

September Kindergarten Connection

"Through God, all things are possible."



September 2015

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We have had a wonderful beginning to our school year! Our staggered entry and first weeks of class went very smoothly. The children are transitioning nicely to our program and routines are being established. I am very excited to be their teacher and look forward to getting to know them and all of you more closely.

▪ **All About Me:**

I was born and raised in Yellowknife, NT, and received my Bch. of Education from the University of Alberta. My husband and I moved to Red Deer in 1992 at which time I joined Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools as a high school teacher. The rest is history! I have been with the Division ever since, and although I have taught all grade levels, my true passion is teaching children in their early years. The first Kindergarten class I taught graduated many years ago, so I've been doing this for a while! Although there are some days when I feel my age, teaching Kindergarten allows me to remain "young at heart"!

My family has been blessed with 4 wonderful children, all of whom attended St. Elizabeth Seton School. I couldn't be more pleased with the wonderful start they got here. It is a privilege for me to work amongst such talented and caring individuals. As my own children have left me and their "Seton nest" to move on to middle and high school as

well as college, I can really appreciate the separation anxiety some of you may be feeling as your first or last child enters Kindergarten and says goodbye to you at the door each day!

Thank you for choosing St. Elizabeth Seton as your child's school. I know we are going to have a fantastic year together!

Blessings to everyone!
Mrs. Abell



<u>Kindergarten Hours of Operation:</u>	<u>AM Class</u>	<u>PM Class</u>
▪ Embedded PD Monday:	8:45-11:15	11:50-2:22
▪ Tuesday-Friday:	8:45-11:45	12:40-3:32

Mrs. Abell's Kindergarten Team:

- Mrs. Ozga - Classroom Educational Assistant (a.m. & p.m. classes)
- Mrs. Watkins - Division 1 Inclusion Teacher
- Mrs. Tuchscherer - Music Teacher (a.m. class)
- Worship & Praise Teacher (p.m. class)
- Mrs. Fenton - Learning Commons Librarian
- Mrs. Kelly - School Counsellor
- Mrs. Armstrong - Principal
- Mrs. Pottage - Assistant Principal
- Kindergarten Parents 😊



