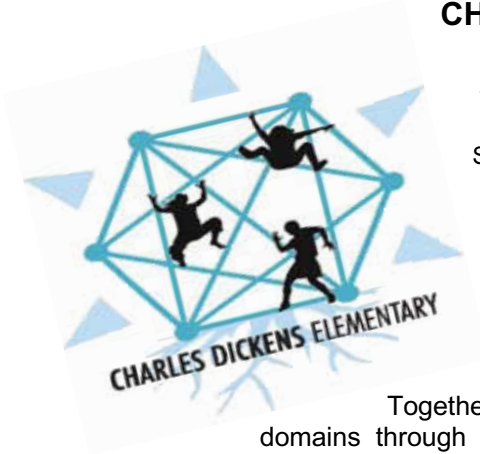


CHARLES DICKENS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



1010 East 17th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C
V5N 3S5

Secretary: Anne Canning
Telephone: (604) 713-4723
Fax: (604) 713-4725
Website: <http://dickens.vsb.bc.ca>

Principal: Julie Weatherall
Vice Principal: Shelley Sunner

PAC Co-Chairs: Daniela Forde, Sara Getz,
Laura Poree, Tiffany Searchfield
Director of Instruction: Aaron Davis
Trustee: Carmen Cho

MISSION STATEMENT

Together we bring alive our commitment to develop each child's potential in all domains through a long-established philosophy built on mutual respect, continuous learning and opportunities for leadership within a child-centred, multi-aged framework.

SEPTEMBER 2020

We acknowledge that we *learn*, work together, and play on the unceded and traditional territory of the x̱m̱əθḵəy̱əm (Musqueam), seɬwítulh (Tsleil Waututh) and s̱ḵw̱x̱w̱7mesh (Squamish Coast Salish) peoples.

Dear Dickens Community:

One little virus has changed the world – or so it seems. It has certainly changed school start up – the 4th and 5th start-ups in a single year, I might add (September 2019 – ‘normal’ school; April 2020 – online learning; June 2020 – hybrid learning; September 2020 – in-person learning with Health and Safety Protocols; and Option 4 Home Learners). They will soon be recruiting us to open schools on Mars and we’ll be ready. COVID has most certainly kept us very busy – so busy, in fact, that my September newsletter has been renamed ‘September’!

Things at Dickens do look different with all the Health and Safety protocols in place:

- everyone keeping their distance
- washing hands multiple times a day
- not sharing materials or working in groups
- walking ‘tight to the right’
- interacting only with those in their Learning Cohort bubbles
- playing in Zones
- having staggered entry and exit times
- having separate Primary and Intermediate recess and lunch times.

There are other changes as well: no clubs or field trips for now; no hot lunches or PAC fundraisers; no parents in the school. It’s not forever, but it isn’t what school should be. Except – COVID hasn’t managed to squash our spirits or quell our enthusiasm. Somehow Dickens teachers are finding a way to make their classrooms work – in spite of the restrictions. Almost everyone wore orange on Orange Shirt Day, we are busy preparing for a Terry Fox run, and

teachers are finding ways to do things online – ways to adapt that honour the feeling of community and ‘The Dickens Way’. It reminds me of the Grinch in Dr. Seuss’s book, who couldn’t stop Christmas from coming – even without all the packages, boxes and bags. In spite of all the things we have had to change and cancel or postpone, the overwhelming feeling in the halls and the playground is excitement, connection and joy.

This is not to make light of the tremendous efforts on the part of staff at Dickens to make things work. Teachers, support workers, office staff and our building engineer and custodians have worked incredibly hard to make school look and feel as much like normal as they possibly can. None of us have ever cleaned so much, washed hands so much, and walked up and down stairs so much to supervise the safe coming and going of our cohorts. Grateful thanks to all, and to parents who have helped prepare their children for things, brought them to school at precisely 8:55 or 9:00, packed food and water for the day, kept children at home when ill, and stayed outside the building. We appreciate your cooperation.

So, COVID, you have not been able to dampen the Dickens spirit after all.

Our first Pro-D Day



COVID-friendly Pro-D Nutrition Break on September 21st. Staff worked on TEAMS and technology.

CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

September has always been a month of settling into routines and setting expectations. It is a time of review and assessment, getting resource support in place and of building community. This year there were new rules: lining up and walking in single file, 'tight to the right'; *not* sharing is caring; eating lunch in the classroom; wearing masks. As directed by the Health Officer, classes have been put into Learning Cohorts. Dickens is a school where teachers have always teamed, so creating Learning Cohorts was simply a matter of pairing the divisions that already worked together. We were also able to divide our outside space into 5 Zones so that there is only one Learning Cohort in a zone at any one time – Primaries go out first and Intermediates second in our staggered break system; cohorts rotate through the zones throughout the week.

