



October 1st, 2023

Iain Gardner, Principal | Tel 604.792.1416 | iain_gardner@sd33.bc.ca | <http://cheam.sd33.bc.ca>

Hitting Our Stride

What an exciting first month of school we have had. This period of time is always a flurry of activity, when the relaxed summer routine is broken off, and we all have to change gears in a short span of time. I think this stellar weather we've been enjoying has also made it a little harder to break out of 'summer mode'. Regardless, our transition back to school has gone remarkably well.

I'd like to take this moment to thank our staff for everything they have done to create a safe and welcoming environment for our students. It takes a special mix of energy, enthusiasm, patience and skill to work with students. All of those qualities have been put to the test these past couple years. While things are certainly much easier now as we return to 'normal', COVID-19 is still on our minds. With World Teachers' Day on October 5th, please take a moment to let the adults that support your child or children know you appreciate them.



Student Demographic Updates

If you have had an address, email or telephone number change since the last school year, please notify the office at your earliest convenience. Also, please ensure we have a current *alternate* phone number in case of emergencies. Please remember to always notify the school of any changes that

would affect our ability to contact you, especially in the case of an emergency.

Bell Schedule (8:19 am-2:15 pm)

8:00 am-----	Supervision Begins
8:15 am-----	Warning Bell
8:19-10:20 am-----	Classes in session
10:20-10:35 am-----	Recess
10:35 am-12:15 pm----	Classes in session
12:15-1:00 pm-----	Lunch
1:00-2:15 pm-----	Classes in session
2:15 pm-----	Dismissal
2:15-2:30 pm-----	Supervision after school

Reporting An Absence

You may have noticed already, but our school now uses an online absence reporting system called *School Messenger*. For those that have been in the habit of reporting absences through the 'Report An Absence' link from our school website, this new system works much the same way. Click on this link for more details: <https://www.sd33.bc.ca/safe-arrival>.

Medical Alert Conditions

All students with potentially life-threatening medical conditions and those who require medication and/or special consideration at school should update their documents on file at the school office as soon as possible.

If your child has a medical condition that the school needs to know about, please speak with your child's teacher as soon as possible as well as contact the office so we can be informed.

Allergy Alert

Every year, as students come and go from Cheam, we review all the allergy alerts we are informed about and adjust our safety plans accordingly. Some of these issues are managed quite easily, and only staff really need to be aware. Others are potentially more serious, and we need further support. Currently, our school is a 'peanut aware' school, which means we all must refrain from having products which may contain peanuts at school. We do this because it is necessary for the safety of a few of our students, whose allergies are very sensitive and potentially life-threatening. In addition to peanut allergies, we have many students with a range of other allergies we need to concern ourselves with to some degree. In some cases, you may receive specific guidance from your child's teacher, as the extra precautions required may only be necessary within that classroom. If you receive such a letter, please read it through carefully. If you ever have any questions or concerns about food safety, or need advice on alternatives, please do not hesitate to ask.

Code of Conduct

To view our complete Code of Conduct, follow this link: <https://cheam.sd33.bc.ca/code-conduct>. We review this document annually. Feedback is invited.

Unstructured Play Time

Every year, we see a range of toys and other items that rise in popularity, and the kids really want to bring them to school. Every year, we also have to help manage a range of challenges presented by these items. The current trend is fidget toys and cards. Trading these cards and toys is a very common thing for our students, in spite of our insistence they not do this. There's nothing inherently wrong with trading, however, not all of our students understand the value of these items, nor do they appreciate that a trade is permanent.

Truly, the purpose of unstructured playtime (recess and lunch) is for the kids to run around, explore, use their imagination, and have fun challenging themselves, all in the company of their friends and classmates. They do not need fidget toys or cards to keep them entertained.

Another point on the fidget toys- these devices were intended as tools in the classroom. Some students use them to maintain their focus on the task at hand, helping them be more successful. Unfortunately, they are most often a source of distraction, and curb students' ability to attend to their schoolwork. If your child's teacher sees them benefitting from this tool, they will be permitted to continue. However, if your child's teacher observes the opposite, the student will be asked to put it away. Your support in reinforcing this with your kids is greatly appreciated.

Labeling Clothing

Please label all your children's clothing (jackets, shoes, gym strip, etc.). It is amazing what can get lost at school! To eliminate lost clothing, please put your child's name on the label of their personal items.

Parking Lot

The general flow in our parking lot in the morning is smooth most days, but it can also be quickly thrown into disarray when traffic is heavier, or individuals don't adhere to the expectations. Here is a link to a [video](#) we created a number of years ago, guiding you through the basics. There are three additional points I need to highlight:

As pedestrians, the safest place to be walking is along the sidewalk. The sidewalks will guide you safely to one of two crosswalks- one by the main entrance, and the other just before the exit. Additionally, we have narrow walking lanes along two sides of the lot, marked by striped, yellow

paint. Pedestrian traffic must remain within these areas.