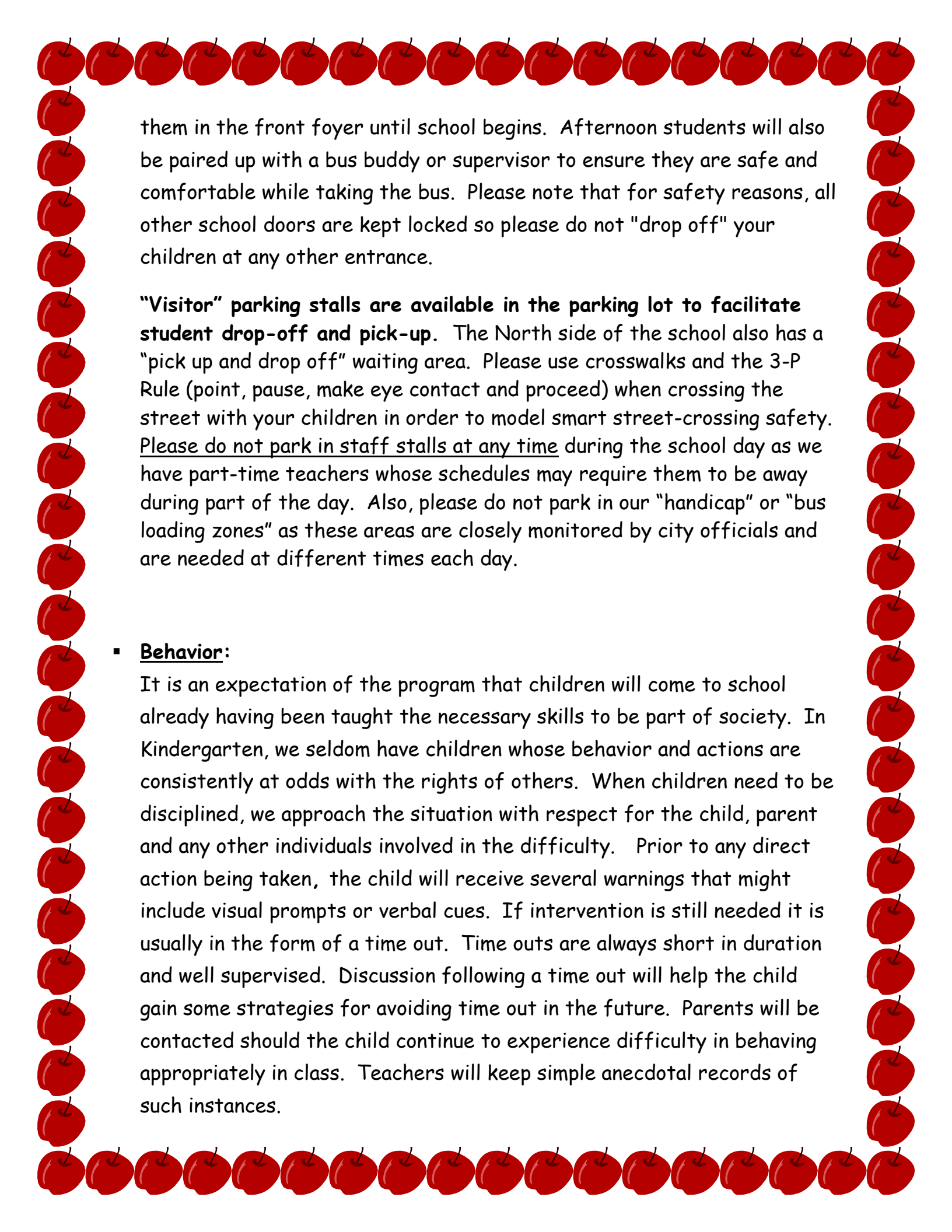


- Curriculum, Teaching Style and Philosophy:

Our Kindergarten programs strive to provide opportunities for the development of the whole child: spiritually, emotionally, creatively, culturally, physically, socially and intellectually within the framework of the curriculum dictated by Alberta Learning. In addition to this, we will use the catechism *In God's Image* to help shape our work and play. Religious Studies will be purposely integrated into daily lessons. Prayer and the teachings of Jesus will permeate all that we learn and do.

- Routines:

The Kindergarten students will focus on learning school and classroom routines during their first week of school. After just a few days together we are able to progress through more elements of our day and participate in more activities. Soon, we will begin using other areas of the school such as the Gym, Playground and Learning Commons. Thanks to all parents and guardians for their patience with our transitions both in and out of the classroom. We are doing our best to accommodate and find a comfortable home for all of our Seton students. Because there are so many children and parents using the front door, it is important for parents to stay with their children until the teacher arrives and opens the door. **To reduce congestion in the classroom boot room, I would like to encourage parents and siblings to say goodbye to the students in the school foyer so that only the Kindergarten children need to enter the boot room and put their things away.** Independence and responsibility are two very important skills we are developing throughout the school year. Allowing children to be responsible for finding and putting away their own shoes, coats, backpacks, library books and agendas will go a long way to developing the self-help and organizational skills needed to be successful in school. Students from the morning class who arrive on the bus will be paired up with an older "bus buddy" to stay with



them in the front foyer until school begins. Afternoon students will also be paired up with a bus buddy or supervisor to ensure they are safe and comfortable while taking the bus. Please note that for safety reasons, all other school doors are kept locked so please do not "drop off" your children at any other entrance.

"Visitor" parking stalls are available in the parking lot to facilitate student drop-off and pick-up. The North side of the school also has a "pick up and drop off" waiting area. Please use crosswalks and the 3-P Rule (point, pause, make eye contact and proceed) when crossing the street with your children in order to model smart street-crossing safety. Please do not park in staff stalls at any time during the school day as we have part-time teachers whose schedules may require them to be away during part of the day. Also, please do not park in our "handicap" or "bus loading zones" as these areas are closely monitored by city officials and are needed at different times each day.

▪ **Behavior:**

It is an expectation of the program that children will come to school already having been taught the necessary skills to be part of society. In Kindergarten, we seldom have children whose behavior and actions are consistently at odds with the rights of others. When children need to be disciplined, we approach the situation with respect for the child, parent and any other individuals involved in the difficulty. Prior to any direct action being taken, the child will receive several warnings that might include visual prompts or verbal cues. If intervention is still needed it is usually in the form of a time out. Time outs are always short in duration and well supervised. Discussion following a time out will help the child gain some strategies for avoiding time out in the future. Parents will be contacted should the child continue to experience difficulty in behaving appropriately in class. Teachers will keep simple anecdotal records of such instances.

