

What are the expectations of the ÉJSMS Students?

At École James S. McCormick School, student conduct is governed mainly by societal norms of respect, responsibility, and safety.

Examples:



- Ask permission before touching someone's belongings.
- Be quiet in classrooms and hallways while others are working.
- Walk in the hallways to avoid accidents.
- If you take a ball outside at recess, be the one who brings it back in.
- Demonstrate good sportsmanship while playing outside at recess.
- Do up your shoes, so they don't come flying off and hit someone.
- Use manners and respectful, appropriate language.
- Clean up after yourself if you spill something during lunch.

Students are taught that socially appropriate behaviour in person is also expected online. Therefore, anyone posting demeaning or bullying comments about another student will be subject to the same consequences as being rude, demeaning, or bullying in person.

The full Code of Conduct for our school is attached to the end of this newsletter and can also be found on the About section of the school's webpage.

Are parents informed if their children do not respect the code of conduct?

Any child can have a lapse in judgment and make a poor choice once in a while. Parents are not typically informed of minor and rare infractions. Your child's teacher will share a classroom handbook that outlines expectations and when contact with parents/guardians will be typically warranted in his or her classroom.

Parents are informed if their children do something aggressive (verbally or physically), or if their children are displaying a pattern of unexpected behaviours. In these cases, parents/guardians are generally asked to meet with school staff to discuss an intervention plan that may include a combination of consequences and behaviour modification strategies.

The philosophy of École James S. McCormick School is to help and support students learn the skills they need to be emotionally in control of their bodies and socially successful with their peers. When school personnel and parents/guardians work as a team, children are strongly set up for success.

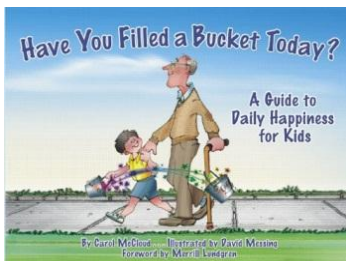
You will see some other examples of school expectations on the following pages, as well as some answers to FAQs.

How do we promote positive behaviour and social interactions at ÉJSMS?

The young students of ÉJSMS have been introduced to

Swiftly's Friendship Tools

As explained to our students, disagreements and conflicts with classmates, and even best friends, may happen during their day. Differences of opinions and ideas are common occurrences in life and in school, and the staff at JS McCormick feels it is essential for our students to have the proper tools and knowhow to resolve these situations in an appropriate manner. We have therefore shared and promoted the following five student-friendly strategies for students to use when conflicts arise. We refer to them as Swiftly's Friendship tools because our swift fox mascot is an important champion of these tools in our school.



HAVE YOU FILLED A BUCKET TODAY?

The children's book Have You Filled a Bucket Today: A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids by Carol McCloud has been an integral part of our school's character education program. This well-written, heartwarming story, along with its wonderful illustrations, encourages positive behavior as children see how rewarding it is to express daily kindness, appreciation and love towards family, friends, animals and even the environment. This book explains to children that we all carry an invisible bucket in which we keep our feelings and good thoughts. When our buckets are full, we are happy; when our buckets are empty, we are sad. Being kind, helpful, supportive and friendly fills buckets. Being impolite, selfish and hurtful is called bucket dipping and empties buckets.

This book, which is based off the educational programs of Merrill Lundgren, the Bucket Man, has been embraced by our school as it helps to provide our young students with a more tangible explanation of how feelings and emotions are affected by everyday interactions. It provides our students and staff with a common language to discuss and promote positive citizenship and behavior.

If you would like to learn more about this program and see its accompanying resources, visit the website: <http://www.bucketfillers101.com/>

ÉJSMS Dress Code for Students

When children are taught to take responsibility for selecting their outfits for each day, they learn to make decisions according to some criteria. Analyzing the facts and making a judgment are two of the most important high level thinking skills we can help our young ones develop.

For example, criteria might include the following:

- It's a gym day.
- Gym has been outside lately.
- It's a windy day.



Can your child judge what the best choices of clothing would be?

