

November 2020

Remembrance Day Ceremony

We will hold our annual Remembrance Day Ceremony on Thursday, November 5th, 2020 at 10:55 am. The students will participate in a virtual assembly to honour the fallen soldiers who have fought for our freedoms.



Scholastic Book Fair

Our Scholastic Book Fair is a widely anticipated event and we were very disappointed at the thought of not being able to offer this event to our students and families. This year Scholastic Canada is offering a virtual book fair and Mrs. Sebo jumped at the opportunity to offer this to our school community at the end of November. More information will be coming out closer to the date.

Parent Teacher Interviews

Our parent teacher interviews will be held on the evenings of Wednesday, Nov 25th and Thursday, Nov 26th from 5pm to 8pm each evening. We will be using a new program which enables parents to select a time for a Google Meet/phone call with the classroom teacher. More information will be coming out after the long weekend.

Powerschool

Teachers have been busy entering assessments and comments into Powerschool for our parent and student community. If you have forgotten your information, please call the school office and we will be glad to assist you. If parents have any questions regarding Powerschool, they can be addressed during Parent Teacher Interviews at the end of the month.



October Eagles

3L- Danica S
3PR- Adalee M
3M- Liam M
3S- Kiarah V
3W- Danica S

4CH- Nathaniel Y
4M- Hailey K
4J- Makenna C
4D- Gaige D
4C- Cleo B

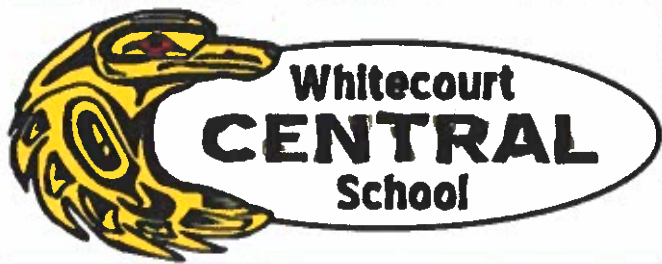
5C- Luc P
5B- Dylan G
5L- Ewan T
5CL- Cassie L
5U- Jacinta S



Website:
<http://whitecourt.ca>
Twitter: @ngpswcs
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/WhitecourtCentral

Validation Forms/Proof of Address

As we continue to update our student information, please ensure that you have returned your validation form and provided your proof of address. This is essential information to have in case of emergencies and for busing. Contact the office if you have any questions.



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School Council News

Thank you to everyone who attended the September meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for Nov 17 @ 5:30 pm. Watch for the agenda on the website. We look forward to seeing you as your involvement is important to us. As a team, we will work together to ensure the best education possible for your child/children. Hope to see you there!

Chairperson - Angie Ophus (to be voted on at the Nov meeting)
Secretary - Shereen Trenchard
Positions available:
Treasurer
Vice chair

Reminders

****If after school plans change during the day, please call the office. Teachers do not always have time to check their emails and Remind messages during the day.**

****Teachers can be reached between 8:30 - 9:00 am and 3:15 - 3:45 pm.**

****Tech fees are now due. They are \$31.50 and can be paid at the school or on School Cash Online.**

****Our Breakfast Program is back up and running. Mrs. Sebo stocks bins in each classroom every morning and the teachers distribute once school starts.**



Literacy Hints

All teachers, Grades 3 to 5, encourage students to pick "Good Fit" books. At the beginning of the year, students are taught a strategy to assist them to pick books that fit their reading and comprehension level which makes reading much more enjoyable.

I can choose a book.

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| Purpose | Why do I want to read it? |
| Interest | Does this book interest me? |
| Comprehend | Do I understand the text? |
| Know | I know most of the words. |

Literacy and Numeracy Tips

As we head into our second quarter of school, we have had some parents ask how they can support their child/children in their learning. We have put together some key tips for consideration:

- practicing addition/subtraction, multiplication facts
- practice skip counting forward and backwards - by 2's, 3's, 4's, etc
- place value; regrouping of ones, tens and hundreds
- reading together for at least 15 minutes each night - discuss characters, setting and problems/solutions
- ensure your child is attending regularly; arriving on time and not leaving early.

