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Dear Parents

Newsletter #5

December 22nd, 2023

On our last school day of 2023, we would like to take some time to reflect on the year that is almost finished. It feels like it has been a very busy fall – we are all tired – both kids and staff. We hope that it's a good tired – one that comes from working hard towards a goal, and seeing the goal get closer because of the hard work. As you watch your child grow, we hope that you are seeing steady growth in all areas – academic, social, emotional, and physical. If you are wondering about the growth that your child is showing, please be sure to talk to his or her teacher. Each child will grow at a different rate – some will find certain things easier, while others will find different things easier. This is not generally something to worry about, as each of us has our own strengths and challenges. At school we will try to use children's strengths to help them overcome things that might be a little more challenging. It is important that we not judge one child's progress against that of another. The goal is for each child to show steady growth, and to do the best that they can do in all areas! Celebrating growth and children's strengths is an extremely important part of the process, and we encourage you to do this regularly. It is also ideal if we can recognize and celebrate the strengths of others – without being jealous, and many of our children are very good at this. Celebrating success is something we try to do every day at school – even if it is only a small success!

At this time of year we tend to want to draw the people we love close to us and celebrate! Our children are one of our greatest sources of pride, but at times, they can also drive us a little crazy! We have all dealt with times that we know our child is not telling the whole story, and at times, are telling us an outright lie! This is a normal part of growing up, but one that needs to be handled carefully. It is hard to admit when we've made a mistake, or a poor choice – at any age! It may seem easier to shade the truth, leave part of the story out, or simply tell a lie to try to avoid consequences – this is not news for any parent! Our children will always need our support and encouragement, but this does not mean that we need to believe everything they tell us. As parents, we need to be ready to ask lots of questions, especially if they tell us something that doesn't seem right. We get many messages from parents wondering why something happened, which is completely understandable since you are only getting one version of the story. When you hear something like this from your child, please be sure to ask lots of clarifying questions. Try not to lead your child in a certain direction, even if you think you know what might have happened. Children want to please the important adults in their life, and will readily tell us something they think we want to hear, even if it may not be true! Try to get them talking about what happened – saying something like "Tell me about what happened" is a great way to start. If they seem to get stalled out, you can try asking "and





then what happened” to try to get them back on track. Other good questions to ask include “when did this happen?”, “who else was around?”, and “why do you think they might have done that?”. Try to avoid yes or no questions if you can, but sometimes these questions may be needed. Once you have asked some of these questions, you might have a better idea as to what happened, or at least have more information to share with the teacher when you talk to them. At times, children might only get part of a story correct, or might not have the whole story, which would lead to them telling you something that doesn’t quite make sense. Ask lots of questions, even if your child says something like “you don’t believe me”. Even though this hurts us as parents, we need to react calmly and keep working with them until we feel we have their version of the story sorted out. When talking to your child’s teacher about something your child has told you, it is important to keep an open mind, knowing that children may not have everything correct. Try to open the conversation in a way that seeks to understand what happened before jumping to any conclusions! Something like the following might be one way to approach the conversation: “Today my child came home and told me this. I thought I should see if there is more to the story to help me understand what happened”. This kind of approach is a great way to open the door with the teacher in a way that allows them to share what they know without feeling defensive or that they are being accused of not having your child’s best interest at heart. I have always maintained that we need to **believe in** our children at all times, but this does not mean we should believe everything that they tell us! Parents have one of the hardest jobs around, and helping children to navigate the world around them is a never ending challenge! Thank you for the time that you put into your children, the love that you give them, and the support that you show. It really does make a huge difference!

From the entire HMK Team, we wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas, and all the best in the New Year! Happy Holidays!!





IMPORTANT DATES

Monday, Jan 8 th	School starts after Christmas Holidays (Day 3)
Friday, Jan 12 th	Hot dog days start (Fridays in Jan & Feb; money collection is on Wednesdays each week)
Wednesday, Jan 24 th	Val Caldwell presentations for gr 4 classes
February	I Love to Read Month
Monday, Feb 5 th	Parent Council Meeting at 6:30 pm in HMK Staff Room
Feb 5 th – 9 th	Kindergarten Registration for 2024-25 school year
Monday, Feb 12 th	NO CLASSES – Teacher and EA Treaty Relations training
Tuesday, Feb 13 th	NO CLASSES – Teacher Treaty Relations training
Wednesday, Feb 14 th	Valentine’s Day
Monday, Feb 19 th	NO SCHOOL – Louis Riel Day
Wednesday, Feb 28 th	Pink Shirt Day (Wear Pink to Stop Bullying)
Friday, March 1 st	NO CLASSES – In school PD/admin
Friday, March 8 th	Last hot dog day
Tuesday, March 12 th	Report cards sent home
March 13 th and 14 th	Parent teacher conferences from 4:00 – 6:00
Friday, March 15 th	NO CLASSES – Administration Day
Friday, March 22 nd	Last day before Spring Break
Monday, April 1 st	School starts after Spring Break (Day 6)

Central Plains Cancer Care Presentations

On December 7th we were very happy to have two educators from Central Plains Cancer Care come to HMK to give presentations to all of the grade 1 – 4 classes. The topic was Healthy Lifestyles, which touched on a number of topics including nutrition and sun care. We would like to thank the CPCC Educators – Karen and Pat – for coming and sharing their information with our kids. A big thank you goes out to Central Plains Cancer Care for providing these educational sessions to schools free of charge!!





