

The Arbutus Week at a Glance...



Hello Parents and Caregivers,

I have given a lot of thought to how to introduce myself as your new Principal. Yes, I was Vice-Principal last year, but with COVID restrictions, I only had the pleasure of meeting a small handful of parents and caregivers. This year I am looking forward to more opportunities to connect and get to know you, and I want you to get to know me.

I decided to share my story of how I became an educator, and eventually, a principal, with my staff on the first day of school. I think it was important for them to understand me better as a person and their leader. So I have decided to share it with you as well.

Being your principal, I wanted you to hear my story of what brought me here to gain insight into me and why I may have certain priorities or make certain decisions.

First, I need to acknowledge I have led a very privileged, white life. I try to apply that awareness to what I do and say every day. However, any life has its challenges, and I'd like to share some of the experiences shaped me.

Growing up, I was born in Montreal and moved to Vancouver when I was 7, where my parents put me in French immersion. I was at best an average student, and honestly felt lost a lot of the time. I didn't feel very capable or smart, especially compared to my friends. I realize now that if the label had existed, I most certainly would have been diagnosed with ADHD. So, I know what it feels like to struggle in school, and to struggle with learning and self-image.

I also know what it feels like to be bullied. I was born wearing my heart on my sleeve and having deep empathy, and as a result, among other things, my peers mocked and teased me to get a reaction out of me, and they could be downright cruel at times. I was a target from the time I moved to Vancouver until I graduated from grade 12. I think that experience, and a grade 6 teacher who was a social justice queen, led to my passion for social justice issues and the strong desire to try to make things right in the world. I understand what it feels like to be on the outside and like you're never going to fit in.

Academically, over time, I somehow figured out strategies that worked for me to get by, to the point that I became an A+ student in my education degree and masters. I found a joy in learning, and of working hard to achieve my best. I eventually learned to react less and be calm and channel my emotions more into trying to make myself better and the world a better place. So I also know the power of resilience and change and how attitudes, beliefs and actions - in ourselves and in teachers towards students- can impact success in learning and school, as well as personal happiness.

I became a teacher at 29, after a career in business. I just didn't feel fulfilled making money for other people. I wanted to help students like me who struggled to be their best selves and learners.

From the time I began as a temp teacher at Reynolds Secondary, I was that annoying keener who joined everything and did everything to make her school a better place. And that was how my life as a teacher went - I joined every committee and sponsored clubs that interested me, eventually becoming the chair of many and department head of English and Socials. I worked closely with students on the yearbook for 7 years, brought problems to admin's attention and tried to work with them to solve them, and tried to create lots of opportunities for fun for students and colleagues.

One of my favorite things was and still is working in a community of learners -connecting and collaborating with colleagues and students, sharing ideas, and supporting each other personally and professionally to be our best selves and look out for each other. After 16 years of doing this, and 16 years of colleagues encouraging me to make the leap into admin - I finally decided to give it a try since I was kind of doing a lot of admin jobs anyway off the side of my desk. It was hard to leave the classroom and students I loved, but it felt like it was time to explore a new way to support students.

It was never a goal for me to go into admin. It just kind of evolved out of all that I was doing. That's how I feel about becoming principal as well -it's part of the natural evolution of my time and experiences, and my desire to support people wherever I am to be their best - and as a result, the school, it's best. I asked to be placed at a Middle School when I applied for the VP pool because I had heard about the magical built-in teams and co-planning time - something very hard to come by in secondary. I was excited to try something new after 16 years. I could not have made a better choice. I feel that Middle is my home and they are my people. I love it in the Middle.

Know that I am not perfect - because, yes, I am human. But I promise I am always striving to be my best self, trying to learn and grow as much as possible. I will always work to own my mistakes and fix them as best I can. Know my door is always open and I appreciate insights and feedback that can help me or the school and our systems improve. And I promise to challenge and support our staff and students to be their best selves, to keep learning and growing as individuals and as a community.

As I mentioned in my parent letter in August, our priority this year at Arbutus Global is to create a strong sense of **CONNECTION and BELONGING** for staff, students, and parents, and to infuse as much **FUN** as possible into all we do. These three words encompass so much of who I am as a person and educator, and, I believe, they are what we need most to create an inclusive school and in these challenging times. It is my commitment to keep these priorities at the forefront of our decisions and planning this year.

Thanks for "listening." :)

Carrie Schlappner—Principal



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THIS WEEK’S REFLECTIONS

It has been a **joy** to have students back and able to interact more, especially outside. It has been a **fun week of connecting** with the **Avalanche Games** and **Beach Day**, as well as moving into permanent classes. With 430 students, it is challenging to get every placement perfect, and we appreciate the understanding and adaptability that students and parents have shown in respecting the complexities that go into creating balanced classes for optimum learning.

Another important component of Connection and Belonging is to **support mental health**. Every week I will share a link to mental health resources to support students and parents. An old friend of mine from Vancouver, Sharon Selby, has an amazing blog and writes many articles specific to supporting teen mental health. Here is her most recent one on how to support back-to-school anxiety:
<https://bcparent.ca/health/ten-tips-for-back-to-school-anxiety/>

Picture



Photo Day THIS COMING WEDNESDAY – please look for the package that has been sent home.

