*Burkevale Protestant Separate School*

# January Newsletter




Happy New Year! The new year is a time for us to reflect upon our accomplishments and learning opportunities of 2023, and to look ahead to 2024 with optimism. Many students set goals or make resolutions as the new year approaches. According to the American business magazine, Forbes, setting goals, not making resolutions is the way to go, and there are a few tips to support our goals coming to fruition. First, reflect over all areas of your life to determine where you are –and where you want to go. Secondly, write down your SMART goals for the areas in your life you are committed to changing. Thirdly, post your goals where you can see them. Fourthly, tell a friend, and lastly, be flexible. If you are planning on setting goals for 2024, maybe the suggestions and Forbes might be helpful. Regardless of your New Year's traditions and/or routines, on behalf of the entire Burkevale community we wish you and your family a blessed, loved and productive 2024.

**December Activities:**

**Christmas Concert:** We were happy to host an in-person Christmas Concert again this year. The number of spectators was overwhelming, with an estimated 1000 spectators combined among the four concerts. Thanks to the staff, students and parents for all of their hard work in making this a memorable event. Additionally, thanks to our board members, April Leblanc and Kyle Graham who attended the event and for speaking with our families. Finally, a huge thanks to our MCs for the evening, Maeve Parent, Grace Larmand and Darsh Visani.

**Entrepreneur Fair:** The Entrepreneur Fair took place in the gymnasium on December 15th with many vendors selling out by noon. Once again, there were some very creative products. They made about $1600.00 to go toward their year end trip and next year's start up costs. The fair allows for so many cross-curricular connections and has become a favourite for our intermediate students. Thanks so much to the students and staff for keeping this alive.

**Student Council:** The student council organized daily activities for the last week of school. Thanks to all student council members for such thoughtful and inclusive activities. One planned activity was the gingerbread house making contest where all of the classes showcased their

incredible creative talents. A special thanks to Ms. Thompson, Ms. Koopman and Ms. Burton for leading our student council.

**Tim Horton's Contest Winners:** Some Burkevale students won the colouring contest for the Penetanguishene Tim Horton's. Winners were: Sophia Cant, Saide Kingma, Grayce Brunelle, Kinley Tessier and Arizona Beaudoin. Congratulations!

**Food Drive and Adopt a Family:** Thanks to Ms. Lahaie and the grade two students for organizing this year's Food Drive. Thank you also to all of the families and students who were so kind and generous during this time of the year, whether it was through canned goods, donation items toward our Adopt-a Family, or kind words. We have collected over 1100 cans of food, and with everything being so expensive right now, we appreciate the kind gestures made by so many!

## January:

Dental Screening:

Dental screening will take place for the entire school between January 17th-19th. If your child will be away for one of these days, please notify the school so that we are able to ensure they are able to participate in the screening.

**Extra- and Co-Curriculars:**

Girls Volleyball and Boys Basketball: Beginning in January, the intermediate girls' volleyball and boys' basketball team tryouts will take place

Skiing: We are looking into providing the grade 1-8 students with some form of cross-country skiing, but are still trying to negotiate pricing and availability. We will keep you posted!

**Academics:**

Term one will be wrapping up in late January with a PA Day scheduled for January 26th for report card writing. Report cards are scheduled to come home on February 16th.

**Advice from the SMDHU -** Stay Healthy This School Year!

Infections can spread easily from person to person. These germs can spread quickly when someone coughs or sneezes directly on another person, or when germs land on hard surfaces like door knobs, desks, and keyboards and then are touched by someone else. These germs can then enter the body through the eyes, nose or mouth.The most important thing you can do to keep from getting sick and stop the spread of germs is wash your hands! Wash with soap and warm running water for at least 15 seconds (or try singing Happy Birthday twice"). If your hands are not visibly dirty you can use alcohol-based hand rub "hand sanitizer" for 15 seconds. Also, make sure you are up to date with your immunizations, cover coughs and sneezes and stay home if you are sick. Teach your kids to do the same!

For more tips to keep you and your family healthy this school year, contact Health Connection at 1-877- 721-7520 or visit www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

**Parent Self Care**

As parents and caregivers, it is important that we take time to check in with ourselves.
When you are feeling stressed or overwhelmed, take time for yourself, even if it is just a few minutes. Working through your own feelings will make it easier for you to support and reassure your child. Self-care does not need to be complicated. Take a few minutes to do something you enjoy, connect with a friend, or move your body. It is not selfish – it is self-preservation!
For more information, call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 or visit www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

**Grandfather Teachings for the Month of January:**



For the month of January, our school community will focus on the grandfather teacher of **WISDOM**. Everyone has a special gift. We can show wisdom by using this gift. How can we show wisdom? Help out a friend who is struggling, gain knowledge by asking questions, be attentive and share your knowledge by answering questions. The beaver represents wisdom because he uses his natural gift wisely for his survival.

