

# SCDSB Newsletter

## September 2018

Welcome to the new school year!

### **New Simcoe County District School Board website launched this summer**

Visit [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca) to check out our brand new look! Our new website launched in July, providing users with an accessible experience that is mobile-friendly – it works well whether you're on a desktop computer, mobile phone or tablet. The new website also has improved search functionality and a special *SCDSBshines* section to highlight and celebrate the amazing accomplishments of our staff and students.

### **New Community Apps feature allows parents to register online and apply to volunteer**

#### **SCDSB Community Apps portal makes volunteering easy**

We appreciate the commitment of all who volunteer at our school. This school year, we are implementing a new online Volunteer Portal. SCDSB Community Apps is a new online portal that allows you to begin the process for volunteering at a SCDSB school. The portal eliminates much of the paperwork currently associated with volunteers. Volunteer applications and approvals will occur online. The new mandate for Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) training, for volunteers, is also part of the portal. The Volunteer Portal is available for all new people requesting to volunteer at a school location: <http://communityapps.scdsb.on.ca>. Only new volunteers or those who require an updated Criminal Background Check Vulnerable Sector Screening (CBC-VSS) are able to register on the portal at this time.

### **Updated criminal background checks required for volunteers**

We appreciate the commitment of all who volunteer at our school. In an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of our students, and in accordance with the Education Act, the SCDSB requires a complete and up-to-date Criminal Background Check Vulnerable Sector Screening (CBC-VSS) for all volunteers across the system. If you are a current, approved volunteer and your CBC-VSS is more than five years old, you should have received a notification in June indicating that you are required to submit a new CBC-VSS. If you wish to continue as a SCDSB volunteer, please complete the following steps:

1. Contact the school principal to obtain a CBC-VSS request letter.
2. Bring your CBC-VSS request letter to your local police detachment.
3. Submit your original and complete CBC-VSS to the school office for review by Oct. 31, 2018.

If you are a current SCDSB employee volunteering in the system, you are required to submit an updated CBC-VSS to the school where you will be volunteering. If you have completed a CBC-VSS within the past six months of the start of the school year for another organization, you may submit that original CBC-VSS for review. If you have questions, please contact the school.

### **Student Accident Insurance information for this school year**

Student injuries at school, during school events, and extra-curricular activities (athletics, clubs, and out-of-province/out-of-country trips) are not covered by the board or its insurance company. While every precaution is taken to provide a safe learning environment, accidents can and do happen. The SCDSB has selected the Insure my Kids program through Old Republic Canada as an option for students/parents/guardians to consider. This insurance offers a variety of plans and benefits at reasonable annual prices. Coverage can be purchased online at [www.insuremykids.com](http://www.insuremykids.com). Participation in extra-curricular activities (athletics, clubs) or out-of-province/out-of-country trips requires the purchase of this insurance, or other extended health and dental coverage. Student accident insurance packages will be sent home with students

## Keep connected with our school and with the SCDSB

It's important to get accurate information about what's going on at your school and at the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB). Here are some ways to do that:

- Subscribe to our school's website by visiting the 'What's New' section at <http://sun.scdsb.on.ca>. You can sign up to receive emails about school news updates and information during emergency situations. It's easy to subscribe – visit our website and click the 'Subscribe' link at the very top of the page. Provide your email and click Subscribe, a message will be sent to your inbox with a link to click to confirm that you want to subscribe. You can unsubscribe at any time using the link at the bottom of each email.
- Sign up to receive Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) media releases by clicking the 'Subscribe' button at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca). The SCDSB Education Centre can be reached at 705-734-6363.
- Follow the SCDSB on Twitter (@SCDSB\_Schools), Facebook ([facebook.com/SCDSB](https://facebook.com/SCDSB)) and Instagram ([instagram.com/scdsb](https://instagram.com/scdsb)).

For school bus transportation information, visit the Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium's website at: [main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca). Also, remember to bookmark the school bus information page at: [simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) for bus delay and cancellation information on inclement weather days.

## Procedures help keep our school safe

The safety and well-being of students is our top priority. We have a number of procedures in place to keep our school safe. You can help your child understand and feel safe by:

- talking to them about the situations below
- reminding them that emergencies are rare
- telling them it's important to follow staff instructions in these situations

Parents should talk about the following emergency drills with their children:

