



Birchland Elementary School

E-News

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Mr. Frank Pearse, *Principal*

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Principal of the Matter – Frank Pearse (fpearse@sd43.bc.ca)

Often, as parents, educators, and community members, we are confronted with situations that we feel we need to discuss with our children, but just can't find the correct words. The tragic death of Amanda Todd, a neighbour and colleague's child qualifies as one of these situations for myself. And although I don't believe it would be beneficial to be talking specifically about this case in our classrooms at Birchland, I believe that this is a powerful time to appropriately educate our children in our homes, classrooms and communities on the subject of bullying.

I strongly believe that the place to begin when discussing this topic is with a definition of bullying, as I often feel that the word is over used. Sometimes the word is used to refer to situations that are one-offs, or disagreements between students rather than true bullying situations (not to say that these situations don't require adult intervention, just that labelling them as bullying would be incorrect).

The Bully Beware website (created by SD#43 Principal Cindy Seddon) lists three things that need to be true in order for an act to be considered bullying:

1. Was it intentionally mean-spirited (embarrassing, humiliating, physically harmful, etc.)?
2. Was there a power difference between the 'Bully' and the 'Victim'?
3. Was the act repeated?

The best definition of bullying I have read is from a New Zealand website which defines it like this:

"Bullying is when someone keeps doing or saying things to have power over another person."

When looking at the issue of power, it is important to think of this as either social or physical power, and to understand that some children command a greater sense of this power than others. It is also worth pointing out that although arguments can be made that a single event can constitute bullying, usually it is a series of acts that take place over time.

As far as advice for parents on the issue of bullying I strongly agree with the words [Tom Grant used in his letter to parents last Friday](#):

"Awareness and education are key to preventing bullying. As parents, it is important that you watch for changes in your child's behaviour and signs of stress. Open dialogue with your child is critical to supporting them. We ask that you talk to them about bullying, appropriate internet use and how they are feeling. If you are concerned about your child's welfare please talk to a school staff member or seek help from other community support services."

Attached to Mr. Grant's letter are several resources and some information on bullying. If you are looking for more information this is a great place to start. The 'Friends for Life' program mentioned has been used at Birchland over the past few years and is planned again this year for many of our students.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this or any issue related to your child and their development please feel free to contact me at anytime.

Frank Pearse
Principal

Grab & Gab

To help promote continued dialogue between our parent community and the school I, along with Mrs. Bhattu (a district youth worker), will be hosting a morning “Grab and Gab” on:

Friday, October 26th at 9:00 A.M.

Join us in the Foyer for a coffee, treat and an opportunity to grab some food and gab with us about kids, school, or any other topics of interest.

Two Weeks at a Glance ([Click for the full Birchland Calendar](#))

October						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	

Oct 23 – Principal for the Day (name draw from Entertainment Book sales)

Oct 23 - Lunch Lady (participation optional)

Oct 24 – Wacky Wednesday; backwards day

Oct 25 – Place des Arts; Gr 4 & 5

Oct 25 – Aboriginal Cultural Program

Oct 26 – Grab & Gab - 9 am in front foyer

Oct 26 – Grade 5 bowling

Oct 30 – Lunch Lady (optional)

Oct 31 – Halloween

Oct 31 – Pizza Lunch Mrs. Baruffa’s class (most Entertainment Books sold)

Nov 1 – Aboriginal Cultural Program

Halloweens’ around the corner

Please take a few minutes to discuss with your children what constitutes an ‘appropriate’ Halloween costume for school before Halloween next week. Although some information contained in the [letter from the Children of the Street Society \(click to open\)](#) is aimed at older students there are some pertinent points for our students as well. While ensuring that our costumes are appropriate please also ensure that your children leave any parts of their costumes that are weapons (real or fake) at home to help ensure safety for all.

We will have our traditional costume parade in the afternoon, beginning at 1:20pm. It is expected that students bring costumes that are easy to change in to, and that they do not change into their costumes until after the lunch hour is over (once their teacher has returned to the classroom). Any additional information specific to your child’s class will be communicated to you by their teacher.

Birchland is Looking Good!

If you have been around the school recently you will notice that our entire school (Including roof and sidewalks) has been pressure washed, and all exterior walls, door, trim and shutters have been repainted. We chose slightly different colours and are very happy with how the building turned out. This, combined with the lighting upgrades that took place inside the building over the summer, has our students feeling really good about their building.

As our building is looking so good, and Halloween is right around the corner, I ask that you continue to be vigilant if you see any suspicious activity around our building. [The complete Vandal Watch flyer can be found here.](#)

Report All Suspicious Activities to the Vandal Watch Tip Line

604-927-7600

PAC – UNWRAPPED EVENT

If you are interested in purchasing tickets for Coquitlam’s Center’s “Unwrapped” Holiday event please contact Alison Habetler at Alison@habetler.ca or 778-322-6106. Tickets for the event are only \$10, and 100% of this money goes directly to our school! The event takes place on Tuesday, November 20th, 2012 from 7:00 PM – 10:30 PM at Coquitlam Centre!

Parking

In continuing to try to ensure as safe a drop off and pick up area as possible for the students at Birchland I have begun asking parents not to park, or stop, their vehicles on the area in front of the school marked as a no parking zone. If cars are parked in this area it effectively turns Fraser Ave. into a one lane road and makes it very challenging for other drivers and for students who need to cross the street.

When I am available I will continue to be in this area at the end of the school day and really appreciate those of you who have already started choosing other areas to park.

West Coast Recess



West Coast Recess / Lunch is a term that we have adopted to describe our commitment to providing students with the opportunity to enjoy outdoor breaks right through the rainy season! **Please help to assist your child in dressing appropriately for the weather (rain boots, rain jacket and indoor shoes).** *It would also be helpful to pack an extra pair of clothes (pants, underwear, socks and shirt) – just in case.*

Community Information

The following groups have requested that we distribute information regarding their community events. Although some of these activities may take place in School District 43 Schools we do not organize or endorse these groups or organizations, we simply pass along the information.

Beyond the Bell at Birchland – This program is offered by Port Coquitlam Parks and Recreation in Partnership with Birchland Elementary. School introduces: Art Attack. Tuesday's 2:45 – 4:15 pm. [See flyer](#)

Session 3: Cartooning **101941 Nov 20 – Dec 11 \$27.80**

To register, please contact POCO Parks & Recreation.

Scouts Canada. Please join the 9th Poco Beavers (5-7 years old) Meetings @ Cedar Drive Elementary School (3150 Cedar Dr) on Mondays. Girls are welcome! For more information, please contact 778-322-6106 or alison@habetler.ca.

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

- Leo F. Buscaglia