During our first weeks of school we learned classroom rules such as:

- Always do your best.
- Be kind to others and yourself.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Raise your hand if you have something to say.
- Line up one behind the other and stay together.
"Eyes forward, marshmallow feet, hips and lips."
- Watch out for each other.

We hope you can review these simple rules with your child. Thanks!



▪ **Birthday Celebrations:**

A suggestion from previous experience is that birthday invitations not be handed out during class time. Each child has their own mailbox where such notes can be delivered more discretely. Children at this age have a hard time dealing with being "left out" and this process helps to minimize these feelings. **At the end of each month we will have a class celebration for students whose birthdays have occurred that month.** There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board outside of our classroom for parents who would like to bring cupcakes, juice or other special treats for these celebrations. Please ensure they are "nut-free" and remember to include an ingredient list with them. August and September birthdays will be celebrated together in September. Similarly we will celebrate June and July birthdays together in June.

Our first Birthday Celebration will be on Wednesday, September 30th.

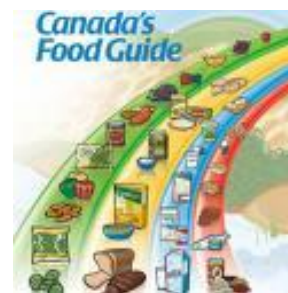
▪ **Class Lists:**

Many parents find it helpful to have a class list that has student and parent names and their telephone numbers in order to arrange play dates or reschedule parent helper days. This list will be made available as soon as everyone has given consent. If for some reason you do not want any or all of this information included, please notify the teacher on the data collection note which is sent home. Please also ensure that this personal information is only used for Kindergarten purposes.



▪ **Snack:**

Children will bring their own snack in a clearly labeled lunch bag/kit every day. When we have snack together we are learning to pray and break bread with one another as Jesus did. We are also stopping to nourish our bodies after working and playing at school. A third important reason to have snack is to learn more about good nutrition. As such, I ask that you follow the daily food designation for snack time. Each day of the week has been assigned one of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide. "Empty calorie" snacks should be reserved for Fridays. The food groups for each day are as follows:



- **Monday - Breads & Cereals Day (Grains)**
- **Tuesday - Fruits & Vegetables Day**
- **Wednesday - Meats & Alternates Day**
- **Thursday - Milk & Milk Products Day**
- **Friday - Children's Choice (This should include a healthy choice, but a "treat" can be added.)**

Please remember that snack time truly should be "just a snack". Children should only be bringing 1 or 2 small items to eat. We only have about 10 minutes each day for this activity; they socialize for part of this time. This is not enough time for young children to eat a whole sandwich, fruit and

treat. **Please keep snacks small.** Children should be eating breakfast or lunch at home before coming to school and use this snack time as a quick energy boost. Food should be child friendly (bite size) and ready to eat. If children cannot peel their own oranges or like their apples cut up this needs to be prepared for them at home. Thanks!

* **Please send a small container of water to school every day.** Juice boxes, pop, and other sugary drinks prove to be messy, wasteful and less healthy choices. Even reluctant water drinkers learn to love this refreshing gift from God by the end of the year if parents stick to our "**water only**" rule. Exceptions: 100% fruit & vegetable juice can be sent on Tuesdays and milk can be sent on Thursdays as they fit our food group categories.

* * **ALLERGY ALERT!!!** Our school strives to be a "nut-free" facility. Please read ready-made and processed snacks carefully to avoid sending "nutty" products to school. Parents will be advised of other "keep away" foods should other allergens exist. **Please alert myself and the school secretary of any severe (anaphylactic shock) allergies your child may have.** We also require a note from your pediatrician outlining the nature of the allergy and course of action to be taken should a reaction occur while at school. Division Policy requires all children with anaphylactic allergies to wear Medic-Alert bracelets clearly outlining their condition. See Mrs. Abell to find out how you can obtain one of these bracelets for your child free of charge. Thank you in advance for your understanding and compliance with this policy.



*** Please also note that according to Division Policy all snacks that are to be shared amongst students for any school function must be accompanied by a "list of ingredients". Thank you!



