

École Laura Secord Elementary

secord@vsb.bc.ca

604-713-4996

Safe Arrival Line 604-713-5159 ext. 74

Principal: Laurent Brisebois
 Vice Principal: Cynthia Ramamonjisoa
 Secretary: Jessica Miller
 Trustee: Janet Fraser



October 6

Upcoming Events

October 9

No School
 Thanksgiving Day

October 12

Cross Country Mini Meet
 Trout Lake

October 19

District Cross Country Meet
 PAC Pizza Day

October 20

No Students
 Pro D Day

October 23-26

PAC Scholastic Book Fair

October 25 & 26

Parent Teacher Conferences
 2:00 p.m. Dismissal (both days)

October 25

Photo Retake Day

October 27

PAC Pumpkin Patch
 PAC Halloween Dance

Weekly Family Update

We know that parents receive a lot of communication from our school and that it can sometimes be difficult to keep up with multiple emails. In an effort to streamline communications, the Monthly Newsletter (highlighting school events and projects) and Weekly Family Updates (informing parents about upcoming events and activities), will be combined starting this week. We hope this change will be appreciated and welcome your feedback.

We hope you enjoy your new weekly newsletter!

Pro-D Day

A friendly reminder that Oct. 20, 2023 is a professional development day for staff and a non-instructional day for all students. This information is also available on our [online school calendar](#).



Annual Consent & Verification Forms

This year, the majority of forms are found online as this is the new district standard. They can be completed quite quickly and use far less paper! To complete the online forms please go to: <https://myforms.vsb.bc.ca>. Please complete all forms listed on MyForms, as they will pertain to your child based on their grade level.

Please note this is a new system so if you do not consent to any of the forms, please reach out to the teacher so that they can update their records.

We truly appreciate your help and cooperation in completing this as soon as possible. Without consent, it limits some of the activities available to your child.



Jessica & Sherri



Secord Cross Country

Practice Days are every Monday and Wednesday at 8am at Trout lake except for holidays or persistent or heavy rain/wind.

Last Mini Meet date is Thursday Oct 12th, after school at Trout lake. Kids are walked to Trout lake at 3:15pm and races begin around 3:45pm and finish around 4:45pm.

Final District Meet is on Thursday, October 19th at Trout Lake. We don't have the start times yet but it usually gets underway around 12:30 and finishes around 3pm. We will update the exact times when we get the District information.

Thanks for all your support and encouraging your kids to take part in cross-country! It is great to see such enthusiasm and such large numbers ... almost 100!

PAC Pumpkin Patch

The annual Pumpkin Patch organized by the PAC is planned for Oct. 27th. Once again, our school field will be turned into a giant pumpkin patch. Students and staff are looking forward to this great Secord tradition. There will also be a Halloween Dance organized by the PAC early in the evening. Stay tuned!



Secord Art Walk

Mme Stipec Div 8



Ms. Verhage - Div 21



Special Days in October

Music Club

A new music club will begin this October 10 until Winter break for Grades 1 and 2, every Tuesday from 12:10-12:35 in the music room. For Grade 3 and 4 it will begin in January until spring break and Grades 5-7 from April to June. Students will be made aware this week and are free to join in!

World Mental Health Day: October 10th is a day to promote mental health awareness and education, and advocates against social stigma relating to mental health.

International Day of the Girl: October 11th is a day to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world!



Ecole Laura Secord Elementary School Safety and Emergency Drills

Information for Parents and Guardians

As a parent, feeling confident in the safety of your child at the school they attend is extremely important. Every year, schools update their Safe and Caring School Plan and hold drills to prepare for emergencies and crisis.

What is a school Safe and Caring Plan?

All schools have an organized, systematic emergency operations plan in place to reduce risks or prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergency situations. These may range from an incident or accident affecting a member of the school community to a natural disaster or crisis and affecting a lot of individuals in the school.

School faculty and staff are trained to assess the seriousness of incidents and respond according to the plan's established procedures and guidelines. The school district provides guidance for each type of community and ensures plans meet expectations.

Emergency Drills

During a school year, we practice emergency drills to ensure that all students and staff members are aware of these emergency responses and understand how to keep themselves and others safe in the event of an emergency. Each year, we are responsible to conduct 2 Earthquake Drills, 6 Fire Alarm Drills, and 2 Lockdown Drills. During these drills, we will practice the appropriate emergency responses. There are five key responses that can be appropriately implemented in the event of most emergencies. It is important to know that the responses are context specific and flexible:

Drop - Cover - Hold On

Most people are familiar with the drop – cover - hold on response as it is the recommended immediate response for earthquakes. Drop-Cover-Hold On may be followed by a second response such as evacuation or shelter-in-place. However, it may also happen in the event of an explosion that causes buildings to shake or materials to fall from structures. The result is that structures become unstable, and materials can fall, explode or disintegrate.

Evacuate

When a building or area becomes unsafe, evacuation may be called for. The most common event requiring evacuation is fire, but other circumstances may also require evacuation. These include floods or a bomb threat within the school.