Student Forms: Student forms went out this week. This year, some are in paper form and some are online at Parent Connect. Please complete all of the forms listed as soon as possible, and return the paper ones to the school.

Rainy Weather: Just a reminder as we approach the rainy season that students should always be bringing a jacket to school for our outdoor breaks. We typically try and get students outside even if it is raining to enjoy some exercise and fresh air. Rain Days (staying inside) are only called if it is a heavy downpour.



Students Arriving Late or Leaving Early

*Any time a student arrives late to the school, leaves early for any reason, or returns to the school after an appointment, they **MUST** come to the office to sign in. This is especially important arriving in the morning, because if a student does not sign in, we do not know to change their “absent” to “late” in our system, and parents receive a call out informing them their child is not at school. We appreciate your assistance in reminding students about this.*



Masks

As mentioned previously, schools no longer receive funding for extra masks for students. We gave away hundreds of masks last year, and we would very much like to reduce this amount, both from a cost perspective, and a waste perspective. We would very much appreciate all parents making sure students have at least TWO masks before they leave for school – one to wear, and another in their backpack. We have already given out approximately 50 masks this week!

Attendance – Please remember to inform the **attendance email or phone line** if your child will be late or absent. You can email to attendance62@sd61.bc.ca (please also cc the teacher) or phone and leave a message at **250-360-0725**.

Please do not call the office in the morning for attendance

	YOUR WEEK AT A GLANCE
Monday, Sept. 13	Exploratory Classes begin
Tuesday, Sept. 14	
Wednesday, Sept. 15	Photo Day
Thursday, Sept. 16	
Friday, Sept. 17	Student Vote

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UPCOMING DATES

PAC Meeting Tuesday, September 21st at 7pm via Zoom

Please look out for the Zoom link that will be sent out for our first PAC meeting this coming Tuesday. All parents are welcome. We appreciate your support!

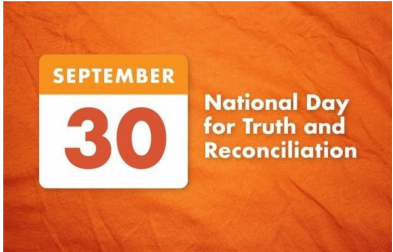


Meet the Teacher is Wednesday, September 22nd at 6pm. Unfortunately we will not be able to host our annual PAC Barbeque and welcome night in the gym due to the pandemic. However, we are working on a plan for teachers to host individual virtual events, and more news on this will follow next Friday.

In the **afternoon of Friday, September 24th**, we will be doing an **in-depth practice of our Earthquake / Emergency Procedures, including reunification with some parent volunteers.** We plan on making this a FUN and educational afternoon for students, with a game element to it. If you are available that afternoon and would like to take part in the drill, we are looking for about 10 parent volunteers to help us practice our reunification procedures. Please email our Vice-Principal, Ms Weckend, if you are interested at sweckend@sd61.bc.ca

Pro D Day: A reminder to our families that **Monday, September 27th is a Pro-D day. Students do not attend that day.**

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation: Thursday, September 30th is now a national day of remembrance and **school will not be in session, and students do not attend that day.** We will recognize this day on **Wednesday, October 29th by wearing our Orange Shirts** and having a whole-school assembly, amongst other things. We wear orange to recognize past injustices to indigenous people in Residential Schools, and it is also a time to celebrate the importance of indigenous culture in our community and country. Students and staff are encouraged to wear orange to mark this occasion.



Upcoming Dates to Remember:

Sept 21	PAC Meeting 7pm
Sept 27	Pro-D Day (students not in session)
Sept 30	National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (school not in session)
Oct 11	Thanksgiving (school not in session)
Oct 19	PAC Meeting 7pm
Oct 22	Pro-D Day—Provincial (students not in session)

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2021

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We are so excited to be welcoming music students back to Arbutus Global this fall. Notices regarding the start of music classes were sent home this week.

Below are some important dates to keep in mind:

Monday September 13:

Grade 7 and 8 Band begin. No instruments needed today.
Grade 6 music registration forms are due

Tuesday September 14:

Intermediate Strings begins at 7:30 am in the gymnasium.
Students will need to wear a mask and need Strictly Strings Book 2.

Choir first rehearsal in the gym at lunch. Choir is open to all students - no experience necessary.

Avalanche Band for Grade 7/8 band students at 7:30 am
Grade 7/8 band will need instrument, bell cover and musician mask.

Grade 7 band will need Measures of Success Book 2.

Wednesday September 15:

No choir this morning. Morning choir rehearsals will start next week.
Mr. Mazza and Mrs. Hill will visit Grade 6 classes today to meet with Grade 6 students to help students pick an instrument for band.

There is no Band 7/8 today.

Thursday September 16:

Intermediate Strings at 7:30 am.

Friday September 17:

Avalanche Band 7:30 am

Monday September 20:

Junior Strings begins after school (2:45-3:45)

First day of Grade 6 band, no instruments required for this day.

Tuesday September 21:

Grade 6 Band - instruments today.

Please send your child **with their instrument labelled with their name, division and phone number.** A notice will come home next week with more information about required materials.

For more information on COVID-19 safety, including information on bell covers, please visit our website: <https://sites.google.com/sd61learn.ca/arbutusmusic>



