



École Cheam Elementary School Newsletter



Chilliwack
School District

September 4th, 2026

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Welcome

Welcome back! We hope that you had a fabulous summer and are ready to embark on another fun school year. The first days of school always bring a lot of emotion to parents and students, and this year brings with it some very obvious challenges. Students will no doubt feel anxious to be back in school, but our goal is to restore their sense of safety as they look forward to the daily routines of learning once again. Students are always excited about returning to school to meet old and new friends, and to get to know their new teacher. From the walk into school to the call for dismissal, the opening days set the tone for a successful school year. The following newsletter contains a lot of information, updating you on some changes, and notifying you about what to expect in the coming weeks.

Classroom Organization

To ensure our projections from June match the reality now, we will require a few days to confirm our class organization. Until our student enrolment numbers are confirmed, students will remain in their tentative class placements. It is anticipated that students will be assigned to their permanent classroom grouping by the end of this week. We thank parents in advance for their patience and understanding as we confirm our student enrolment numbers.

There is a basic outline of the first week at the end of this newsletter.

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 (8:15 am-2:20 pm)

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

Reporting An Absence

Our school uses an online absence reporting system called *School Messenger*. 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.

Peanut Aware

In an attempt to make Cheam a safer place for all of our students, we respectfully ask that you be 'peanut aware'. Please do not send food containing peanuts, or products that 'may contain traces of peanuts'. We fully appreciate how challenging it

can be to change habits and find safe and healthy alternatives. Thank you for your support.

Volunteering

If you are hoping to participate in activities in your child's classroom or help with fieldtrips, a Police Information Check (PIC) must be completed. Police Information Checks are mandatory for all volunteers and are valid for four years. We ask that a PIC be completed once while your child is in the Primary grades and again when they are in Intermediate to ensure all PIC's are current. There is no cost for having this done. Forms can be picked up at the school office.

As it can take time for PICs to go through the system, we do encourage you to take care of this step as soon as you're able to. Also, if you'd like to help out with driving, we'll need a driver's abstract on file. Volunteer driver forms need renewed every year.

Staffing Update

We have a number of new staff to update you about. Some will be joining us permanently, and a few will be here temporarily, covering for staff on leave. There are a couple pieces of the puzzle still to complete, but I am very impressed with the dedicated team we have in place. Here's a complete list of our amazing staff:

Teaching Staff

- ❖ Mme M. Gibbs, K (Immersion)
- ❖ M W. Barrow, K (Immersion)
- ❖ Mrs. J. Zacharias, K/1
- ❖ Mme H. Johnson, 1/2 (Immersion)
- ❖ Mme M. Little, 1/2 (Immersion)
- ❖ Mrs. T. Rozendal, 1/2
- ❖ Mlle S. Leroux, 2/3 (Immersion)
- ❖ Mrs. K. Burgess-Leon, Grade 3/4
- ❖ TBA, 2/3 (Immersion)
- ❖ Mlle C. Williams, 4/5 (Immersion)
- ❖ Mme A. Cazander and TBA, 4/5 (Immersion)

- ❖ Mr. R. Marshall, Grade 4/5
- ❖ Mr. G. McDonald, PE Teacher
- ❖ Mme A. McCallum, Learning-Assistance (Immersion) and Resource Teacher
- ❖ Mme. K. Sarrazin and Mr. J. Sinclair, Teacher-Librarian/ Learning-Assistance Teacher
- ❖ Mrs. A. Munro, Counsellor
- ❖ Mrs. H. Brown and TBA, ELL Teacher

Support Staff

- ❖ Mrs. R. Zullo, Education-Assistant/ Supervision-Assistant
- ❖ Mrs. D. Meester, Education-Assistant
- ❖ Mrs. K. Parenteau, Indigenous Education-Assistant
- ❖ Ms. E. Hoogeveen, Child and Youth Care Worker
- ❖ Mrs. C. Berry, Supervision-Assistant
- ❖ Mrs. M. Thornton, Supervision-Assistant
- ❖ Mrs. K. Dieno, Custodian
- ❖ Mrs. M. Adrian, Secretary

School Calendar 2026-2027

Our basic school calendar for next year is now ready. It has been included here, at the end of this newsletter, and has also been posted to our website.

School Supplies

In the interest of uniformity and efficiency, our teachers have all asked that you allow them to purchase everything your child needs.

