can and they will be able to, or do we try to (what we believe) "fix" the problem, and in doing so, pass on the message that they cannot handle the challenge? The latter promotes the opposite of resiliency.

I will concede that some challenges are much bigger than others and that in some cases it is important for parents to be involved to help their children, but for many of the challenges, it is important for children to try things for themselves first and then retry them if necessary to get better at whatever it is they are doing. I think that as parents we are often quick to jump in and assist before letting our kids try, fail, retry, and learn.

The reason I started this newsletter with this topic is because it is an important skill to practice, and also because at the beginning of the year, it is something that is relevant to the classroom placement of students.

There are several things that are considered when building classrooms. In some cases, this may mean that a child is not placed with a best friend and when this occurs, there may be a reason for this. In my experience, we have students that are happy after they hear where their classroom will be, some smile, some are neutral, and some cry. The best thing we can do for our children/students is to let them know that they can handle this. It may not be "perfect" and it may not be what they expected, but they will still have opportunities - to make new friends, to play with other friends at recess and lunch, to have playdays outside of school, and possibly the opportunity to work with some of their friends during times of collaboration between classes. By telling them they can handle it, we are reassuring them that they can work through challenges that arise and experience success in handling challenges. This will only help them moving forward. Thank you for your support with this 😊

Dennis

School Goals

For our Action Plan for Learning (APL) we have created three school goals in three areas. They are as follows:

Intellectual Development - our school goal is to build the reading skills of our students.

Human and Social Development - our school goal is to strengthen our sense of belonging and connectedness.

Indigenous Learners and Indigenous Ways of Learning - our school goal and focus is to integrate the First Peoples Principles of Learning (FPPL) explicitly in and through learning opportunities.

Front Doors

The front doors of the school are unlocked during the day. It is **ESSENTIAL** that any adult that enters the building checks in at the office - no exceptions (even if you wish to take your child to his or her classroom). While your child is very aware of who you are, to other students, you are a stranger, so checking in at the office lets everyone know that we are safe. I know this is something new, so I greatly appreciate your attention to this. Thank you.

Air Quality

Each day this week, several times per day, I monitored the air quality for our region and went outside to check the "smell" in the air. A determination was made each day before recess and lunch to determine if it was okay for the students (And staff to be outside). We were fortunate that in our area, the air quality did not extend beyond the "low risk" level which

allowed us to go outside. I will continue to monitor the air quality to ensure that we make the best decision(s) about whether to stay inside or go outside.

An adjustment to our bell schedule

Beginning next week, we are adjusting our bell schedule for the school. This will not result in any changes to the start time or dismissal time, but we need to change it to allow for the transition from outside to inside after recess and lunch. The changes will be made on the SharePoint site to reflect this. The bell at the end of recess will ring at 11:05am to allow students five minutes to get into their classrooms to begin working, and the end of lunch bell will ring at 1:00pm to also allow students five minutes to get into their classrooms.

The Welcoming Bell will still ring at 8:45am (allowing students five minutes to get into class) and the dismissal bell will still ring at 2:38pm.

Breakfast Program

The breakfast program starts this Monday, Sept. 8th. Students will be served breakfast at 8:30am in the gym.

School Supplies and planners – Cash Online

As a school, we purchased school supplies for our students. The items that we purchased were done in bulk so that we could get additional savings. It is our hope to continue to purchase school supplies in the future, but as we fine tune the process, the costs should come down (because we will be able to reuse items and we won't need to re-purchase some supplies, such as rulers and scissors).

Early next week, we will be placing the cost for school supplies on our school's Cash Online system. An email will be sent that will let you know when the purchase for school supplies can be made. The supplies are of good quality and will be communal; shared by students. This will mean that at the end of the school year, your child will be able to take home all their workbooks or duo-tangs with their work, but that the other supplies will remain at the school, and these will be put toward next year's order to lower the cost. For parents who wish to purchase their own supplies, you will be responsible for replenishing any items that are required.

For planners, the information will also be put on the Cash Online system. The planners are \$5.00.

Promoting and Embracing Multiculturalism

If there are traditions / celebrations in your culture that you would like to share with our school and community, please reach out to me so we can highlight it.

At my previous school, had a display in the front foyer for Nowruz (Iranian New Year) We watched several students talking with one another to tell them about what their families do for

this celebration. It was so incredible to see students teaching students about multiculturalism! After this, other families were welcomed and encouraged to create a display honoring any of the traditions or celebrations from their culture and we had parents come in to create a display about Ramadan. Once again, we watched as students stopped to read about Ramadan and to talk with other students about the meaning of Ramadan and how it is celebrated.

I would love to start this at Birchland by welcoming in families from different cultures and creating a display that highlights their tradition / celebration. Please reach out to me if you are interested and we will create a display entrance of the school. We learned that by simply having the information visible and available to our staff and students, we saw several interactions among many students and adults from different cultural backgrounds come together to learn more about it. I will proudly highlight all displays in newsletters.

After School Programs

I will be looking to have after school programs in our school. I will send out a survey to see what interests there are in the community for after school programs and do my best to book ones that are of greatest interest.

West Coast Recess and Lunch

At Birchland, we will be going outside at recess and lunch unless the weather is extremely bad or there are potential safety risks. This means that we will be outside virtually every day. Please make sure that your child is prepared each day to go outside.