



Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Newsletter

September 10, 2020

Dates to Remember:

Monday, September 21 School Board Meeting at 5:30

Thursday, October 15 No School MEA

Friday, October 16 No School MEA

Mission Statement:

Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting allowing students to reach their potential, preparing them to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, lifelong learners.

From Ms. Diane Blanchette:

Director, Birch Grove Community School

Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service

This has been a great start to a new, but very different school year! It has been exciting seeing both new and familiar students and Saplings joining us at Birch Grove Community School. I look forward to seeing the accomplishments of both our students and staff. I anticipate that this is going to be a year full of growth!

The staff at Birch Grove Community School are fabulous! Here is a list of the K-5 school staff:

Returning – Sara Knottski: K/1 Teacher

Returning – Sara Silence: 2/3 Teacher

Returning – Heidi Milner: 4/5 Teacher

Returning – Michelle Blanck: Special Education Teacher

Returning – Jessica Klemmer: Special Ed and General Ed Paraprofessional, Office assistant, Tech Para

Returning – Rista Sharma: Special Ed and General Ed Paraprofessional

New! – Luciana Ranelli: Special Ed and General Ed Paraprofessional

The Birch Grove Community Service staff are also fabulous!

Returning – Sheryl Martinson: Lead Saplings Teacher

Returning – Jessica Klemmer: Community Service Coordinator, Saplings Teacher/sub

New! – Constance Wees: Saplings Assistant

We welcome the new staff! Please be sure to introduce yourself to them when you meet!

We will strive to give every child what they need to make significant growth throughout the year, but we will need your help to do it. Please communicate with your child's teacher, encourage and support your child with homework, use time at home to promote learning, and see to it that your child is read to, or reads independently at home. These are just a few things that you can do to promote growth. The staff will have other ideas and resources for you throughout the year. Please never hesitate to contact us if you have questions, concerns or ideas!

The front entry doors open at 7:55. Please do not drop off children prior to this unless you have made arrangements with Sheryl (Saplings) or Diane (K-5). You will know that you can drop your child off as the front doors will be open. If the doors are not propped open, it is before 7:55.

If you **NEED** early drop off (before 7:55) you must register your K-5 child with Diane, or your Saplings with Sheryl. Please do not send your child any earlier unless you have registered. We have laid careful plans for those that have registered, but are not prepared for children who are not. Thank you!

Drop off's in the am: if you arrive between 7:55 and 8:10, you can pull up to the front doors and send your children in – please make sure they go in the doors. Once they are in the building, we will take it from there. Saplings may also be dropped off at the front doors now between 7:55-8:10 (you should see them go in the doors though). We will see that Saplings get to their room too! We will close the front doors at 8:15. **IF THE DOORS ARE SHUT/LOCKED, PLEASE RING THE BELL FOR ENTRY-** do not just drop your child off – please bring them to the entry and ring the bell.

Pick up's in the PM: please also pick your child up at the front doors between 3:05-3:15. If your K-5 child happens to be at the playground prior to pick up, we will bring them to the front doors, please do not go to the playground. Saplings ONLY will be waiting at the end of the sidewalk by the playground.

Newsletters will be emailed each week, usually on Thursdays (sometimes Fridays if it is really busy around here!). **Newsletters will be emailed to the address that you indicated on enrollment forms.** If you would like to add an email address to the newsletter group, please let us know. Newsletters are also posted on our school website at www.birchgroveschool.com

Be sure to check out our website at www.birchgroveschool.com. You can find the school year calendar, newsletters, school board minutes, COVID information, upcoming events, resources, and

more. I hope that you will be a regular visitor to our site. Have your children check it out too, as it has links to educational sites that are changed frequently.

Facebook:

Be sure to “Like” and “Follow “Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 Facebook page, and be sure to share with others! We post regularly – it can help to keep you up to date with events and activities!

Each student has been given a Take Home Folder. Please check this folder daily! Use this folder to communicate with your child’s teacher, return forms and paperwork, send bus passes, etc. **Take Home Folders are checked every day – backpacks are not!**

Bus passes – if you have a change in your child’s normal bussing, please send a written note. For instance, if your child is being picked up by someone and not riding the bus home, please send a note (or call). If your child is getting off a different bus stop than normal, please send a note.