HMK Gala Evening at ArtsForward

We were pleased to have student art work displayed at ArtsForward this month! The Gala evening was December 13th for parents to view the artwork, but the gallery was also open to the public at other times. Many of our classes toured ArtsForward during December to see all of the wonderful artwork on display. A big thank you to Heidi and ArtsForward for providing the opportunity for our children to show off their artistic skills!



3H and 3P Visit Kinsmen Courts II

On December 13th, Mrs. Pollock's and Mrs. Hackewich's classes walked over to Kinsmen Courts 2 to spread some holiday cheer! The students were assigned a Senior buddy and made a holiday card for them. The students had some time to visit with their Senior and get to know them. Together, they played Christmas Bingo and Balloon Volleyball. It was a great experience for the students and the Seniors. By the smiles on everyone's faces, it was a successful visit! Thank you to Dana Menzies and Marsha Fergie for helping us arrange this afternoon for everyone!



Christmas Assembly

On our last day of school before the holiday, we had an assembly in the gym to sing Christmas Carols together! It was so nice to all be together and hear the children's voices ringing out! Diana Davidson came in to play the piano for our sing along – thank you Mrs. Davidson for coming in and helping with this!!





Mr. Pudlo's Christmas Play

This year Mr. Pudlo's class performed "Twas One Crazy Night Before Christmas"! Performances were December 18th and 19th, with a special show on December 19th just for parents and relatives. After much hard work learning lines, learning songs, and choreographing everything, the kids were ready and did such a great job with the play!! A big thank you goes out to Mr. Pudlo for all of the time and effort that has gone into his Christmas play, as he does all of the music, rehearsing, and choreography himself!





Grade 2 and 4 Christmas Plays

Our grade 2 and 4 classes were split into two casts, and gave performances of "A Pirate Christmas" on Dec 18th and 19th. Mrs. Weisgerber coordinated the production again this year, and taught all of the songs in music classes. The grade four classes had all of the lines in the play, and did most of their practicing and rehearsing in their classrooms under the direction of their homeroom teachers. The grade 2s practiced the songs and choreography in classrooms with their teachers, which led to the overall production! The children did such a great job performing the play – both Cast 1 and Cast 2 were superb in their renditions! We would like to thank everyone in the school for pitching in and helping out – some helped with decorations and sets, some worked on costumes, and some helped with the stage and sound – it was a total team effort. Of course, the biggest thank you goes to Mrs. Weisgerber for coordinating the entire production! Well done everyone!!





Noon Skating

Our noon skating program takes place every Wednesday (K, gr 1 and 4) and Thursday (K, gr 2 and 3). There is a break in this program over the Christmas Holidays, but skating will resume on the first week back after the break. There continues to be very strong interest in skating, as we typically have 130-160 kids skating each day!! If your child would like to try skating, please let his or her teacher know, and they will keep their eye out for skates and a helmet that fit. We continue to look for skates and helmets for kids to use – if you or someone you know happens to have skates or a helmet they would be willing to donate, we would be happy to accept them. We have also had a strong response from parents coming to help tie skates, and help kids get started out on the ice. Thank you so much for coming to help each week – we appreciate it so much! We are also thankful that the Neepawa Titans are helping out with the noon skating program as their schedule allows. They help with skates, and are also out on the ice with the kids, which is such a huge hit!! Thank you all!!



Grade 4 Volleyball League

In December the grade 4's were able to participate in an afterschool volleyball league. The students were divided into 6 teams and were able to showcase their skills, they developed in gym and noon hour intramurals. In total 66 grade 4 students participated in the program. We will be having more opportunities for after school programs in the new year. A big thank you goes out to Mr. Freeman and Ms. Reeves for organizing and running the volleyball league!!





Winter Updates

Whenever possible, we will send the kids outside for recesses as the fresh air and exercise are both extremely beneficial to their overall development and well-being! Even though the fall has been so mild, we know that colder weather will be coming after Christmas! When it gets VERY cold, there may be times that the kids do have to stay indoors for recesses due to the extreme cold. We have set -30°C wind-chill as the temperature that kids will not be allowed outside for recesses. We know that having wind-chill values in the upper -20 's is quite cold, but as long as the kids are properly dressed, they will be fine for the short amount of time they are out during recesses! Please be sure that your children come to school dressed to play outside – warm parka, snow boots, ski pants, toque, neck warmer and mitts will be a necessity (please note that mini-gloves are not adequate for this weather)! Sending an extra pair of mitts is also a good idea, as kids will often play in the snow and their mitts may get wet. By their third recess of the day, these mitts will not do a very good job of keeping their hands warm! Thank you!!