Lockdown

Lockdown is used to prevent intruders from entering occupied areas of a building or when it is necessary to isolate students and staff from a danger outside or within the building. Situations include active shooters or dangerous intruders. Staff and students are restricted in their movements to a specific area which is then protected through locking of exterior and classroom doors and covering windows. There may be other areas of the school that are capable of being locked down and these may also be designated as lockdown locations.

During a lockdown, if within a room, the teacher will:

- Ask for silence
- Turn off lights
- Gather students on the floor and out of sight
- Close windows and cover interior windows/door glass (where possible)
- Get behind heavy furniture, file cabinets, or into interior rooms
- Direct all mobile phones/devices to be silenced and placed face down on the floor
- Direct students not to use their mobile phones or send texts/posts on social media
- Ensure classroom door is locked

Hold and Secure

A Hold and Secure is used when it is necessary to secure a school because there is an emergency occurring outside the school. The exterior doors are locked and monitored to allow students and staff to enter but otherwise remain locked. Once inside, no one leaves the building. An active police incident in a neighbourhood would trigger a lockout. Confirm with local police when it is safe to lift the lockout.

During a Hold and Secure, if within a room, the teacher will:

- Close and lock exterior doors under their control
- Close windows, blinds or drapes to keep students on task and limit distraction from outside events
- Continue regular activities in-class/in-school unless advised otherwise

Shelter in Place

A shelter in place order is used when personal safety is considered to be in danger if anyone leaves the school. It is usually associated with an environmental hazard where hazardous materials are released into the atmosphere. For example, a chemical spill or gas leak in the immediate vicinity of the school. Shelter in place might also be used in the case of a wild animal in the vicinity of the school (e.g. cougar or bear). In the case of environmental hazards, steps may need to be taken to ensure the school is airtight – turning off furnaces, air conditioning, closing fume hoods and exhaust systems, covering and taping windows – and that the air is safe to breathe.

During Shelter in Place, the teacher will:

- Close and lock any exterior doors and windows under their control
- Close blinds or drapes to keep students on task and limit distractions from outside events
- Continue regular activities in-class/in-school

Not all emergencies require one of the five responses listed here. Typically, less drastic measures are necessary.

Note:

We do not use code words when ordering one of these responses. We use the correct terms – drop/cover/hold on, evacuate, lockdown, hold and secure or shelter in place.

How are emergencies at schools communicated to parents?

Our school provides parents with timely information on the status of their child's safety. For example, we have an emergency communication system in place that notifies parents via email. Schools inform parents of any unusual situation that demands one of the protocols listed above. However, do not always provide prior notice of drills. Staff and students may or may not receive warnings for drills in order to test and improve our procedures. However, come the month of October, we always let staff and parents know that emergency drills will soon start.

Helpful guidelines for talking with children about school safety

For some children, even participating in a drill may cause some emotional stress. This is especially true if it reminds them of a prior crisis event, or if they otherwise are feeling vulnerable or anxious.

Staff always prepare children with care and attention. As parents, you can also help your child by talking about emergency situations and communicating with your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns. Any conversation with a child must be appropriate for their age and developmental stage.

- **Younger Primary students** need brief simple information that should be balanced with reassurance. This includes informing children that their school and home are generally safe and that adults are available to protect them. Young children often gauge how threatening or serious an event is by adult reactions.
- **Older Primary students** may be more vocal in asking questions about whether they are truly safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Parents can share the information they have about the school's safety plan and any other relevant communication to ease their child's mind.
- **Intermediate Students** may have strong and varying opinions about causes of violence in school and society. Parents should stress the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following the school's safety guidelines (reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to school safety made by students or community members, for example).

If you have any questions, concerns, or information you would like to share about your child, please talk to your child's teacher, school counsellor or principal. We are looking forward to working with you for a Safe and Caring Laura Secord Elementary school.

Reunification Drill

We will be conducting an "Earthquake" Drill with Reunification in May, 2024. More information will be shared as we get closer to the date. We appreciate that you review the context and responses for an earthquake drill with your children to help them prepare. Thank you!

Purpose of a Reunification Drill:

Surprisingly, one of the most challenging elements to navigate in an emergency happens after the action has calmed down. Well, maybe it isn't so surprising. Large numbers of parents/guardians picking up students on campus during a high-stress time could spiral out of control quickly without a concrete plan. That plan is called "reunification" and has a huge impact on the effectiveness of a school's emergency response.

The VSB uses the same Reunification process as most other school districts. It involves parents reporting to a Check-In location, showing personal identification (ID), and our staff confirming the person picking-up a student is listed with the school as an Emergency Contact of the student. It does take some time, but bringing ID, having updated Emergency Contacts listed with the school, and being patient and polite make it go much faster.

You are encouraged to also review your emergency preparedness plan at home - more information can be found at this link: [Household Emergency Plan](#)

If you have any questions, please call the school office directly at (604) 713-4996.

Sincerely,
Secord Administration Team



Thanksgiving day traditionally is a European agricultural celebration of the fall harvest and giving thanks for that bounty.