Hoodies—We feel it is important to see a person's face, because facial expressions convey so much in the way of communication. Hoodies tend to cover children's faces when the hoods are up and made make it harder for the child to hear in the classroom. We do not generally allow children to wear their hoods up (only if there are extenuating circumstances), and absolutely *do not allow* hoods to be zipped shut.

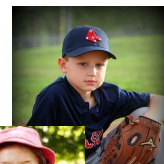


Hats – There are many reasons people choose to wear hats: (for eg.,

as part of an outfit;



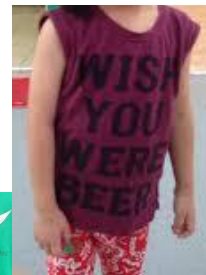
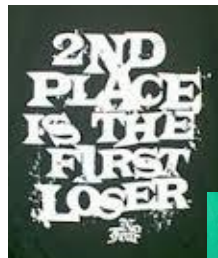
to represent identity and belonging;



to protect from sensitivity to fluorescent lighting).

Note: Some teachers allow hats to be worn in their individual classrooms while others do not. Parents/guardians will receive handbooks from their children's teachers, and they will indicate whether hats are not allowed in their classrooms.

In terms of the school in general, headwear that obstructs vision or hides a student's face will have to be removed. Students wearing inappropriate clothing logos will be required to change and the clothing will be sent home.



PE/DPA – Please note that daily physical activity (DPA) is a *daily* requirement in Alberta schools. Physical Education (PE) classes take place twice/week. It is helpful for students to come to school prepared to participate in physical activities every day. Physical activities can include outdoor events, so sport sandals are a better choice than flip flops. As well, it's a good idea to have a pair of shorts at school to slip on under a dress.



Research shows that movement helps increase academic performance as well as physical performance. During recesses, we want our students to be active and socially engaged with their peers. Therefore, students are not allowed to take electronics outside with them. As well, leaving electronics at home reduces the upset that occurs if they go missing.

Footwear – If your child has lace-up shoes, please teach him or her to tie them up. Recesses are short, so children do not like to waste time waiting for someone to help with laces. Also, laces tend to come undone and create a tripping hazard. For safety reasons, it is important that shoes are done up tightly. Students will not be allowed to participate in physical education classes unless they have tight fitting shoes (ie., no untied skater type shoes).

For the sake of our caretakers, runners should have non-marking soles.



The parking lot has been designated a **CHILD SAFETY ZONE** at specific times of the day.

Guardians are asked to park on the street to drop students off or pick them up.

For student safety, the parking lot is considered a safety zone for students to walk through rather than a drop off/pick up area.

From 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m., only staff members and school buses/vans can enter the parking lot. This avoids mixing moving cars and children in the lot. As well, only buses/vans are allowed in the fire lane.

In exceptional circumstances, vehicles are allowed into the parking lot for drop off and pick up when students are not able to walk to the school on their own. For example, a child with a broken leg can be brought into the parking lot for the duration of the healing process. As well, some students with special needs must be brought into the parking lot for safety and/or physical reasons. To have access to the parking lot for drop off or pick-up times, permits are required and must be obtained from the office each year.

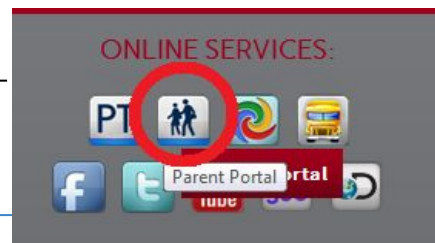


Frequently Asked Questions

If my child is going to be absent, do I inform the teacher or the administrative assistants?

Attendance is taken each morning and right after lunch. If a student is absent and we have not heard from the guardians, an automatic messaging system is activated.

If your child is not going to be at school, please call the school in advance, so attendance records are up to date, and so you don't get an automated message from the school. The school is open by 8:00 a.m. every morning, but you can leave a message on the school's phone (403-782-3096) any time, and our administrative assistants will get it. If the office staff has not heard from you in time, your child will be marked absent. You will receive an automated phone call, text, and/or email informing you that your child is absent. **By logging onto the parent portal on our school webpage, you can select the method(s) through which you want to be notified.**



Who can pick up my child?

