

Dickens Annex Newsletter – October 2019

<http://go.vsb.bc.ca/schools/dickens-annex>

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Vice-Principal (Annex): Jim Embree

Principal (Main): Matt Carruthers

Director of Instruction: Aaron Davis

PAC Chairs : Daniella Forde, Sara Getz, Laura Poree, Tiffany Searchfield

Welcome Back!

It is our sincere pleasure to welcome you back to the start of a new school year. I hope that you have enjoyed a relaxing summer with family and friends. I want to extend a very special welcome to our new staff, new students, as well as 31 new Kindergarten students who will start with a gradual entry this week before they begin their full-day schedule on **Wednesday, September 11th**. Welcome to Dickens Annex!

We hope to continue to share important information with you through this newsletter on a regular basis, as well as highlight some of the student learning over the next school year. The staff has been working hard to prepare their classrooms this past week. We look forward to working with you and your family this year.



Important Dates to Remember:

- **Oct 1st** Carousel Theatre Field trip: Rainbow Fish
- **Oct 2nd** Kindergarten Hearing screening
- **Oct 4th** World Teachers' Day
- **Oct 4th** School Photos (am)
- **Oct 7-11th** Healthy Living Week
- **Oct 14th** Thanksgiving holiday (no school)
- **Oct 18th** School Photo retakes
- **Oct 25th** Provincial ProD day (no school)
- **Oct 31st** Hallowe'en stations

School Hours

Please be aware that the school hours are 9:00 - 3:00 pm. The warning bell will ring at 8:55 am **and instructional time begins promptly at 9:00 am**. Outside supervision begins before school at 8:40 am. After school supervision is from 3:00-3:20 pm. Please make sure that your children have been picked up before 3:20 pm.

Staffing Changes

It is my pleasure to welcome **Merve Ozkan** (Kindergarten teacher) and **Jacylin Snider** (Counsellor) to our school. We are happy to have you join our Dickens Annex community.

In addition, **Larissa Warrington** (office staff) will be in the office for the next week, and **Nirmal Kodnani** (Custodian), will be with us until a replacement has been hired. Welcome!



Communication:

As we work in partnership with you, we want to keep the lines of communication open. Please feel free to drop in and say hello, phone, or email the office. We like to hear how things are going. In addition, we will continue to update our webpage <http://go.vsb.bc.ca/schools/dickens-annex/Pages/default.aspx>. We will also send out our monthly newsletter electronically (as well as provide limited hard copies at the school). Newsletters will be sent out on the first Friday of every month. If you have not yet had a chance to check out our school twitter account yet (@dickens_annex), please add us, as we like to tweet out a lot of great things that are happening here on a weekly basis.

Dickens Staff 2019-2020

Dickens Annex is a caring place built upon collaboration and teamwork. I am pleased to introduce our staff to you for this coming year:

Vice Principal:	Jim Embree
Office Admin Assistant:	Patti Wong
Division 1 (Grade 1,2):	Jacquie Nielson (M, T) Brenda Lui (W, TH, Fri)
Division 2 (Grade 1,2,3):	Marnie Conklin
Division 3 (Grade 1,2):	Shirley Wong (M,T) Trish Mounsey (W, TH, FR)
Division 4 (Grade 2,3):	Irene Cultum
Division 5 (K):	Anne Miller
Division 6 (K):	Merve Ozkan
Librarian/Resource:	Jim Embree/Jacquie Nielson
Student Support Worker:	Everlyn Wray
Student Support Worker:	Sylvie Beddoes
Student Support Worker:	Pardeep Sidhu
Supervision Aid:	Pat Toombs
Supervision Aid:	Karen Chow
Speech-Language:	Lauren Linke (Monday am)
School Counsellor:	Jaclyn Snider
Engineer/Custodian:	TBA

Class Casting:

The placement of your child in a class is a thoughtful process that takes time. The staff know their students in the school context and engage in a rigorous placement process that involves the consideration of several factors (balance of academic, social, and emotional abilities, social concerns, students with special needs, cohesive student groupings, as well as class-size and composition requirements from the VBE).

Students will remain with their last year's class and teacher on Tuesday, September 3rd. It is our hope that students will transfer to their new class during the morning of **Wednesday, September 4th**. Thank you for your support in this process.



Kindergarten Schedule

In preparation for our new kindergarten students starting the school year at Dickens this September, the following schedule has been set. Please call the office if you have any questions.