Maintaining an organized classroom is such an important aspect of setting a positive educational environment. Even small details, such as using colour-coded folders and having a decent pencil ready to go, can make the difference between a smooth day and rough transitions for our students.

The list below shows you what we will be charging for each class. The costs reflect the general amount

needed to cover the most common consumable items.

- ☐ Kindergarten-Grade Two: \$50.00
- ☐ Grade Three-Five: \$60.00

Please wait until classes are set before submitting your online payment.

Labeling Clothing

Our Lost and Found cupboard is often overflowing with jackets, sweaters, and such. To help minimize loss, please put your child's name on the labels of their personal items.

Supervision

A reminder that supervision begins at 8:00 am in the morning. For student safety reasons, please *do not* drop off your children or leave them unattended before this time. Supervision after school ends at 2:35 pm. Any students that have not been picked up by this time will be asked to wait outside the office.

Parking Lot

Safety in and around our parking lot is something we need to monitor vigilantly. The majority of our families need to drive their kids to and from school, so patience and caution should be front of mind. Here are some key things to take note of:

1. Our buses stagger in before school between 7:35 am and 8:10 am. After school, they will be parked in the bus lane as early as 1:45 pm, ready for the students at dismissal time. *On Tuesday, September 8th, the first partial day of school, they will be there by 9:45 am.*
2. The most significant thing we need your support with is remembering to never park and leave your vehicle unless you are in a designated parking stall. If your child needs help getting out of the vehicle, you need to find a parking stall. The bus lane and the through-lane must remain clear at all times, even if it doesn't appear to be a busy time.
3. If you are just dropping off, please pull forward to the cross-walk marked at the far end of the parking lot. Students (and parents) should use the sidewalk and/or walk within the painted yellow lines. Do not cut through the parked cars. *It is also very important to never stop to pick-up or drop off at the main entrance. Equally important, do not use this area to make a u-turn.*
4. Coordinating pick-up at the end of the day is tricky as it can be very difficult to find parking. Please discuss your plan with your child. We have supervisors on hand until 2:35 pm, so consider staggering your arrival time. The buses and the bulk of cars are usually gone by 2:30 pm.
5. The bus lane can only be used by other vehicles if directed by staff. Typically, the only time this will occur is in the morning when traffic is backing up in both directions on Banford, and we need to create space for cars to be able to exit the lot.
6. Make note of the traffic cones placed in certain areas along the roadside. Our buses require a fair bit of space to make the swing out of the parking lot onto Banford Road.
7. Do not block access for our neighbours to their driveways. *Please also be mindful of the hedge across from the front of the school as it has been damaged over the years by doors and side mirrors. Small vehicles only, please.*
8. Do not back in to the gravel parking spaces along the sidewalk. *While it makes leaving more challenging for you, it is considerably less confusing to everyone else than the maneuver required to reverse stall park. At times, the bumpers of larger vehicles also hang over the sidewalk, making it more challenging for folks to walk safely.*

9. Please turn off your vehicle when parked. Your cooperation in minimizing exhaust fumes is greatly appreciated.

I am sure there are more than a few of these points you might find inconvenient and/or unnecessary. Understand that my priority is the safety of everyone who visits our site. Calm, predictable, and slow are the order of the day. Consistency is also important. If everyone cooperates, everyone will be safe.

We will have supervisors in and around the parking lot before and after school each day. Please respect the direction they provide. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

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

Important Dates

Sept 8: First day of school (dismiss at 10:15 am)
 ➤ Buses are running at dismissal (i.e. 4 hours early)
 Sept 9: First full day for Grades 1-5
 Sept 23: Welcome Back 'Eat and Greet'
 ➤ 4:00-7:00 pm, Food Trucks and Faces! Details TBA
 Sept 25: Terry Fox Run
 Sept 22: Individual Student Photos
 Sept 29: Every Child Matters 'Orange Shirt Day'
 Sept 30: Nat'l Day for Truth and Reconciliation
Kindergarten Gradual Entry
 Sept 8: No school for K's
 Sept 9: visits scheduled (no K's in session)
 Sept 10: No K's in session
 Sept 11: 8:15 am-10:00 am (Session A)
 Sept 14: 8:15 am-10:00 am (Session B)
 Sept 15: 8:15 am-10:00 am
 Sept 16: 8:15 am-12:00 pm
 Sept 17: 8:15 am-1:00 pm
 Sept 18: 8:15 am-1:00 pm
 Sept 21: 8:15 am-2:20 pm

Accident Insurance

The Chilliwack School District or Schools Protection Program (SPP) does not insure expenses for student injuries that happen on school grounds or

during school activities. Parents/Guardians are responsible for these expenses.

iA Financial Group offers a comprehensive accident insurance plan with a critical illness component designed for the whole family.

