



**MERRITT BENCH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Principal  
Mrs. L. Stewart  
Phone: (250) 378-2528

**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 58 (NICOLA-SIMILKAMEEN)**

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## Welcome to the 2016-17 Merritt Bench Elementary School year

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September 13, 2016

I would like to welcome all Merritt Bench students and parents to a new school year! We hope you have had a chance to visit the school and to note another physical change that took place over the summer. A heartfelt thank you is extended to Mr. McNiven, District Superintendent, our School Board members, Mr. Stogianos, Maintenance Supervisor, and his crew for the lovely entrance to Bench.

The Bench staff and I look forward to showing you our school improvements (entrance and new Vision Statement artwork) and visiting with you at our annual Terry Fox run. Come and join us on Thursday, September 29th at 11:30 to run with the students, cheer them on or take part in our family picnic. Bring your blanket, pack your lunch and gather on the top field at noon (in the gym if it is raining) to picnic with us. We have 8 new students at our school this year so the Terry Fox run and picnic is a perfect opportunity to get to know these youngsters and their families.

We are also fortunate to have new members join our Bench Staff. Tammy Trundle is a wonderful addition to our student support team. We are happy to welcome Barb Scapinello as our Strong Start Support Worker. Though not new to the district, Lynn Aubin joins us here at Bench bringing with her much experience, expertise and passion for best practice education. She is our grade 6 teacher.

It is hard to believe this is my fourth year as principal of Merritt Bench Elementary. The past three years have been full of amazing professional and personal growth! I learned that Merritt Bench values its strong traditions, has experienced staff who are deeply committed to your children and are experts at what they do while at the same time open to new ideas and opportunities that change can bring. Merritt Bench offers wonderful programs, field trips, and cultural events during the school year all of which are supported by the parent community. Thank you for your tireless partnership with us. But most importantly, I have been honoured to watch, guide and teach your children. Each of them has helped me to be a better educator and person. It is a privilege to be part of this wonderful school community. I look forward to another amazing year! Please feel free to contact me at any time, my door is always open.

The MB **Parent Advisory Council (PAC)** invites you to add your voice and/or hands to their group. We pride ourselves on being an interactive, family community. The Bench PAC (Parent Advisory Committee) is a great way to get involved. Meetings are typically the **first Tuesday of the month**. However this month it will be on **Tuesday, September 13 at 7:00 pm** in the library. Complimentary child minding will be provided in the gym. Please come out and introduce yourself. Parent participation and input is always encouraged.

If you would like to receive PAC emails which include meeting times and minutes, school events and other important information/reminders, please send your request to [merrittbenchpac@hotmail.com](mailto:merrittbenchpac@hotmail.com) .

This year our staff continues to delve into the development of growth mindsets with our students and are extremely excited about delivering this work through the program, "Play is the Way". Our second goal involves taking students to deeper levels in their reading. We invite you to partner with us in this work and will be sharing many home activities and providing examples of language you can use in conversation with your child. Please check our school website for more information. <http://mbes.sd58.bc.ca/>

***"If parents want to give their children a gift, the best thing they can do is to teach their children to love challenges, be intrigued by mistakes, enjoy effort, and keep on learning."*** – Carol Dweck

**Attendance:**

We take attendance first thing in the morning and after lunch. Students not in attendance in the morning who are not accounted for are flagged and we call home to check on them. To greatly assist us, please contact the school and let us know when your child is away. We have an answering machine on 24 hours a day for this purpose. Our number is 250 378-2528.

When picking your child up early for an appointment, please inform both the office and the classroom teacher.

Thank you for your cooperation in these matters.

**Early Arrival / Supervision:** Formal supervision does not begin until 8:30 a.m. Therefore, students arriving at school before 8:30 are not supervised. Please check your schedules and work with the school to ensure your child is not arriving too early and therefore not being supervised.

**After school** we ask that **students wishing to play** on the school grounds **check in at home first** then return under the supervision of their parents. Supervision is limited to 15 minutes after the school day ends.