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Oh COVID-19, I am so tired of you. Sadly, we are not done yet, the battle continues and we need to find strength to endure. Living through this major historical event is taking all the positive coping skills we have ever learned. We are needing to teach ourselves and our children how to stay the course so we can remain mentally well.

At the end of August, Northern Gateway Public Schools, with Alberta Health Services and the Mental Health Capacity Building Team, offered for all NGPS staff an information session termed “We Are ALL In This Together”. It highlighted strategies necessary to support each other while supporting students.

That phrase brings to mind a poem by Damien Barr about weathering storms. The analogy depicts that though we are in the same storm, we are each in a different boat. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just one oar, and so on. I think of this illustration often as I work with each school, supporting students with varying circumstances and levels of resilience. Some are home schooling, some are online/at home, others are face to face. Some students and families are immune compromised, others are struggling with job loss, poverty, addictions and neglect. Some are thriving academically while others are struggling mentally. Some are directly impacted by COVID-19, others don't know anyone who has tested positive. Regardless of the situation, we all need to survive the storm together.



Image Credits: Barbara Kelley

As COVID-19 carries on and we become more weary, it is important that we can recognize when mental distress becomes mental illness, when we need self care and when we need professional help.

MENTAL DISTRESS vs MENTAL ILLNESS (teenmentalhealth.org)

Mental Distress: symptoms do not last long; normal reactions to an abnormal situation (like a pandemic!)

Mental Illness: symptoms present for 1-3 months. Impacts day-to-day functioning.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Indigenous people, LGBTQ2S+, older adults, those living in poverty, those with chronic health conditions, previous mental illness, persons with disabilities, or those with a restricted income.

RED FLAGS

- Change in eating habits/weight
- Loss of interest
- Guilt
- Talking lots of time off school/work
- Conflict in relationships
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Isolating themselves
- Feeling very busy, hurried
- Physical changes
- Memory or attention problems
- Increase in drinking/smoking/vaping

Anxiety is contagious... and so is calm.

HOW TO HELP?

The **Five Essential Elements** I learned in *Psychological First Aid* is a great place to start:

1. ***Promote Safety:*** Wearing masks, floor signage, handwashing for example reassures our physical safety and something as simple as providing accurate information fosters psychological safety. .
2. ***Promote Calm:*** feeling anxious is normal. Practice controlled breathing, mindfulness and meditation to remain calm.
3. ***Promote Self and Community Efficacy:*** carry on regular activities as much as possible. Look for ways to connect with the community. It boosts our confidence that our community can recover.
4. ***Promote Connectedness:*** get creative in how to connect with others such as online concerts, physically distanced walks or outdoor visits.
5. ***Instill Hope:*** envisioning a realistic and “normal” future can inspire hope and optimism.

To be healthy and successful we need to feel connected, safe and in control

Self care means different things to different people, but mostly, it is about cultivating a compassionate inner voice.

- Make small changes in daily routine/tasks
- Regular physical activity
- Focus on what you can control (your attitude, what you eat, what you watch/listen to, what you spend your money on)
- Actively reduce and manage the stress in your life: organize that junk drawer, write up a budget, complete that to do list. Things that give you a feeling of accomplishment.
- Punitive responses to problem behavior can lead to further trauma
- Deep breathing
- Be creative: paint, decorate, garden, knit, woodworking, etc
- Set boundaries with toxic people, family, friends, and social media.
- Keep structure and routine of the day if you have chosen at home, online learning

We are all in this COVID-19 storm together. Regardless of the boat we are in, we need to believe that we will soon find safe ground. Each of us is seeking to survive this worldwide crisis as unscathed as possible. Let us navigate our route with respect, empathy, courage and responsibility. Throw a lifeline to the ones who are struggling, accept a lifeline if someone reaches out. We are ALL in this together.

[For Mental Health Support](#) Mental Health Help Line 1-877-303-2642, Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

This article was submitted by Tammy Charko BA, BSW, RSW. Tammy is Northern Gateway Public School's Student Support Facilitator. She is a support for schools, students, parents and caregivers to promote success in school. Tammy advocates for students and families, providing a link to the community programs. Tammy has been a registered social worker for more than 20 years and is a mother to 4 teenagers.