For more information on the benefits of the coverage, please follow this link:
<https://specialmarkets.ia.ca/aonbc/home>

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.

Fair Notice

Attached is a document entitled 'Fair Notice'. The purpose of this letter is to assure you that we are committed to making our schools safe for students

and staff. In addition to our PBS supports at the school level, there are additional District-level supports we will access when student behaviours pose a potential risk to themselves or others. The attached letter outlines how we may respond in these more serious instances.

Parental Involvement

Study after study has shown that parental involvement is the number one determinant of how well all children, regardless of their background, do in school. Here are ten ways you can help your kids succeed in the classroom and beyond.

1. Create an environment in your home that encourages learning.

This will be a major influence on how well your children do in school. Provide them with many different opportunities to become excited about learning. Make sure that appropriate materials from puzzles to paints to computers are available to stimulate their curiosity.

2. Provide your children with a well-balanced life.

Establish routines so that your children get enough sleep, eat regular nourishing meals, and receive sufficient exercise. Limit excessive TV-viewing and the playing of computer and video games.

3. Read to your children every day.

Most of the learning your children will do in school involves reading. Read to your kids to teach them about reading, expand and enrich their vocabularies, and broaden their experiences. Reading aloud exposes them to materials that would be difficult for them to read on their own.

4. Encourage them to read extensively.

As your children progress through school, as much as 75 percent of what they learn will come from the printed page. The more children read, the better their reading skills become. Make sure there

are a wide variety of interesting reading materials in your home to encourage the reading habit.

5. Show your children how to be organized.

Children who are organized find it much easier to succeed in school. One of the best ways to teach organizational skills is through example. Show your children how to use such organizational tools as assignment pads, calendars, notebooks, binders, and backpacks.

6. Teach them effective study skills.

Good study skills are absolutely essential to get good marks. Make sure your children know how to read their textbooks, prepare for tests, memorize facts, and use their time efficiently. Encourage them to have a regular time for studying, and provide a study place that is free of distractions.

7. Urge your children to listen and participate in class.

Listening in class is the easy way for children to learn. Advise your older children to take notes, which will help them concentrate on what is being said. Encourage your children to participate in class. It will greatly increase their interest in what they're learning.

8. Help your children learn how to tackle homework.

Doing homework can help reinforce what your children learn in school. Show them how to do it so that homework quickly becomes their responsibility. Help them learn what assignments to do first and how to plan their time. Encourage them not to rush through their homework but to consider every assignment a learning experience.

9. Talk to your children about school.

Your children spend hours in school every day. A lot can happen during that time. Show that you are genuinely interested in their day by asking questions about what they did and talking with

them about the papers they bring home. When problems occur, work with your kids to find solutions.

10. Develop a good relationship with your children's teachers.

Good communication between home and school helps children do well in school and makes it easier to address problems.

First Week Plan

➤ **Tuesday, Sept. 8th (8:15 am-10:15 am)**

Students report to their classrooms from last year. This is also where they will be dismissed from. New students to Cheam are to report to the gym and we'll assign them appropriately. *No Kindergarten students in attendance.*

➤ **Wednesday, Sept. 9th (8:15 am-2:20 pm)**

Upon arrival, Grades 2-5 students will report to their old classrooms, same as yesterday. *Grade 1 students will be given instructions from their teacher on Tuesday what the plan for Wednesday morning is, as the Kindergarten teachers will be occupied with interviews with their in-coming Kindergarten students.* New students also report to the same classes they were in yesterday. If your child is unsure where to report, they are to meet in the gym where they will be redirected by a staff member.

Kindergarten interviews begin.

Over the course of the day, students will be regrouped and introduced to at least one of their possible new teachers. For our French classes, we have 2 or 3 potential options, depending on the grade level. For our English classes, things are generally more straightforward. It is only our grade

one and grade four students that we need to look at how we place them.

At the end of the day Wednesday, students need to make note of where they are being dismissed from, as this is where they will start the day on Thursday. Please ask them about it!

➤ **Thursday, Sept. 10th and Friday, Sept. 11th (8:15 am-2:20 pm)**

On Thursday and Friday morning, students are to report to the class they have temporarily been assigned to. We expect to be able to finalize classes on Friday. The students will be notified before they leave at the end of the day. You will also receive a brief email from your child's teacher, confirming which classroom they will be in this year.