Parent Council

Happy Holidays from Parent Council! Our HMK Cookbooks will be available for purchase at Harris Pharmacy over the holidays – they are \$15 each. After Christmas they will also be available at the school office.

Our next meeting is on Monday, February 5th in the HMK Staff room.

Babysitting and coffee are provided!

NOTICE:

1. Remember to listen to local radio stations (Neepawa and Brandon) for information on busses, potential closures, storm billeting, etc. On days that busses are cancelled or we have a storm billet situation, we would ask that town parents use their discretion as to whether to send kids to school or not. If you decide to keep your kids at home, please be sure to contact your child's teacher so they know not to expect them that day!
2. Please do not drive past busses (in either direction) when the red lights are flashing and the STOP sign is out. Not only is it extremely unsafe, it also involves a fine of over \$600, as well as two demerits on your license!
3. Please be sure to watch for kids crossing streets, as well as our adult crossing guards. When an adult crossing guard has their flag out and is out in the intersection, **DO NOT DRIVE PAST THEM!!** They are out there so kids cross the street safely. Passing through a crossing guard, not stopping at stop sign, or parking in front of a yellow curb will likely find you facing a conversation with an RCMP officer, as well as a potential ticket.
4. Please make sure that your children are NEVER walking behind the cars parked in our staff parking lot. Adults are not expecting students to be walking behind their parked vehicles **AT ANY TIME** so please make sure you never drop your child in a location that will cause them to walk behind these parked vehicles. Your child's safety is at stake.





SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Classroom and library volunteers: Penny Elliott, Claire Brister, Siri Freeman, Sheena Johnson

Diana Davidson for coming in to play the piano for our Christmas Carol assembly!

BPSD Board of Trustees for the Smile cookies for staff!

Maureen Sneddon for donating homemade jam to make lunches with!!

Everyone who helped stack chairs and clean up after the Christmas Plays!

Parents and Staff who come out each week to help tie skates and supervise the noon skating program! We couldn't run this program without you!!

PUBLIC SERVICE

In the New Year Watch for “Cooking with the Stars- Neepawa Edition” – Being aired by NACTV

The concept behind this TV production is to help promote the **Meal in 30 Project** being initiated by the Neepawa Eats Healthy Committee* and build a strong community connection to the importance of healthy eating by involving many community partners and the community!

During the months of January until June 2024 monthly recipes have been selected for the Meal in 30 Project encouraging community members to:

- Shop at their local Safeway and Co-op Grocery Stores
- Pick up the monthly featured Meal in 30 Recipe along with all the featured food items
- Discover how easy it can be to prepare budget friendly tasty meals at home

So now imagine the show “Chopped” meeting “Dancing with the Stars! In Neepawa, Manitoba!”

Each Meal in 30 recipe will be cooked and judged by local Neepawa Celebrities. These Neepawa “Celebrity Chefs” will compete against each other for the best tasting/ prepared item. **Each of the celebrity chef’s are allowed to bring one additional “secret ingredient” to “elevate” the recipe they are preparing for the show .** The secret ingredient chosen by each chef will hopefully help the 3 judges make their decision on which recipe has been prepared/ showcased the best!

We hope that the show will bring attention to the Meal in 30 Project as well as highlight the importance that food plays in our lives, encourage more cooking to happen at home even when feeling stretched for time and remind us all on the important role that food can play in helping build connection in our homes and community.

You too can get involved and be a STAR in your very own kitchen! Here is the FEATURED RECIPE FOR THE MONTH OF JANUARY! You will also find this Meal in 30 Recipe in Co-op and Safeway as part of the Meal in 30 Community Healthy Eating Project!





Penne with Veggies and Black Beans

Total time: 25 minutes
Serves: 4



INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cup uncooked penne pasta
- 1/3 cup sliced zucchini
- 1/3 cup fresh carrot
- 4 medium mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 green pepper, sliced
- 1/2 small onion, sliced
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1/4 tsp basil, oregano, and thyme
- 1/4 tsp salt
- dash pepper
- 2 tsp oil
- 1 cup (1/2 can) black beans, rinsed
- 1/4 cup chopped tomato
- parmesan cheese.

DIRECTIONS



1 Cook pasta according to the package directions.



2 Slice zucchini, peppers, onion, mushrooms, carrots and mince garlic.



3 Saute vegetables and seasonings in 1 teaspoon of oil until crisp-tender.



4 Stir in the beans.




5 Drain pasta, add to the vegetable mixture. Add another teaspoon of oil. toss gently.



6 Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and enjoy!

You can also try...
Using a frozen vegetable medley to save time on chopping
Different beans or add meat of your choice



Let us know how you liked the recipe to be entered to win a grocery prize pack.

**Neepawa Eats Healthy Committee: Neepawa Eats Healthy is a group of dedicated partners representing local organizations and community members working together to improve healthy eating outcomes in the community.*





From the entire staff at
HMK, Have a Great
Holiday!!!