Tuesday, September 3 rd	9:00 - 9:45	All groups will meet in the gym
Wednesday, September 4 th	9:00 - 10:00 11:00 - 12:00	Group A Orientation Day – students and parents Group B Orientation Day – students and parents
Thursday, September 5 th	9:00 - 10:00 11:00 - 12:00	Group C Orientation Day – students and parents Group D Orientation Day – students and parents
Friday, September 6 th	9:00 - 10:15 10:45 - 12:00	Group A and B Partial Group Day Group C and D Partial Group Day
Monday, September 9th	9:00 - 12:00	Partial Day for all students. Recess snack needed
Tuesday, September 10 th	9:00 - 1:15	All students (lunch at school, 12:00 – 12:47) Recess snack and lunch needed
Wednesday, September 11 th	9:00 - 3:00	First full day of Kindergarten for all students Recess snack and lunch needed Pick up at 3:00 pm

All School Timetable Change

Please note that we have adjusted the recess and lunch break times for the 2019-2020 school year. The new times are as follows:

Warning Bell:	8:55 am
School begins:	9:00 am. All students are expected to be in class for attendance at 9 am
Recess:	10:50-11:05
Lunch:	12:00-12:47 pm
Afternoon classes:	12:47 pm
Dismissal:	3:00 pm

“Play-First” Lunch

After a successful two-week pilot project last spring, we have decided to implement the “Play-First” Lunch at Dickens Annex. Starting on **Wednesday, September 4th**, students will be dismissed to the playground at noon, followed by time to go to the washroom and wash their hands, before sitting down for lunch in the gym.

The lunch hour schedule will be as follows:

12:00	Play time on the playground
12:25	Bell to enter the school to use the washroom and wash hands
12:30	Bell to go to the gym to eat lunch
12:47	Students return to their classroom for afternoon attendance

We hope that the “Play-First Lunch” schedule will promote healthy eating habits and improve student achievement.

Forms, Forms, and a Few More Forms:



This month is the beginning of a full year of activity. Please anticipate a school package to be sent home in the coming weeks containing emergency health information, media consent forms, as well as CASL consent. We update all of your child's contact information every year and appreciate the time you take to go over and return the completed forms. Please help us by getting these forms back to your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible.

If there is a health issue that we need to be aware of, please let Patti or Jim know asap.

Reporting Student Absences:

Student safety is of paramount importance at the Vancouver School District. Ensuring safety is a shared responsibility. In order to assist our school, we ask parents to notify us of student absences. If your child will be away from school, please phone or email the school to report this absence as early as possible. Messages will be received before the office is open. School offices are busy places: consistently notifying the school in advance of your child's absence will significantly improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the Safe Arrival Morning Routine.

On behalf of our Office Team here at Dickens Annex, thank you very much for following our district-wide Safe Arrival Program! In order to help us keep track of the students in our building, please continue to report your child's absence in the following ways:

To Report Your Child's Absence via *Telephone*:

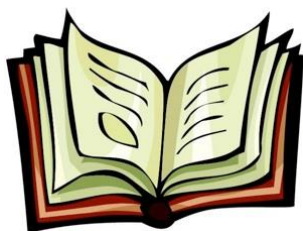
1. Call 604-713-5392
2. Record your message (include child's full name, grade and division)

To Report Your Child's Absence via *E-mail*:

1. E-mail: pawong@vsb.bc.ca
2. Type your message (include child's full name, grade and division)

Please report the absence to the Safe Arrival Program even if you have already notified your teacher.

Student Sign-Out Procedure



When you pick up your child *during* the school day, please ensure that you sign them out at the school office. If you do not sign out your child, they will be unaccounted for, and the school will identify your child as a 'missing' student and will commence a search of school grounds. If the school staff do not locate the child, and are unable to reach a parent promptly, the school will call the Vancouver Police Department. Therefore, clear communication is essential for ensuring the safety of your child and to prevent unnecessary searches. **Thank you for helping us keep your children safe!**

Nut Aware School – Nut Allergies

We have a number of students who have a life-threatening allergy to NUTS and exposure could result in severe sickness or death. To help reduce the risk of accidental exposure, we need your cooperation in order to provide a safe and secure learning environment. The following are respectfully requested:

1. Students do not bring food to school that contain peanuts or nut products (i.e. peanut butter, muffins/cookies with nuts, granola bars). Please read ingredients on purchased and packaged food items included in your child's lunch and snack.



2. If your child enjoys peanut/nut containing products at home, please ensure that your child adds hand-washing to their routine before coming to school. Even a small amount of peanut oil or dust from a friend's hand can easily be transferred to crayons, books or playground equipment that can pose a risk for the allergic child.

3. Discuss with your child the importance of not trading or sharing food.

The above items will also be discussed with all the students in the classroom setting along with ways to help their allergic friend stay safe. We hope you will appreciate the seriousness of this condition and that you will assist us in our efforts to create as safe an environment as possible for all students. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Dickens Annex Mission Statement

Together we bring alive our commitment to developing each child's potential in all domains through a long-established philosophy built on mutual respect, continuous learning, and opportunities for leadership within a child-centered, multi-age framework.

