

SEPTEMBER  
2020



# Selkirk Montessori School E-Newsletter

## From the Head of School, Erin Hayes

Welcome back our wonderful Selkirk Montessori family.

It was very uplifting to hold our first staff meeting of the year and review and fine tune all of the healthy and safety protocols. We have a solid plan in place for the school, and teachers are excited for the unique adventures and learning the school year will bring.

Before we head back, please go over our ROCKS (below) with your child in regards to the year to come. Without parents in the building, it will be disappointing not to connect about your child and your lives. Please say hello at pick up or drop off; feel free to reach out by email or phone, anytime.

We miss seeing you.

**Selkirk ROCKS**  
Talking ROCKS with your child for 2020

	RESPECT	OPENMINDEDNESS	COMMUNICATION	KINDNESS	SUCCESS
<b>For the littles</b>	Each family has different people in their family with different levels of risk, so they may make different decisions.	Trying new things helps the brain grow strong and healthy.	Everything comes different from the world. It is okay to be different. It helps lead to our world as an individual.	Some people might be feeling nervous or shy. Try to have some things people share. It helps us to be a little better when we try things we are not sure of.	Each learning is a new adventure. We are learning and growing every day. We are learning to be better people.
<b>For the middles</b>	Each family has different people in their family with different levels of risk, so they may make different decisions.	Being curious and trying things changes. Some changes will be easy to adjust to, but others will require practice.	When people do some things, they are happy to do them. They are not afraid to try things and learn to do them. They are learning to be better people and themselves.	Being kind to others helps them feel better. Everyone has a feeling and we can help them feel better. We can help them feel better.	Learning to be a better person is a goal. We are learning to be better people every day. We are learning to be better people.
<b>For the bigs</b>	Each family has different people in their family with different levels of risk, so they may make different decisions.	If you are in a hard time, it is okay to ask for help. It is okay to ask for help.	We will all learn to be better people. We will all learn to be better people. We will all learn to be better people.	Everyone has to be different to be better. We are learning to be better people every day. We are learning to be better people.	Each learning is a new adventure. We are learning and growing every day. We are learning to be better people.

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*“This is not forever.  
It’s for now.”*

*Dr. Bonnie Henry*

## Pacific Montessori Society Board Update

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Our first meeting of the new school year will be held on Monday, September 23rd at 6:00 pm in the staff room.

If you are interested in attending the meeting, please contact Penny. All members of the Pacific Montessori Society are welcome to come.



We have a number of enthusiastic parent volunteers who have expressed an interest in joining the board this year! I will have more information about them for you prior to the Annual General Meeting in November.

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## Provincial Government Employees' Community Services Fund

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Thank you for including us in your donations through the provincial government Employees' Community Services Fund. Our last cheque totalled \$526.62!

For those who aren't in the know, the campaign runs between September and November and is a very easy way for parents who are provincial employees to contribute to the school.

If you have any questions, please contact me :  
[penny@selkirkmontessori.ca](mailto:penny@selkirkmontessori.ca).



**You have made a difference!**

## Welcome our New Staff Members!

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### **Nicola Steiniger—Eagle Class**

Nicola has a degree in music from the University of BC, Early Childhood Education credentials and her 3-6 Montessori training. She taught on the mainland for many years, moving to Victoria in 2018. Nicola sings, plays the cello, collects antiques, and crafts (knitting and felting).



### **Devon Bottomley—Seastar and Out-of-School Care**

Devon graduated from the University of Victoria with a Bachelor of Education with Distinction, Art Education and Spanish. She has previously taught at SMUS and Shawnigan Lake School. Devon loves crafts (greeting cards and wire sculptures) and gardening.



### **Deanna Martin—Owl and Out-of-School Care**

Deanna received her Early Childhood Educator training from Pacific Rim Institute and her education degree from the Memorial University of Newfoundland with a concentration in science. Her passions include photography, baking, mountain biking and — most importantly — her son.



### **Laura Bondar—Receptionist/Administrative Assistant**

Laura has taken over Karma's position at the school this summer. She was born in Victoria, studied administration at Camosun and Royal Roads and volunteered in Nepal at an elementary school. She has worked mostly in the hospitality industry, and her last position was at the Hotel Grand Pacific in reservations. Laura's hobbies include painting, ice skating and swing dancing.



## Back to School: Supporting our Children's Emotions

With a very different school year ahead of us, it can be difficult to not get caught up in the “What if?” loop, especially when these what ifs concern our children. Our own feelings about sending our children back to school during these trying times will naturally show up in how we handle back to school preparation. So, with our own emotions in check, how can we support our children's emotions with this transition back to school?