▪ **Parent Volunteers:**

Parents are an integral part of our Kindergarten program. It is appreciated if we can have a parent helper in the room each day. Every 3 months, calendars will be posted for parents to choose their helper days. Parent helpers will not be scheduled during September or June; however there will still be opportunities for parents to participate in field trips and other school events. If you are unable to sign up for a helper day, one will be assigned to you. If your scheduled day conflicts with your personal/work schedule please feel free to change days with another parent or have another adult that is close to your child take your place. Please indicate such changes on the parent bulletin board calendar. (Please plan ahead and **remember that all volunteers need to have a criminal record check on file in order to help out both in the classroom or on fieldtrips.**) Your child becomes the "special friend" on days that you are the "parent helper" so it is important to them and me that you participate in our program whenever possible. Having said that, as a working parent myself, I fully understand that it is not always possible for parents to volunteer in the classroom. Your child will still be my "special friend and helper" even if you are not there. ☺

Parent Helper Sign-Up sheets for the months of October, November and December will be posted on the bulletin board outside of the Kindergarten classroom. In order to assist me in scheduling helpers, parents are asked to **sign up for one helper day per designated block.** (You should be able to sign up about once per month.) **As some parents do not have the same last name as their child it is helpful to me if you just put your child's name on the calendar.** If possible, try to sign up on different days of the week each month so that you can see a different part of our weekly schedule.

Please also note that I have posted **parent sign-up sheets** for making **Play-Doh** and assisting with classroom **laundry** such as dish cloths and paint shirts once or twice a month. I have included a Play-Doh recipe in this newsletter.

[Activity Village: Play-Dough Recipe](#) (click on the link)*

*I **double the recipe** when I make play dough for the class. I also use Kool-Aid juice packets to give it colour and essence.



[Play Dough Recipe](#) (double the recipe for Kindergarten)