This is a snapshot of events on the horizon. Please keep your eyes on the website for details and updates.

Important Dates in October

Oct 2: Nat'l Day for Truth and Reconciliation Stat
Oct 5: World Teachers Day
Oct 6: Pro-D Day
Oct 9: Thanksgiving (no school)
Oct 17: Student photo retakes
Oct 19: ShakeOutBC Earthquake drill/ Early Dismissal
Oct 20: Professional Development Day
Oct 23: PAC Meeting online
Oct 27: Hot Lunch
Oct 31: Black and Orange School Spirit Day

Important Dates in Nov./Dec.

Nov 8: Indigenous Veterans Day
Nov 9: Remembrance Assembly
Nov 10: Professional Development Day
Nov 13: Remembrance Stat Holiday
Nov 17: Rock Your Mocs
Nov 22: Hot Lunch
Nov 24: Professional Development Days
Nov 30: Mo'vember

Dec 4: Deck the Doors
Dec 11-14: Tradansa
Dec 19: Hot Lunch
Dec 22: School Spirit Day (Red/Green)/ Last Day of 2022/ Term One Reports

Second, the bus lane is for bus use only, **at all times of day**. The *only* exception to this would be when directed by staff. In the morning, at times we can get a backlog of traffic along Banford Road, and the only way for folks to proceed is if cars are directed through the bus lane. As soon as the pressure has been relieved, we'll stop allowing cars

through the bus lane. Why? Please refer to my points about safe walking areas.

The third point is a new request. During the busy drop-off and pick-up times, can I please ask that drivers refrain from backing into parking stalls at the front of the school and along the sidewalk. I understand why folks prefer to back in, and this can still be done if you are arriving during quieter times. However, when we have a line-up of cars along the road in both directions, the maneuver required to position your car to back in only adds confusion to the process. I am also concerned for safety of pedestrians along the sidewalk, as the back end of many vehicles hang over the sidewalk. Again, this is a request for added caution during peak times. Essentially, if you see any traffic in front of you or behind you, please signal your intentions and then drive *forward* into the stall.

Communication

If you want to know what's going on at school, our website is an excellent place to begin. Visit <http://cheam.sd33.bc.ca/>. Key areas to focus on are the *Home* page, the *Calendar* and *News and Events*. The site will be updated regularly. We will also send out periodic reminders via our email system: sysadmin@myeducation.gov.bc.ca.

All of our monthly newsletters will only be published online. If you require a paper copy, please inform Merilee at the office.

There is a Cheam Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cheamelementary/>, which has proven to be an excellent vehicle for sharing information and keeping families connected. I encourage you to visit the site and request to be added to the group. Please understand this is a parent forum, with parent administrators. If you ever need to get a hold of me or other staff, best to contact us directly.

Your child's teacher will also be in regular contact with you, of course, perhaps by newsletter, communication book, planner, class website, email or phone.

Tradansa

During the week of December 11th-14th we will be hosting a dance instructor from a group called Tradansa. She will be teaching all of our students traditional dances, celebrating Christmas and the winter season. There will be an opportunity to watch the students perform on the afternoon of December 14th (1:00-2:00 pm). As we have limited seating capacity, and many of you will not be able to get away from work to join us, we will have the performance filmed and then shared online through a secure platform. Stay tuned for details.

Donations

There are many ways to get involved in school life, and one way is to support our programs through donations. Food insecurity is a growing concern in Chilliwack, and our community is no different. As we work to expand what we are able to offer in regards our snack/lunch program, donations of pantry-type items and other healthy snacks are greatly appreciated. Your PAC already routinely supports our students through fruit and veggie donations, and we also receive support from the Bowls of Hope Society. We'll be putting out a list of suggested items shortly.

Another donation that would be helpful would be various clothing items. We like to keep a small number of items on hand to help kids out when the weather turns on us and they aren't quite prepared for the day. We also have the odd time when a student will slip in the mud, and they could use a quick change of clothes.

Finally, we are also on the lookout for booster seats. We don't have too many occasions where we need them, but we like to have a few on hand

in case a class is short for a field trip. We just had to recycle the boosters we had because they had all reached their expiration date. If you have one kicking around that has a little life left in it, please let us know.

École Cheam Elementary T-BIRD Behavioural Expectations

Here at Cheam, we are all Thunderbirds, and we show this by meeting our expectations each and every day.

T- Think First means stopping and making smart and safe choices.

B- Be Responsible means doing the right things.

I- Include and Cooperate means working and playing together.

R- Respect Others means treating others in a kind, fair and polite way.

D- Do Your Best means being proud of yourself and your school.

"Soaring for Excellence"