- 1. Check-in with yourself.** How are you feeling about your child heading back to school? Are you worried? Confident? Relaxed? If you are worried or uneasy, make sure to take care of these feelings and to talk things through with your support network, **not in front of your children.** If you are struggling emotionally, reach out for support. (Refer to the resources section below if needed).
- 2. Be confident in your decision.** You have made the decision to have your child attend school on-site this September. It is normal to have feelings of uncertainty with this school year being so different, but it is important to be firm and confident about our decision in front of our children. They take on so much of what we feel about situations, so if you're unsure, your child will likely pick up on that and feel the same. Trust in your child's teachers and the whole school team, who are working hard and diligently to make the school a safe and positive environment.
- 3. Check-in with your child.** Take the time to have a conversation with your child about what they are looking forward to at school and what they might be feeling worried about. What can they expect to be the same? What can they expect to be different? *Validate* your child's feelings by reflecting back what you're hearing them say. For example, a child might say, “I don't want to go back to school. I want to stay home with you.” A reflective response might sound like, “It sounds like you're nervous about going back to school. You feel safe with me at home.” Younger children may not have the language to name their feelings yet, so it's up to us to help them. As Dr. Dan Siegel says in the book, *The Whole-Brain Child*, when it comes to emotions, you need to “name it to tame it.” Making time to have conversations with your child about their experiences will help them process their thoughts and move through their feelings.
- 4. Be honest.** It is instinctive for parents to want to handle their child's worries by using general reassuring statements like, “Don't worry, everything will be fine,” or “There's nothing to worry about.” However, this can be invalidating for children because their feelings are very real to them. Instead of brushing worries to the side, help your child think of what supports and protocols are in place at school.

For example, a common worry among children is that they will contract Covid-19 at school. Be honest about the risks of it happening but reiterate all of the steps the school is taking to reduce the risks (ie. Washing hands, wearing masks, physically distancing, staying in pods). If worries come up about different topics, help your child think of possible solutions and who they can talk to at school for help.

5. **Model coping strategies.** This pandemic has forced us all to structure our lives very differently and for many of us, it has also brought additional stress and anxiety. Although we do want to avoid venting about our stress to our children, it is helpful to talk through ways we can take care of our own big emotions. For example, if something stressful comes up when you are in front of your child, such as being stuck in traffic, you could say, “I’m feeling so frustrated with all this traffic! I think I’ll take a few deep breaths to calm down.” Then model deep breathing, or whatever helps you (ie. Turning on your favourite song on the car stereo, naming colours that you see out the window). It might sound robotic or unnatural at first, but children notice what we do and learn so much from what we model to them!
6. **Take small steps and praise courage.** If your child is nervous about coming to school, find small ways they are showing courage related to the transition and praise them for it. For example, if your child is nervous about being on-site, it might be helpful to drive to the school building before their first day and encourage them to simply walk up to the front door. If they refuse to get out of the car even after some encouragement, don’t look at it as a failure, but instead praise them for what they were able to accomplish. You could say, “I see you are nervous about getting out of the car, but I’m so proud of you for coming with me to the school today. That took courage. Let’s try again tomorrow.” Whatever the fear is, find ways to gradually expose your child instead of avoid it (because avoidance feeds anxiety!).
7. **Communicate with your child’s teachers.** You know your child best! Talk to your child’s teachers about whatever concerns your child may have. Every single teacher on staff at our school have a wealth of knowledge and skills in supporting students in challenging situations. Although we are heading into uncharted territory with the new health and safety protocols in place, our teachers have toolboxes full of so many tools and strategies to help their students feel safe, calm, and ready to learn.

I am so excited to welcome the children back to school next week and look forward to supporting their mental health and wellbeing in whatever capacity they may need. If for any reason you think your child may require additional support in transitioning to school, please do not hesitate to contact me at: [counselor@selkirkmontessori.ca](mailto:counselor@selkirkmontessori.ca)

We are in this together! #selkirkROCKS

**Carmelle Hermoso**

School Counsellor

**(References on Page 6)**

## **References:**

Anxiety Canada (2020). *7 Tips for educators returning to school during covid-19*. Anxiety Canada. <https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/7-tips-for-educators-returning-to-school-during-covid-19/>

Siegel, D. J. & Bryson, T. P. (2011). *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*. Bantam Books Trade Paperback Edition.

Quinlavin, T. (2020, May 15). *Return to school. A trauma informed approach*. Raft psychology. <https://www.raftpsychology.com/news/gyid0efdmvmfjw4r9xxly04rwrjd0o>

## **Additional Resources:**

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/covid-19/>

<https://childmind.org/article/back-to-school-anxiety-during-covid/>

<https://childmind.org/coping-during-covid-19-resources-for-parents/>

## **Virtual Mental Health Support for Parents and Caregivers:**

*BounceBack* – Expanding access to free online, video and phone-based coaching and skills-building program so that more seniors, adults and youth who are experiencing low mood, mild to moderate depression, anxiety, stress or worry, can receive care. (Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division). Available now. For more information, visit: [www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19](http://www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19)

*Virtual counselling services* – Expanding access to virtual community counselling for individuals or groups at low or no cost. A list of community counselling agencies offering virtual support is online. Available now. For more information, visit: [www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19](http://www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19)

*Peer support and system navigation* – Expanding access to virtual mentoring and supports by increasing the number of peer support and system navigation workers. (Canadian Mental Health Association). Available now. For more information, visit: [www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19](http://www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19)