We do not allow any adults to take children from the school unless one of the following is in place:

- The person is listed as a guardian or an emergency contact person in our online student records.
- The classroom teacher has been informed by a guardian that someone different will be picking up a child.
- The person represents the child's typical child care provider/organization.
- The person can prove he or she is a biological parent.

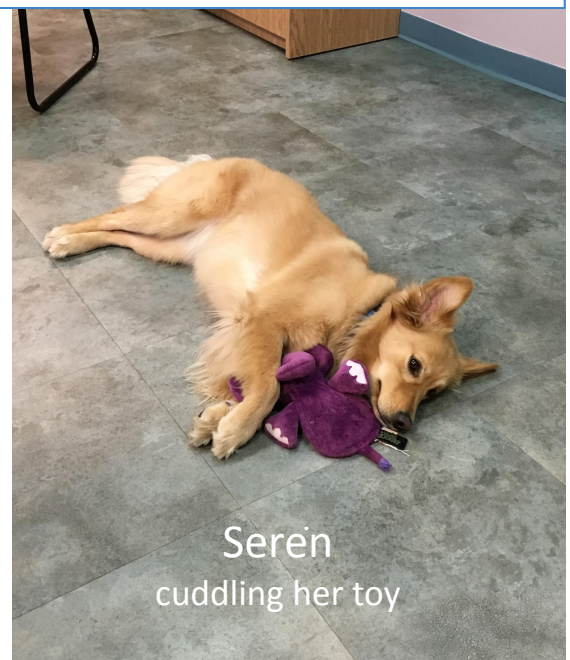
Note: Biological parents have a right to information about their children and to access their children in person, regardless of custodial arrangements most of the time. The only reason a biological parent could be denied is in the case of a court order, which must be on file at the school.

Are dogs allowed in the school?

Dogs must have prior approval from the administration before coming into the school. The only exception to this is when any animal is coming to the school for show and tell, as previously arranged with the classroom teacher.

Dogs have many benefits in a school environment. For example, they provide a calming influence for many students. As well, quieter students might prefer to read aloud to a pet rather than a person. Some school staff members bring their personal pets to school on occasion, and the office dog, Seren, is at school for some or all of almost every day.

Staff dogs are only allowed to be at the school with admin approval after a strict set of criteria has been met. For eg., all shots must be up to date and the paperwork submitted to the office. As well, the school staff must be aware of classrooms with students who have allergies.



Seren
cuddling her toy

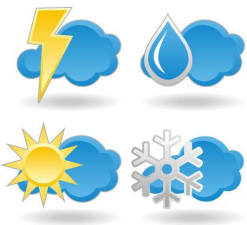
Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if my child isn't where he/she is supposed to be at the end of the day?

On occasion we get a phone call from a parent saying her son didn't get off the bus, or his daughter hasn't shown up at the arena for ringette, or an older brother arrives to pick up a younger sister, but she isn't at their meeting spot, etc. If this happens, call the school, and the school staff will immediately start working on locating the child. Here are some of the things that have occurred over the years:

- A child is walking home, but stops to play in a park and doesn't make it home at the usual time.
- A child was supposed to wait for an older sibling, but decided to walk home alone instead.
- A child was supposed to meet his older brother at JSM, but decided to walk over to the junior high to find his brother instead.
- A child was supposed to go to the arena, but forgot and took the bus home.
- A child took her friend's bus home instead of her own, so they could play together.
- Instead of walking home, a child went to a friend's house, so they could play together.
- A child was supposed to wait at school for his mom, but his dad decided to surprise his son by picking him up from school early.

Between the family and the school staff, students are usually located quite soon. If not, the police can get involved as well, but this has been a very rare occurrence.



How do you decide when to keep students indoors for recesses?

Children need to be outdoors for fresh air, exercise, socializing, and a break from classes, so we avoid canceling recess as much as possible. When children are dressed appropriately for the weather, they can play outside in a wide range of conditions.

However, we keep students inside in the case of heavy rain or in the case of extreme cold.

To determine if it's too cold we include several factors including the temperature, the wind chill, and the amount of sunshine. Generally, it's about -23 to -25 when we decide to keep students inside. Sometimes we shorten a recess break, so students are not outside the whole recess, but they get a few minutes of movement outdoors.