**Welcoming 2024:** We are so grateful for this great school community, the students, families and staff that support Burkevale. We are wishing everyone a very Happy New Year**!** We are focusing even more this year on kindness at Burkevale and it's really great to see so much kindness in the halls and rippling out to the community. We have Ms. Dosen (SERT) and Ms. Laura (CYW) at Burkevale providing support to our students including one on one counseling, small group options and social emotional learning. These supports are available at the school several days a week, so don't hesitate to get in touch if your student is struggling, you can email the Mental Health Lead Christy Hamill chamill@pssbp.ca for more information. We will be sending out a form for your review early in the new year so please look for that.

Your provincial team that supports Burkevale has some great resources for family and youth available at: https://smho-smso.ca. With the war in Ukraine and Gaza there is considerable distress at times watching the news, and being concerned for others who live in areas of high conflict. There is a tip sheet available (https://smho-smso.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Info-sheet-ways-to-support-students-world-events.pdf) to help you talk about those worries within your family and manage any

related stress. If you have any questions you can get in touch with Christy Hamill, chamill@pssbp.ca or 705-715-6775.

Children's Mental Health Ontario has a great page with tips on how to support you and your family's mental health over the winter months Winter mental health tips
It's a time of less sun exposure so you can talk to your doctor about taking vitamin D to support your mental and physical health. The basics for physical health and mental health are the same, we need to get enough sleep, eat regularly, connect with others and movement (simply walking) can help buffer stress and low mood. Research shows that the impact of movement on your mood and overall mental health is very significant, and moving/exercising with family or friends outdoors has extra boosts for your mood.

Please remember that we have community partners who are ready to help as well. The Youth Hub is active and provides some really great and innovative supports for youth aged 12 and up; https://youthhubs.ca/en/sites/north-simcoe/. Youth can call the hub phone line at 1-705-427-5639 and hub staff will provide navigation support and a warm hand-off to other hub partners and/or community services. They also have a new van service that can help get youth to the variety of services they have available.

Catholic Family Services (you don't have to be Catholic to use) provide family counseling and also have had some fantastic workshops and resources, you can check them out here: Group Counselling | Catholic Family Services of Simcoe County

New Path has quick access counseling sessions for youth and families at any age. You just call to connect with a counselor: 705-725-7656 or 1-866-566-7656,
https://newpath.ca/quick-access-child-and-youth-mental-health-clinic/

Kinark is also offering family and youth counseling services as well as services for families who may need guidance with Autism supports, you just have to call: 1-888-454-6275 https://www.kinark.on.ca

Kids Help Phone has been working hard to offer easy to access adult and child resources: https://kidshelpphone.ca, or call anytime 1-800-668-6868

# Ready to take on WINTER

## Expert Advice for Child and Youth Mental Health

Recognizing that this winter may be a difficult time for a lot of families, especially those whose children have mental illness, we have rounded up expert child and youth mental health tips to help you through the season.



### Focus on Gratitude

Take a few minutes to think of the things you are grateful for and encourage children to do the same. That is not to take away from how challenging things have been over this last year, but rather, it's an opportunity to recognize that some good things have been happening, too.



### Embrace Winter

Having a positive mindset about winter may encourage you and your family to think of new ways to get outside more.



### Collaborate with Kids on Plans

Take time to collaborate with your kids and family on activities to stay busy. If your teen is feeling unmotivated to go out, try to really understand what's behind their feelings. Ask if there is anything new that they are interested in trying. It gives you a chance to help them shift how they may be feeling.



### Stay Connected

Talk to children and teens and ask what methods of connecting with friends is best for them. Is there a virtual program they could do? Depending on your child's interests, it could be something like a shared online yoga or dance program.



### Stay Active

Going out, even on cloudy days, will give you a dose of much-needed natural light.



### Keep Healthy Habits and Routines

Prioritize the healthy habits that you normally have, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthily, and exercising regularly. Routines – and knowing what to expect in the day – can be especially helpful to children with mental health issues.



### Reach out for help

If you are not sure what your child is experiencing is normal or if they need help, reach out to a child and youth mental health centre in your community. Help is available from child and mental health experts who can talk to your child or you, or both.

CMHO
Children's Mental Health Ontario
Santé mentale pour enfants Ontario

www.cmho.org