- **Shelter in place** is used when there is an environmental or weather-related situation, like a chemical spill outside the building, or a major storm. Activities continue inside the school. Students and staff are not allowed to leave the building. The ventilation system may be shut off.
- A **hold and secure** is used when there is a situation in the community, not related to the school, like a bank robbery nearby. Activities continue, but all exterior doors are locked. No one is allowed to enter or exit the school.
- A **lockdown** is used when there is a major incident or a threat of violence related to the school. Students and staff move to secure areas, away from doors and windows. Interior doors are locked, lights are shut off and blinds are drawn. Students and staff remain quiet. We practice lockdown drills at least two times per year. In the unlikely event of an actual lockdown situation, police ask that parents do not go to the school. Information will be communicated through the school board social media sites ([www.facebook.com/SCDSB](https://www.facebook.com/SCDSB) and [www.twitter.com/SCDSB\\_Schools](https://www.twitter.com/SCDSB_Schools)) and website ([www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca)), through local police and local media.
- All schools have **evacuation plans** in case of gas leaks, bomb threats or fire incidents that would require everyone to leave the school. We hold drills to practice our evacuation plan. In a real evacuation, students and staff may go to the evacuation site, depending on the situation. Parents will be informed about pick-up procedures by the school, school board and local media.
- Elementary school main doors are locked during the school day. Visitors must use the **intercom system** to enter the building. **Staff may not be available to answer the door immediately, please be patient.** All visitors, including school volunteers, are required to **sign in** at the school office and wear **visitor identification**.
- Staff and volunteers must complete a **criminal record check** before having contact with students.
- We ask parents to contact us when their child will be absent from school as part of our **Safe Arrival** program. When we don't hear from a parent/guardian and a student is absent, we will call home to find out the reason for the absence.
- At least two staff members in every school are trained in **first aid and CPR**. All SCDSB schools **have Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)**.

When parents are at school during a drill or emergency event, they must follow direction from school staff, police, fire and/or emergency personnel. Parents may not have immediate access to their children during drills or emergencies. They may need to wait until the situation is resolved and school staff and/or emergency personnel release students into parent care. It's important for you to know we'll always take whatever precautions are necessary to keep our school and students safe.

## **Student dress code**

Students are expected to respect the guidelines when dressing for school. Our school is a safe space. We work to be equitable and inclusive, and understand that students may choose to express themselves through their clothing choices. Student clothing cannot pose a safety concern or conceal identity. Exceptions are granted to students who wear head coverings or other garments/objects for the purposes of religious observance, medical or sensory needs, or other reasons protected by the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The SCDSB dress code is available in the student agenda and online at [www.scdsb.on.ca](http://www.scdsb.on.ca). If you have questions about the dress code, you can contact the principal or the SCDSB Equity and Inclusion Education Team at 705-728-7570.

## **School bus 'Bus Tag' program helps students get to and from school safely**

The Simcoe County Student Transportation Consortium's Bus Tag program supports safety for JK/SK and other school-identified students. The program helps match students to their assigned afternoon school bus and identifies that they must be met by a parent or guardian at their afternoon bus stop.

The program provides a colour coded Bus Tag with the assigned p.m. route number to be attached to the student's backpack and a colour coded route card with route number in the windows of the school bus that the Bus Tag is matched to. The program can also provide tags for students who are walkers and/or who remain at an on-site child care centre to make sure they don't get on a bus in error.

For more information, visit [main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca](http://main.simcoecountyschoolbus.ca) and click on the 'Safety' tab.

## **Register now for fall International Language Programs and Indigenous Language Programs**

The SCDSB offers children in Grades 1 to 8 an opportunity to learn and/or maintain a language other than French or English. Whether you enrol your children in this program to learn a new language, understand a new culture or to extend their knowledge of their first or second language, every student can benefit from this program. The Barrie Learning Centre (Bayfield Mall) offers Arabic, Farsi, Korean, Mandarin, Ojibwe, Russian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Urdu. The Bradford Learning Centre (157 Holland St. E, Suite 200) offers Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Mandarin, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian, Urdu and Vietnamese. The classes take place Saturday mornings, 9 to 11:30 a.m. starting Sept. 15 (classes are dependent on student enrollment). There is no charge for this program. Most classes fill quickly on a first come, first served basis. Register your child by visiting [www.thelearningcentres.com](http://www.thelearningcentres.com) and clicking on 'Elementary Student.'

## **Upgrade or learn new skills with Adult and Continuing Education options at the Barrie Learning Centre**

Beginning in September 2018, the Barrie Learning Centre will be extending its hours of operation. This will allow for additional programming hours throughout the week, including increased access to evening programs in Night School, Literacy and Essential Skills, English as a Second Language and Personal Support Worker (PSW). Visit [www.thelearningcentres.com](http://www.thelearningcentres.com) to find the course that's right for you.

## ***Eye See...Eye Learn* program offers free glasses for Junior Kindergarten students**

The *Eye See...Eye Learn* program provides comprehensive eye exams by local optometrists to Junior Kindergarten (JK) students. The eye exams are covered under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) when parents show their child's health card. There is no out-of-pocket cost for the eye exam and if the child requires a pair of glasses, they will receive them free of charge courtesy of a participating optometrist. For more information, visit [www.eyeseeeyelearn.ca](http://www.eyeseeeyelearn.ca).