**Administration of Medications and Medic Alert:** If your child has a medical condition, such as a severe allergy, a "Medical Alert Planning Form" will need to be completed. Students requiring any medication to be given during school hours need to complete a "Request for Administration of Medication at School" form. These forms are available at the school office.

**Appropriate Clothing:** Students should come to school expecting all kinds of weather. Please review with your child what wearing appropriate clothing means.

**Safety Concern:** Ripening fruit, cooling weather bring bear into our vicinity. To ensure your child's safety, please have him/her walk home in a group. At school three loud whistle shrieks indicate an emergency, such as a bear on the grounds. Students are trained to enter the school immediately when they hear this signal.

**Upcoming events:**

**Photo Day - September 23rd** (bring your smile.) See attached order form. Retake day will be Nov.7th.

**Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup> – Terry Fox Run** - Our run starts with a warm-up on the top field shortly after 11:30am. There are different routes to accommodate both our primary and intermediate students. Donations to the Terry Fox Run will be accepted at the school and will become a bulk deposit to the community Terry Fox Run. **Our school goal is to donate \$5.00** per student to this worthy cause. Please feel free to join your child for this event. We will need a number of volunteers to ensure the safety of the runners along the route. Please contact Mrs. Thompson if you are available to help. Thank you!

**Thursday, September 29<sup>th</sup> - School picnic** - Following the Terry Fox Run there will be the traditional picnic on the top field. Bring a blanket to sit on and a picnic basket to eat from to enjoy a time of meeting with other parents, staff and of course the students here at Bench. If the weather has plans for rain we will meet in the Gym.

**Friday, September 30<sup>th</sup> – Orange Shirt Day** –wear an orange shirt to school to show that “every child matters”. We will celebrate this FN event with a school assembly at 11:30 am. Please join us and wear orange.

**Monday, October 3<sup>rd</sup> – Jennifer Nicholson BC Hall of Fame Assembly** -1:00 – 2:00 pm In recognition of the great commitment our schools have made to the 60 MKC, we are being honoured with a visit from the BC Hall of Fame. Please join us for this special event.

**Tuesday, October 4<sup>th</sup> – Author Jennifer Nielsen** – 1:00 – 3:00 pm. This current author will spend time with our upper intermediate students talking about her novels as well as leading a writing workshop.

**Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup> – The Ned Show** – 11:00 – 11:45 pm. This character education program centers around a 45 minute assembly called The NED Show. NED is a loveable cartoon character whose name is an acronym for **N**ever give up, **E**ncourage others, and **D**o your best.

**Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup> our hot lunch program** begins. Hot lunches are served on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Mrs. George is an amazing cook who creates nutritious, homemade meals for our students. Order forms will be sent home mid-September.

During the school year teachers occasionally take their classes on neighbourhood outings off the school grounds (i.e. to the community garden or on fitness runs.) If you **do not want your** child to take part, we ask you to **inform the school**. Otherwise we will accept your non-reply as your consent for these outings. Thank you.

This year we have a number of individuals in our building who have **life threatening allergies to nuts**. We ask you to refrain from sending foods which contain nuts to school in your child’s lunch. Thank you for your consideration of these individuals.

**Criminal Record Check and Drivers Abstract Form.** Please note that the Criminal Record Check is required to support school activities including transporting students in a private vehicle. Please consider having this form completed early if you have not done so in the last year here at Bench Elementary School. Forms are available from Brenda Thompson, Secretary, at our office.

### **Attachments:**

Please review the number of attachments to this letter.

- Lifetouch photo order form (please return if you wish photos)
- Online Safety presentation with Merlyn Horton (MSS on Sept. 20 6:30 pm)
- BC School Fruit and Vegetable Nutritional Program consent form (please return)
- Letter from the Ministry of Education
- School District Calendar
- Permission for: PAC access to information (please return)
- Media Coverage/ Field Trip Consent (please return)
- Student Verification Form (MUST BE RETURNED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE)

Wishing everyone a wonderful school year!

Sincerely,

Lori Stewart, Principal Merritt Bench Elementary School