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October 28, 2020

### **A Message to Parents and Guardians: Halloween Appropriateness**

Halloween across all schools in SD43 is a fun and festive day which brings the school community together. Typically, the time around Halloween is incident-free and very respectful.

From time to time, a few students “in character” push the boundaries of what is socially acceptable, or what is appropriate behavior in schools, sometimes at the expense of others. With that in mind, for student safety and school climate reasons, to ensure that every student and adult in our community enjoys the time around Halloween, we would like your assistance in reinforcing these guidelines with your children:

- Students in costume should be easily recognizable and/or identify themselves to any staff member when queried.
- Replica weapons (guns, knives, etc.) are inappropriate, as are costumes which are hyper-sexualized, or costumes which depict elements of sexual exploitation.
- Please encourage your children to avoid glamorizing sexual exploitation by refusing to allow them to wear Halloween costumes that re-victimize those who have suffered the devastation of this crime.
- It is also important to note that costumes which portray individuals of a marginalized race, which are stereotypical and/or condescending, or that demean any group of people and make fun of anyone’s suffering are inappropriate.
- A costume is not funny when it is making light of someone’s religious, cultural, ethnic or racial group, or which is a caricature of this group.
- Students “in character” are to conduct themselves appropriately. Behaviors which intimidate, harass or humiliate members of the community, or other behaviors which are inappropriate at the expense of others, do not contribute to a fun, festive, and safe environment.

As a reminder, by law, and School District expectations, the use and possession of firecrackers or fireworks at school is strictly prohibited. This pertains to students before, during or after school, on or offsite.

Please refer to these readily available public websites for more information:

<https://www.cbc.ca/parents/learning/view/my-culture-is-not-your-or-your-kids-halloween-costume>

<https://www.coquitlam.ca/286/Fire-Safety-Tips>

<https://www.portcoquitlam.ca/city-services/fire-emergency-services/fire-safety-information/>

<https://www.portmoody.ca/en/city-services/fall-safety-tips.aspx#Halloween-Safety>

Have a safe and happy Halloween.

Sincerely,

Patricia Gartland  
Superintendent/CEO