1 cup plain (all-purpose) flour

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt

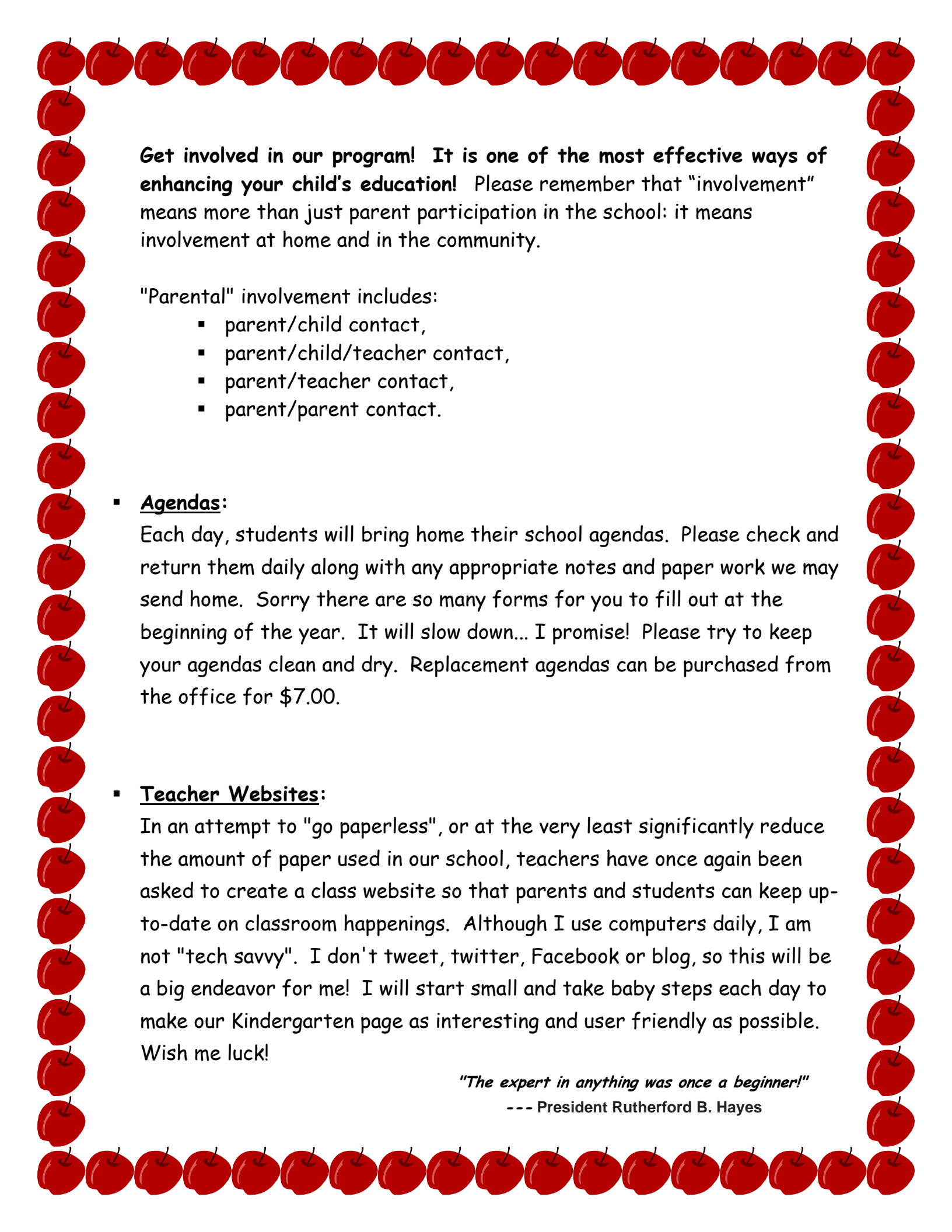
2 tablespoons cream of tartar

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 cup boiling water with food colouring added

1 teaspoon vanilla essence (Optional, but it makes the play dough smell nice!)

- Put all the ingredients into a large saucepan, and stir over a medium heat until the dough forms into a ball. Allow to cool, and then knead until smooth.
- Wait until the dough is completely cool before placing it in an airtight container or it will sweat and get sticky. (A large Ziploc bag with the air pressed out of it works well for storage.)



Get involved in our program! It is one of the most effective ways of enhancing your child's education! Please remember that "involvement" means more than just parent participation in the school: it means involvement at home and in the community.

"Parental" involvement includes:

- parent/child contact,
- parent/child/teacher contact,
- parent/teacher contact,
- parent/parent contact.

▪ **Agendas:**

Each day, students will bring home their school agendas. Please check and return them daily along with any appropriate notes and paper work we may send home. Sorry there are so many forms for you to fill out at the beginning of the year. It will slow down... I promise! Please try to keep your agendas clean and dry. Replacement agendas can be purchased from the office for \$7.00.

▪ **Teacher Websites:**

In an attempt to "go paperless", or at the very least significantly reduce the amount of paper used in our school, teachers have once again been asked to create a class website so that parents and students can keep up-to-date on classroom happenings. Although I use computers daily, I am not "tech savvy". I don't tweet, twitter, Facebook or blog, so this will be a big endeavor for me! I will start small and take baby steps each day to make our Kindergarten page as interesting and user friendly as possible. Wish me luck!

"The expert in anything was once a beginner!"

--- President Rutherford B. Hayes

▪ **Contact Me:**

Messages can be left for me on:

- Voicemail at 403-343-6017
- Email at emma.abell@rdcrs.ca
- via note in your child's agenda or on the
- Clipboard outside of the classroom.*



* **Please use the clipboard to communicate daily changes to pick-up**

people or schedules as we do not usually have time to check voice or email messages until the end of class. The clipboard serves as a handy reference and is checked daily before dismissal. Notes in student agendas also work well if you know of changes in advance. Thanks!

▪ **September Events:**

- ✚ **Tuesday-Wednesday, September 1-3 - Staggered Entry**
- ✚ **Wednesday, September 3 - Meet and Greet the "Cool" Staff at Seton** (Seton teachers serving ice cream outside their classrooms) 6:30-7:30 p.m.
- ✚ **Friday, September 4 - Regular Kindergarten classes begin**
 - **Opening School Mass** - 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary's Church (no combined class this day)
- ✚ **Monday, September 7 - Labour Day Holiday - No School**
- ✚ **Wednesday, September 9 - "Sportball Demo Day" in the gym** (p.m. class only)
- ✚ **Thursday, September 10 - Mrs. Abell away at Montfort Centre for Kindergarten Teacher Professional Development** (Both classes will have a Guest Teacher this day.)