The Home Learner program started the week of September 21 with a contact letter and a full group story lesson. It was crucial for us to make sure every home learner had been engaged in at least one lesson before September 30 in order to maintain their spot at Dickens. The Home Learning Option (4) is not an online learning program and parents of home learners are in charge of their children's learning with 90 minutes of contact a week from a VSB teacher or support worker. Some assignments will be posted by the classroom teacher and there are resources and links uploaded to the Home Learners Team on TEAMS. Dickens staff spent the September 21st Professional Day creating their class teams online and learning how to call meetings and use some of the many features of Microsoft Teams. We understand that our Home Learners would love to be back at school and many plan to return on October 13th – the first return date for Home Learners.



Learning from Home – Dickens student and brother listening to Julie read *Each Kindness* on September 25th. Many of our Home Learners shared their writing and art responses to the story.

KINDNESS ROCKS!

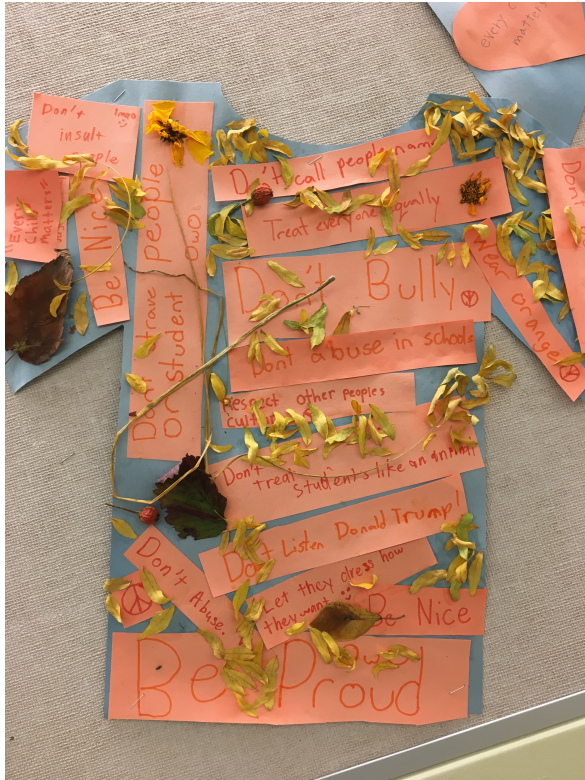
One of the suggested follow-up activities for *Each Kindness* was to make a Kindness rock garden. Low and behold and unbeknownst to me, I found two Kindness rock gardens at Dickens the very same day in Divisions 3 and 5. Here are Division 3's Kindness Rocks.



VIRTUAL CONNECTIONS



A parent connects via Teams to share a story with Division 10.



ORANGE SHIRT DAY

Dickens was a sea of orange on September 30th.
Classes did lessons, art activities and read stories about the story behind Orange Shirt Day and Indigenous history in Canada - Every Child Matters.

Art by Division 12.