Also, please send a back-up lunch to be kept at school for the inevitable day that one is forgotten at home or on the bus. Back-up lunches will be kept in student lockers. Non-perishables foods should be used for back-up lunches.

The start of the school year has been a little chilly! Please see that your child has appropriate clothing to go outside every day. Each day we have a 30 minute recess – we also go outside at other times. If you need help getting outside clothing/shoes, please let us know, as we may be able to help.

Distance Learning bags will be sent home each day on Thursday. Please return them to school with your child on Monday. We will be easing into distance learning as we progress through the year. If there are any issues, teachers will be able to work through them with your child M-TH.

Thank you for choosing Birch Grove Community School! We are looking forward to a great year!

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us!

birchgrove@boreal.org ~ Birch Grove Community School Email

bgcommunityservice@boreal.org ~ Community Service Email

218-663-0170 ~ School Phone

218-663-0170 ext. 26 Community Service Phone

Website

www.birchgroveschool.com



Look for:

Birch Grove Community School and Community Service #4145

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**From Ms. Sheryl Martinson**

*Saplings Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

It was perhaps a little awkward, but a good start to the new year! This week and probably the next couple of weeks are all about routines, procedures and expectations. Most of the 15 children enrolled in Saplings this fall have been in the program for at least for a bit. That is extremely helpful. But there is still the logistics of a new classroom set-up, different expectations and new ways of doing things. So, I work to get everyone on the same track to start the year. The children do miss their friends that have moved up to kindergarten. But, and I say this every year, it is so fun to see last year's "little kids" step into the "big kid" role! And they appear ready to rock it!

I'm looking forward to great things in the coming year. And as always - I am here to partner with the parents. I am thankful to have a chance to come along side families and to work for the good of the children.

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From Ms. Sara Knottski

K & 1 Grade Elementary Teacher

Wow! We are already off to a great start! We spent this week learning the expectations in school. We learned how to walk in the halls, sit on the carpet, and take care of our classmates and the materials in our school. I can tell that we've got a great group of children and we are going to have a wonderful year!

We also spent time writing and drawing about ourselves and learning about our classmates. It was great to see the new first graders stepping up and being role models for the new students in the class. Note: We have a snack twice a day, one mid-morning and one mid-afternoon. If you wish for your child not to have a snack during one or both of those times please let me know. Please remember to pack a small healthy snack for this time. The children are not allowed to eat desserts or drink juice during this time.

Each child needs to have an emergency lunch and an extra set of clothes at school. **Please be sure to pack a back-up lunch and an extra set of clothes for your child to keep in their locker for the rest of the year.**

I look forward to a great year with the Kindergarteners and first graders and you!
See you online on Friday!

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**From Ms. Sara Silence**

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

The first few days have been both rewarding and challenging. Overall though, they have been the same as a traditional first week of school. We played games to meet and get to know each other. We did a few crafts and coloring things that were actually ways to give me a sneak peek into student needs, strengths, and interests.

We go slow for academics on purpose these first two weeks, so that the routines and expectations we need to be successful in class are firmly in place before we dig in and take off running for the school year.

Our first units will be focusing on how we become a strong learner and community member, whether that be our class community, your household community, or beyond. This will span all subject areas.

Friday is our first distance learning day. As with the rest of the week, we are easing into distance learning. Students will not be expected to be on a device for more than 60 minutes. Each child will meet with me for 30 minutes in a small group and will have two other tasks to complete online, all other work for this Friday will be "paperwork" sent home Thursday.

Thank you for a great first week!

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From Ms. Heidi Milner

4th & 5th Grade Elementary Teacher

4/5th grade is off to a great start this school year! With many returning students and new classmates, our class community is growing and learning together.

We spent the week getting to know one another through conversations, art activities, and games. We also worked on writing a newspaper article about ourselves or something that we know a lot about to share with our classmates. It's a great group in 4/5 and we are happy to be together both in person and virtually.

Besides getting to know one another, we learned a lot of new procedures to help keep our school safe in times of COVID. Students did an excellent job wearing masks and are working hard at social distancing. It's all new, but our students are so willing to learn. We know that to be safe and continue to meet in person we must do our best to follow the guidelines. Thanks 4/5th grade for making this such a great start to the year!

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