✚ **Monday, September 14 - Embedded PD - Early dismissal and start times: AM Class - 8:45-11:15
PM Class - 11:50-2:22**

- 1st School Council Meeting of the Year:
7:00 p.m. in the school library - All parents welcome! **Each class is required to have 2 Room Reps.** Please sign up if interested. Sign up posters are located in the main school foyer, on the east office wall.
Thanks!

✚ **Friday, September 18 - Lifetouch School Portraits Picture Day - Practice smiling at home! 😊**

✚ **Monday, September 21 - Embedded PD - Early dismissal and start times: AM Class - 8:45-11:15
PM Class - 11:50-2:22**

✚ **Wednesday, September 23 - Motivational Magic Show; 1-2 p.m.**

✚ **Monday, September 28 - Embedded PD - Early dismissal and start times: AM Class - 8:45-11:15
PM Class - 11:50-2:22**

✚ **Wednesday, September 30 - August & September Birthday Celebration - Treat sign-up list is located on the parent bulletin board outside of the classroom.**

*** Transportation Request: We have a parent with a child in the A.M. Class that is in need of transportation to/from school for their child. Please see Mrs. Abell if you know of any parent/individual that may be able to help out in this regard. Thank you!

▪ **End Note:**

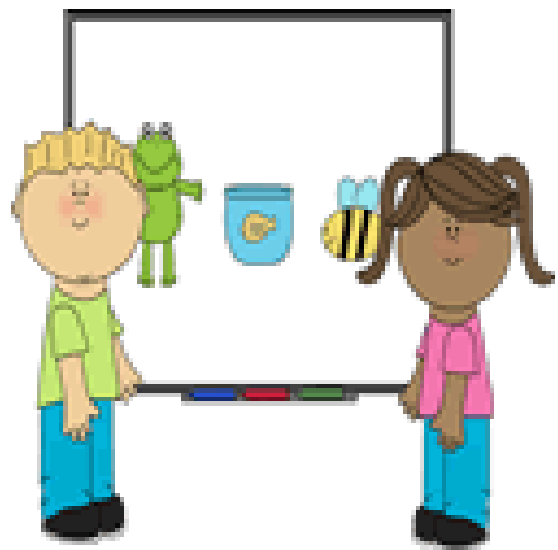
In our Kindergarten program we maintain six critical life messages as outlined by Barbara Coloroso (educator and consultant) and they are:

1. I believe in you.
2. I trust you.
3. I know you can handle life's situations.
4. You are listened to.
5. You are cared for.
6. You are very important to me.

I was fortunate to have the following poem given to me by a fellow educator and mentor. When I read it again I realized that it was one to be shared with my Kindergarten parents. I will do my very best to be the best that I can be for your children. I hope you enjoy this poem as much as I did. It is my conviction to treat your child like I would like you to treat mine. I am looking forward to a great year of learning.

Respectfully yours in Catholic Education,

Mrs. Emma Abell



Take my Son by the Hand

My son starts school today. It's all going to be strange and new for him for a while - and I wish you could sort of treat him gently. You see, up to now he's been kind of the ruler of the roost. He's been boss of the backyard. I have always been handy to soothe his feelings.

But now, things are going to be different. This morning he's going to walk down the front step, wave his hand and start on his great adventure, which might include wars and tragedy and sorrow. To live his life in the world he has to live in will require faith and love and courage. So, teacher, I wish you would sort of take him by his young hand and teach him the things he will have to know.

Teach him - but gently. He will have to learn. I know, that all men are not just, that all men are not true. Teach him that for every scoundrel there is a hero; that for every crooked politician there is a dedicated leader. Teach him for every enemy there is a friend. Let him learn early that bullies are the easiest people to lick.

Teach him the wonders of books. Give him quiet time to ponder the eternal mystery of birds in the sky, bees in the trees and flowers on a green hill.

Teach him that it is far more honorable to fail than to cheat. Teach him to have faith in his own ideas, even if everyone tells him they are wrong.

Try to give my child the strength not to follow the crowd when everyone else is getting on the bandwagon. Teach him to listen to all men, but to filter all he hears on a screen of truth and to take only the good that comes through. Teach him to sell his brawn and his brains to the highest bidder, but never to put a price tag on his heart and soul. Teach him to close his ears to a howling mob, and to stand and fight if he thinks he is right.

Teach him gently, but don't coddle him - because only the test of fire makes fine steel. This is a big order, teacher, but see what you can do.

He is such a nice little fellow, my son.

--- Author Unknown