Kindergarten Gradual Entry Sessions Begin Sept. 11

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"

2026-2027 Local School Calendar	
Days in Session	183
Minimum Number of Instructional Days	173
Number of Non-Instructional Days	10
Schools Open (Early Dismissal- 10:20 am)	September 8
Nat'l Day for Truth and Reconciliation (Statutory Holiday)	September 30
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (District)	October 9
Thanksgiving Day	October 12
Early Dismissal (11:20 am)	October 22
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (Provincial)	October 23
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (Assessment/Evaluation)	November 6
Remembrance Day (Statutory Holiday)	November 11
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (In Lieu)	November 27
Last Day before Christmas Holidays	December 18
Christmas Holidays	December 21 to January 1
Schools Reopen after Christmas Holidays	January 4
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (Assessment/Evaluation)	January 22
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (District)	February 12
Family Day (Statutory Holiday)	February 15
Early Dismissal (11:20 am)	February 26
Last Day before Spring Vacation	March 12
Spring Vacation Period	March 15 to March 26
Good Friday (Statutory Holiday)	March 26
Easter Monday (Statutory Holiday)	March 29
Schools Reopen after Spring Vacation	March 30
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (CTA)	April 30
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (Assessment/Evaluation)	May 14
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (In Lieu)	May 21
Victoria Day (Statutory Holiday)	May 24
Last Day (Early Dismissal 11:20 am)	June 24

Fair Notice

Common programs and integrated services shall provide information to those who receive or are affected by their services. This is referred to as **Fair Notice** that such a multi-agency program/initiative exists. The Chilliwack School District is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for all staff, clients, students and community members, and as such, is a member of the Chilliwack Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA or ARTO) Protocol.

WHAT IS A VIOLENCE THREAT RISK ASSESSMENT (VTRA) PROTOCOL?

The protocol is designed to enhance communication between all partners. It is incumbent upon the partners to share necessary and appropriate information that may initiate or facilitate the Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) process. It is a trauma-informed and equity-inclusion guided practice that utilizes and Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) process to:

- To ensure the safety of all individuals,
- Begin to understand the factors that contribute to the Individual of Concern's (IOC's) threatening or high-risk behaviour,
- View the Individual of Concern (IOC) as in need of intervention and support rather than discipline.
- Be proactive in developing an intervention plan that addresses the emotional and physical safety of the Individual of Concern (IOC). It may include disciplinary action but will include appropriate supports to aid in the Individual of Concern (IOC) in developing and using more appropriate strategies,
- Promotes the emotional and physical safety of all.

It is NOT a Disciplinary tool or response.

WHAT IS A THREAT?

A threat is an expression of intent to do harm or act out violently against someone or something. Threats may be verbal, written down, posted on the Internet, or made by gesture. Threats must be taken seriously, investigated, and responded to appropriately.

DUTY TO REPORT?

Often when we hear in the media about a violent incident, we learn that the Individual of Concern had made threats in advance of acting violently. To keep our communities safe, staff community members, students, and parents all need to act responsibly and report all threat-related behaviours and high-risk activities. This report can be made to any community partner of the Chilliwack VTRA/ARTO Protocol.

When a report of a threat is received by any member of this protocol, and upon screening it is determined the threshold for the "Categories of Action" is met, the Chilliwack VTRA/ARTO Protocol will be activated.

"Categories for Action" may include, but are not limited to:

- Serious violence or violence with intent to kill,
- Violence with intent to do serious bodily harm,
- Verbal/written threats to kill others ("clear, direct and plausible"),
- Verbal/written threats to do serious bodily harm ("clear, direct and plausible"),
- Social Media/Technology generated threats to harm/kill others,
- Possession of weapons (including replicas),
- Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices),
- Fire setting,
- Sexual intimidation or assault,
- Ongoing pervasive and targeted bullying and/or harassment,
- Gang related intimidation and violence,
- Hate incidents motivated by factors including, but not limited to, race, culture, religion, and/or sexual and gender diversity,
- Suicidal ideation or attempts as related to "Fluidity" or "Conspiracy to Two or More".

CAN I REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE?

It is important for all parties to engage in the process. If for some reason there is a reluctance to participate in the process, by either the Individual of Concern or parent/guardian, the threat assessment will continue in order to ensure and restore a safe and inclusive environment for all.