*Living Life to the Full* – Launching access to free virtual Living Life to the Full peer support and practical skills courses for coping with stress, problem solving and boosting mood. The eight-week course is led by a trained facilitator. (Canadian Mental Health Association – BC Division). Available now. For more information, visit: [www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19](http://www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19)

*B.C. COVID-19 mental health self-assessment tool* – Launching a set of mental health screening self-tests alongside the COVID-19 self-assessment tool. (Canadian Mental Health Association). Available April 20. For more information, visit: [www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19](http://www.cmha.bc.ca/covid-19)

*Suicide Help Line* - 1-800-SUICIDE 1-800-784-2433 (24 hours)

*Online Service for Adults* [www.CrisisCentreChat.ca](http://www.CrisisCentreChat.ca)

# Work Party—Thanks for the Hand!



We called for help and you came! Very special thanks to parent/board member Shawn Stewart and all the parent volunteers who came to take out the garden boxes last week!



We even had two of our students lending a hand! Plants and dirt were removed, the boxes and pavers salvaged for sale and a variety of other pots, containers and detritus taken away.

The idea was to create more outdoor space for the children to learn and play! These outdoor spaces have been refreshed with more pea gravel and new logs. The Jackladder playground has been rototilled to fluff up the wood chips and the Checkerboard installation has been refreshed. We're ready for the kids!



# Selkirk Parent Group

Welcome back Selkirk families! For our new families, the Selkirk Parent Group (SPG) is an independent committee of the Pacific Montessori Society (PMS). The SPG contributes to the school community by encouraging parents to volunteer and participate in the school's social and educational events, by facilitating communication within the parent community and liaising with the PMS Board. The SPG also raises funds to directly support the activities Selkirk Montessori School's students and organizes activities and events to support the roles outlined above. More information: <https://selkirkmontessori.ca/community/parent-group-spg>

## THANK YOU

- **Freezies Event** – Thank you to the teachers, admin and SPG volunteers for organizing and running our Freezies Drive By event on the last day of school in June!
- **Teacher appreciation**- Thank you to our SPG Vice Chair, Kate McKenzie for spearheading the coordination of our teacher appreciation gifts at the end of the year and to the class reps for coming up with creative ways to make beautiful cards that all the families and children could contribute to.
- **Class Reps** - Thank you to all the wonderful parents who volunteered to continue as Class Representatives this year! We are looking for Kindergarten/Preschool Class Reps for: Chickadee AM, Chickadee PM, Chickadee Full Day, Hummingbird AM, Hummingbird Full Day and Eagle Full Day and Cormorant Class Rep this year. Description of Class rep duties: assist teachers in communicating information on specific events held in the class or school to the rest of the families in the class; welcome new students and families to the class; act as a conduit between parents and SPG. Class reps are encouraged to attend monthly SPG meetings (which this year will be via Zoom).

## WHAT'S NEW

**SPG meeting and orientation** - Thursday, Sept 10<sup>th</sup> 7-8:30 via zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84763137015?pwd=bzdDU2YyK0p2YzdVaTU2M0NUNUVHUT09>

Meeting ID: 847 6313 7015, Passcode: 005430

**Introducing.... Hot Dinners!** To fortify our families and keep our school safe, the hot lunch program is transitioning to a Hot Dinner program during the first term of this school year. We are working with a small group of vendors to provide healthy and delicious dinner options in family size servings, with the possibility of leftovers for lunches the next day! Look for information emails coming shortly. Orders will be taken starting Monday, September 14th.

**Wiser WASH** by Draught WISE fundraiser offering eco-sensitive sanitizing and disinfecting products – coming soon!

## HELP WANTED

If you are interested in getting involved in the SPG it's a great way to get to know other parents and staff at the school. Currently we are looking for SPG Communications rep, Volunteer coordinator, Fundraising rep, Hot Lunch & Dinner volunteers (contact [selkirkhotlunch@gmail.com](mailto:selkirkhotlunch@gmail.com)) and Art Cards coordinator, Website coordinator and K/P class reps.

Looking for creative and safe ways to build Selkirk school community connections!

If you'd like more information about volunteering with the SPG, please contact us at [SPG@selkirkmontessori.ca](mailto:SPG@selkirkmontessori.ca).

**BUSINESS NAME**

2970 Jutland Road  
Victoria, BC  
V8Y 2T3

Phone: 555-555-5555

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Email: someone@example.com

***We can make a difference.***

[www.selkirkmontessori.ca](http://www.selkirkmontessori.ca)



Special thanks to former parent, Kanne Arbour-Bohme, for changing out our old, broken wooden flower boxes for these spiffy new ceramic ones!

## Dates to Remember

- September 22—Parent Orientation (online) - more information to come from the teachers
- September 28—Non-Instructional Day (no school for children)
- October 12—Thanksgiving Day (school closed)
- October 13—Individual Student Photos

Selkirk Montessori School is located on the traditional territories of the Ləkʷəŋən people, today known as the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations.

We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory.