Students who do not bring appropriate outdoor gear to school are still expected to go outside for recesses. The office has some extra mitts, coats and snow pants for students.

Do you have emergency response procedures in place?

Wolf Creek Public Schools is now working with Zero Hour School Emergency Program. You can learn more about this program online. <http://www.hour-zero.com/> Emergency measures are transitioning this year to the protocols put forward by Zero Hour. As well, staff members are required to take several tests online to ensure occupational health and safety guidelines are understood.

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if my child has an accident at school?

The parents will be informed as soon as possible in the event a child is injured and requires medical attention (eg., if we suspect a bone is broken or stitches are required). We usually call parents to come to the school to check on their children when they are injured. In the case of minor injuries that clearly do not require medical intervention (a skinned knee, for eg.), parents will usually be informed by the classroom teacher, but possibly not until the end of the day.

In the case of an emergency, an ambulance will be called before the parents are contacted. The school staff functions *in loco parentis*, which means we are expected to care for the students in place of their parents during the school day. Therefore, we make decisions based on what we would want to be done for our own children.



What happens if my child has to take medication at school?

The school staff is not allowed to administer any medications (including things like Polysporin) to students, except in the case of life-threatening emergencies (such as administering an epi-pen to avoid anaphylaxis shock).

When prescription medication is required by a student, we require paperwork to be filled out by both the child's doctor and the parent/guardian. Contact the school office for more information if your child needs to take a prescription medication at school.

Prescription medications are kept in the office.

Is the school peanut free?

The school does not guarantee a nut-free environment. It is impossible to monitor all products brought into the building to ensure they are nut free. Furthermore, many nut products provide a healthy alternative to processed foods.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to inform the school staff if a child has an allergy of any type. In the event a student in any given classroom has a severe nut allergy, we will inform the families of the students in that class that sending any products containing nuts could be life-threatening. In such a case, our level of vigilance would increase significantly to match the severity of the allergy.

Are parents informed if their children misbehave?

Any child can have a lapse in judgment and make a poor choice once in a while. Parents are not typically informed of minor and rare infractions.

Parents are typically only informed if their children do something aggressive (verbally or physically), or if their children are displaying a pattern of misbehavior. In these cases, parents/guardians are generally contacted and asked to meet with school staff to discuss an intervention plan.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do you do with lost articles of clothing?

There is a lost and found box in the main hallway. Articles are occasionally be found just inside the other entrances, but most items are lost and found. Small items such as jewelry are kept in the office.

Three or four times a week, students and families are asked to go through the lost and found box (during break times). Afterwards, all leftover items are sent to a local organization.

Note: Due to COVID-19, students will not be allowed to go through the lost and found at this time.

What if I want to volunteer to help out in the classroom, on field trips or tying skates?

We ask all parents/guardians/grandparents, etc. to follow a process that starts with filling out a request to volunteer. Please see the school's website, come in to the school office, or check with your child's teacher for this paperwork. Once we have your signed volunteer application form, we will provide you with a form to take to your local police department. This form and two pieces of ID are required for you to get a vulnerable sector check done at no cost. Updated vulnerable sector checks are required for Wolf Creek volunteers every three years.

What are the instructional materials fees for?

While the school budget purchases basic materials such as paper, books and pencils, we have need for other materials to supplement our students' instructional experiences. For example, the fees cover additional art supplies such as clay and burlap, as well as maker materials such as fasteners, tools, and other building supplies for creativity and problem-solving.

Please note: Until instructional fees are paid, students will not be able to purchase hot lunches through the parent portal. If this is a concern, please meet with a school administrator.

What do you do for emergency preparedness?

Evacuation Drills and Lockdowns – Wolf Creek Public Schools uses Hour Zero as our protocols for evacuations and lockdowns. Our first few evacuation drills are announced in advance, so teachers can prepare their students.

For the remainder of the year, evacuation drills are unannounced. Not even the staff is informed. Evacuation drills can happen any time, so they take place regardless of the weather, and they can even occur in the middle of lunch time or an assembly. We have to be prepared for anything. <http://www.hour-zero.com/>

Our first lockdown drill will occur soon as well. We have had great success with these. When our school is in lockdown, it is very quiet in the building; the students are amazing.