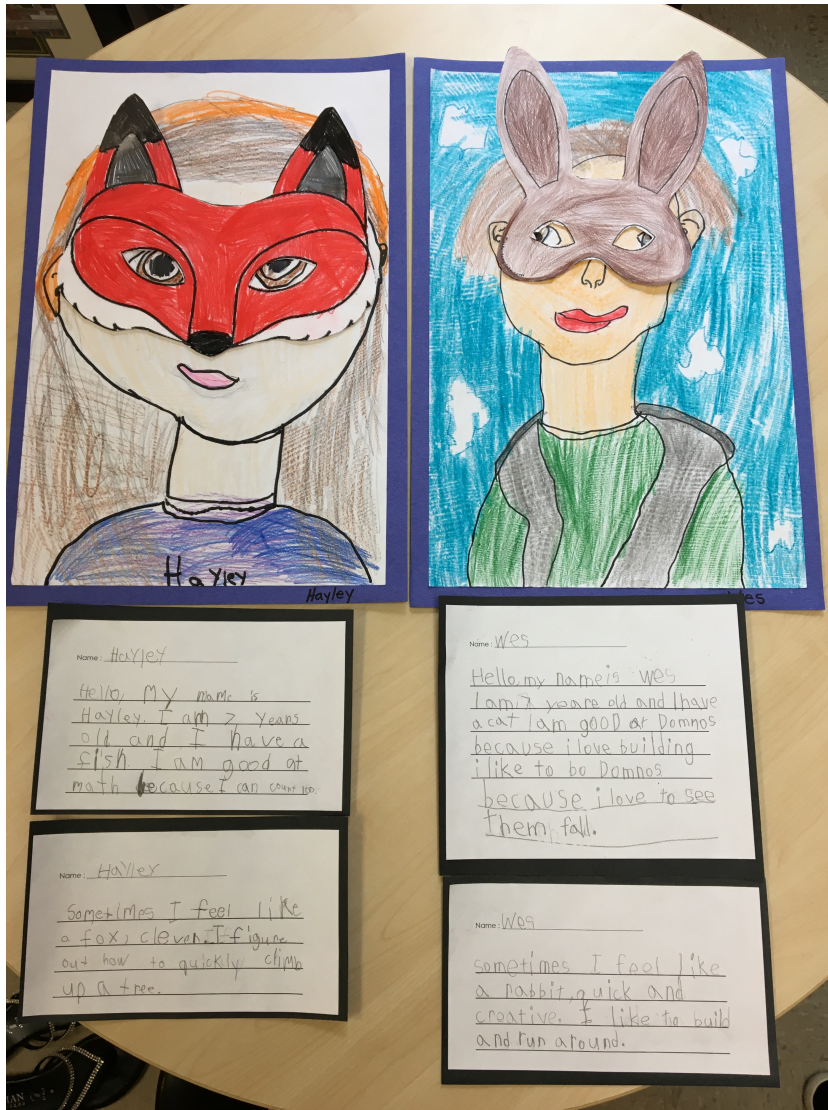
PARAGRAPH WRITING

When I taught writing, I always told my students, 'If you can say a sentence, you can write a sentence. And if you can write a sentence, you can write a paragraph. And if you can write a paragraph, you can write an essay – or a book.' Sounds simple, right? Then, why is it so hard? Writing seems to be one of the most challenging skills to master for many students. This student summed up his frustration about paragraph writing in his paragraph of the week.

I can't write a paragraph. I just can't do it. I can't write the details. Not one, not two, and certainly not three. There is just nothing to be detailed about! I can't write the explanations, for reasons I can't explain. There is nothing to explain because I can't write the details. I can't even think of an opening and closing sentence, because I can't think of a topic! And if there is no topic there is no paragraph. See, I told you, I couldn't write a paragraph. Wait...that was a paragraph!

By Leif – Division 18

SELF PORTRAITS WITH A DIFFERENT KIND OF MASK



Division 3 Art and Writing inspired by a First Nations book.

REMINDERS:

Sunnyside Park is not an off-leash park for dogs. The nearest off-leash dog park is at Trout Lake. Thank you for remembering to keep your dog on a leash if you are using the park

Thank you to parents for promptly returning the forms which went out last Friday. We also appreciate that people are using School Cash online to make payments. This is easier, more secure and safer in COVID times.

Next week will be dedicated to Terry Fox. Friday, October 9th will be a staggered Terry Fox Run. Last week an email went out with a link to donate.

Thank you for continuing to do a Daily Health Check for your children before they come to school. Below is the new shorter checklist.



Daily Health Assessment – Student

This document is an updated Daily Health Assessment following BCCDC’s COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings dated September 11, 2020.

All parents, guardians, and/or caregivers have the responsibility to conduct a Daily Health Assessment of the student each day before sending them to school.

Do not return this assessment to your school. Keep this at home for your daily reference.

Student Daily Health Assessment			
1. Key Symptoms of Illness		Does the student have any of the following symptoms?	
Fever		YES	NO
Chills		YES	NO
Cough or worsening of chronic cough		YES	NO
Shortness of breath		YES	NO
Loss of sense of smell or taste		YES	NO
Diarrhea		YES	NO
Nausea and vomiting		YES	NO
2. International Travel	Has the student returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3. Confirmed Contact	Is the student a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	YES	NO

If you answered “YES” to one of the questions included under ‘Key Symptoms of Illness’ (excluding fever), the student should stay home for 24 hours from when the symptoms started. If the symptom improves, the student may return to school when they feel well enough. If the symptom persists or worsens, seek a health assessment.

If you answered “YES” to two or more of the questions included under ‘Key Symptoms of Illness’ or the student has a fever, seek a health assessment. A health assessment includes calling a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner, or 8-1-1 if these options are unavailable. If a health assessment is required, the student should not return to school until COVID-19 has been excluded and symptoms have improved.

If you answered “YES” to questions 2 or 3, use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if the student should seek testing for COVID-19.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, the student can return to school when symptoms improve and they feel well enough. Testing may not be recommended if the assessment determines that the symptoms are due to another cause (i.e. not COVID-19).

Thank you, Teachers

Monday, October 5th is World Teacher Day. More than ever the world has seen that teachers do whatever needs to be done through whatever medium is possible and available to ensure that their students can learn. Any parent who has been their child's teacher at home throughout the pandemic certainly has a renewed appreciation for what teachers do every day – not just for one or two children, but for 20 to 30! Here's to our Dickens' teachers. This newsletter is a testament to what they do.

Thank you,

Julie Weatherall

Principal, Dickens Elementary