Dickens Annex Philosophy

Child-centered learning (also called student-centered learning) is an approach to education focused on the needs of the students. It empowers students to take responsibility for their own learning. Student-centered learning is focused on each student's needs, abilities, interests and learning styles, placing the teacher as a facilitator of their learning.

Teachers create an environment that nurtures the curiosity of children to grow and to develop into life-long learners.

1. Multi-Age Groupings

At Dickens Annex, we purposefully place students of different ages and abilities in classes with two or more grade levels. Within the classroom and school, students are often re-grouped based on different learning abilities, rather than being taught according to one grade level. Children learn differently, excel in different areas, and have different emotional maturities. Students in a multi-age classroom may remain with the same teacher from more than one year, therefore forming a "family" grouping.

2. Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction involves meeting the needs and engaging learners while valuing different intelligences. Differentiation can show us how to teach the same standards to a range of learners by using a variety of teaching modes.

3. Collaboration

Collaboration is at the core of the teaching at the Annex. Both the teachers and the students participate in collaborative activities. School events and programming encourage cross-curricular and cross-graded collaboration. To remain current in educational pedagogy, we are constantly working to meet our diverse learners' needs through best practice. To accomplish this, we hold weekly meetings, for planning and teaching group lessons and programs. Group language (literature-based language arts), Afternoon Program (student chosen science and social studies themes) are examples of how we work and learn together.

4. Authentic Assessment

Authentic assessment focusses on what each child can do. It is an ongoing process and is formative; it aids in the planning and directs the instruction. In the form of assessment, students are asked to perform real-world tasks that demonstrate the meaningful knowledge and application of skills learned.

Dickens Annex Code of Conduct

Do your best. Help Each Other. Find Joy

10 THINGS YOU CAN DO AT HOME TO IMPROVE SEL



1 BE PRESENT.

You are the most important person to your child, so free up space and time for quality play with your child - have fun! Play allows lots of opportunities for children to practice self-management strategies and gain a greater awareness of self and others.

2 CONNECTION IS KEY.

Physical touch can foster secure connections so don't neglect opportunities for skin-to-skin touch whether it be hugging, kissing, or simply holding your child's hand. Comfort and reassure your child when they are upset.

3 ASK CHILDREN HOW THEY FEEL.

When you ask your child about his or her feelings, the message is that feelings matter and you care.

4 ENCOURAGE THE EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS.

You can help a child manage their emotions by asking them to express how they feel, why they feel that way, and then offer a solution to respond to those feelings.

Avoid dismissing your child's feelings by saying things like "you're fine or okay" or "stop crying", this can have a negative impact on your relationship with your child. Instead, try using "I" messages or "I" statements for example, "I feel you're sad because you're crying" or "When I see you being unsafe, I feel scared."

5 ASK QUESTIONS THAT HELP CHILDREN SOLVE PROBLEMS ON THEIR OWN.

When you hear your child has a problem, it's tempting to step in and take over but this can harm a child's ability to find solutions on their own. A helpful approach is to ask good questions. Examples include, "What do you think you can do in this situation?" and "If you choose a particular solution, what will be the consequences of that choice?"

6 READ BOOKS, STORIES, AND SING TOGETHER.

Reading stories and singing aloud is a way for you and your child to share something enjoyable and learn about the world and our roles within that world, together. Through stories children can explore how people handle conflict and process common issues such as a new baby, grief, going to kindergarten, or making and losing friends.

7 GIVE CHILDREN CHOICES AND RESPECT THEIR WISHES.

When children have a chance to make choices, they learn how to solve problems. If you make all their choices for them, they'll never learn this key skill. Giving children ways to express preferences and make decisions shows that their ideas and feelings matter.

8 ENCOURAGE HELPING AND SHARING.

Regularly talk with your children about what others might need, and how you could be helping. Think about big and small ways that you can help—whether by taking out the trash for an elderly neighbor or by volunteering at a local food pantry or at your church, mosque, or temple. These acts build empathy, cooperation, and a community-oriented mindset.

9 YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S BEST ROLE MODEL.

Stay calm when you're angry. Learn to recognize your own "trigger situations" and talk about coping with anger as a family. Show your children how you calm down: i.e., "I'm feeling very upset, so I'm going to take a couple of deep breaths before we talk about this." Modeling these cool-down strategies can help your kids develop self-control.

Be willing to apologize. When you do get upset, or make a mistake, apologize to your child. Explain what you meant to do or say. In these moments, you're teaching social competence—that conflict is a normal part of life, and that it can be solved respectfully and calmly.

10 OFFER PRAISE AND SUPPORT FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIORS.

Children who demonstrate cooperation, sharing and follow the rules can benefit from positive reinforcement to build their confidence.