## **Pay for field trips, lunch days, etc. with SchoolCash Online**

We have made it easy for parents to make their school purchases from the convenience of their own home. Whether it's lunch days, field trips or school wear, we have it online for you! Follow these three steps to get started:

1. Go to [simcoecounty.schoolcashonline.com](http://simcoecounty.schoolcashonline.com) or visit our school website and click on "Pay Fees"
2. Register and add your child to the newly created account
3. View and purchase items through bank transfer or credit card

It's safe, fast and convenient. Contact the office with any questions.

## **Parent Portal gives parents real-time access to attendance, grade information**

The SCDSB Parent Portal is a secure online tool that provides parents/guardians (of students less than 18 years of age) with quick access to their children's attendance and grades and includes the option to sign up for email notifications. To access the Parent Portal, parents/guardians will need their child's SCDSB Pupil ID Number, which can be found on the Student Information Verification Form, as well as an Access ID. The Access ID will be provided to new students in a sealed letter this fall with instructions on how to create an account. If you lose the Access ID, you can visit us in the school office and we'll provide it to you after verifying your identity.

## **Register for Before & After School/Child Care at our school**

Register now for before and after school programs/childcare. The Before and After School Program is for students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 who need care before and/or after the regular school day hours. The fees are as follows:

### **2018-19 Daily Fees**

- Before and After School Fee: \$20.75
- Before School Only Fee: \$10.50
- After School Only Fee: \$15.25
- PA day, holiday Fee: \$37.75

Please contact Upper Canada Childcare at 705-726-5674 to register your child(ren).

## **Ideas for packing healthy school lunches**

A school lunch should give children the energy and nutrients they need to be ready to learn, be more alert and perform better at school. When planning lunches keep these tips in mind:

- Include one serving from at least three of the four food groups from Canada's Food Guide.
- Rather than buying pre-made lunch kits, make your own healthy "lunch kit" with divided containers and small bite-sized cheese cubes, left over chicken chunks, veggie sticks or fruit slices.
- Get your kids to eat more veggies - send cucumber coins, zucchini sticks and pepper strips with dip.
- Fill whole wheat or multigrain wrap/pita/tortilla shells with your child's favourite foods such as hummus and grated carrot or sliced turkey with honey mustard.
- Don't have them drink their fruit - send water instead.

For more information to keep you and your family healthy, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or call *Health Connection* at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520.

## **Stressful mornings sound familiar? Here's how to get organized and out the door on time**

Try these tips to help get the whole family out the door on time:

1. Plan ahead: pack lunches and pick out clothes the night before.
2. Go to bed at a reasonable hour so you wake up rested and ready for the day.
3. Wake up and get yourself ready, before your child.
4. Keep the TV and electronics off. These can be disruptive first thing in the morning.
5. Give clear instructions and be realistic about what your child can do for themselves. Praise them when they do something well to help them learn new skills.

Finally, remember to have patience. Your child learns from watching you! In time your child will learn to plan ahead, be organized, and develop patience too. For more tips, visit [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org) or [www.triplep-parenting.ca](http://www.triplep-parenting.ca)

*Information provided by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit*

## **Don't stress! Back to school mental health tips**

It's the start of a new school year and students need to get back into the swing of things! While a new school year can be exciting, it can also cause stress and anxiety. The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) suggests maintaining positive mental health during this seasonal shift with the following strategies:

- Take care of your body – mental and physical health are fundamentally linked. Make sure to get enough sleep, drink water, eat well and exercise.
- Build resiliency – resiliency means coping well with problems, stress, and other difficult situations. Set aside time to think about the resiliency tools available to you and your child, such as structured problem-solving skills or resources that can help out during difficult situations.
- Reach out for support – offering love, acceptance and sense of safety is important but so is providing resources outside of the home to support our youth in times of crisis. Some useful resources include New Path, YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka, CMHA, Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions, and the Kids Help Phone.

To learn more about the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka community youth programs and support, visit [www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca](http://www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca).

*Information provided by the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka ([www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca](http://www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca))*

## **Simcoe Community Services' Grandparent System support groups**

The Grandparent System Support Program (GSSP) was established in response to the increased needs and unique challenges experienced by grandparents with the sole responsibility of raising their grandchildren. Support Groups are available now in Barrie, Bradford, Orillia and Midland with plans for support groups in local communities across Simcoe County. Support groups provide a safe and confidential environment where grandparents can create relationships with others who understand and have lived experiences in similar situations. Grandparents can build on skills, resource share and network to build a community of support. For more information about the support group, meeting dates/times or if you have questions about the GSSP, contact [gssp@simcoecommunityservices.ca](mailto:gssp@simcoecommunityservices.ca) or 705-726-9082 x2321. Childminding and transportation assistance may be available.