 **ÉCOLE ÉLÉMENTAIRE ALFRED B. DIXON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

 9331 Diamond Road, Richmond, B.C. V7E 1P5

 “**Working Together, Learning Together, Growing Together”**

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Ms. K. Wallace, Principal/Directrice Ms. C. Orzen, Vice Principal/Directrice adjointe

**September 9, 2022**

**WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL**

Dear Dragon Families,

We are extremely excited to share the District has approved our organization and that our students have moved into their classes this morning.

As we move into the start of the new school year, first and foremost in the minds of many parents and children is that of class placements. We want to take this opportunity to provide you with some background information that we hope you will find useful.

The process of creating classes begin in May the previous school year, and the process is ongoing until students are permanently placed in September of the following school year. Some parents may think that this is a random process, but, in actuality, a great deal of thought, reflection and collaborative planning goes into the setting of classes. Teachers and Administrators think deeply about which students will work well with others, the strengths and stretches of each child, and how they will best meet the social, emotional and academic needs of each child within a diverse group of students.

Coupled with this, the Ministry of Education sets clear guidelines around class size and composition, and our schools must comply to these guidelines. The process of creating classes is a complex issue and is at the forefront of our teachers’ priorities.

In most schools, requests for information from parents are asked for in April or early May, and although we do not invite requests for individual teachers, there may be learning, health, social, or emotional concerns that the school needs to be made aware of.

These requests may be taken into consideration, but it is not always possible to honor every request, for every child, every year. At the end of the day, the final responsibility of class placement lies with the school administration.

In rare cases, parents/caregivers remain concerned about their child’s placement. It may help to remember that our school staff members are experienced professionals, with a perspective that differs from that of parents. Educators spend five hours a day in class settings with their students, and so the school is the environment where teachers have academic expertise. Teachers invest a great deal of thought and energy into putting students together for optimal learning environments, and that is why your child’s school will support the school-based decisions that are made.

What if, your child is concerned about their placement? The first step might be to consider doing nothing – in most cases, when the parent has an open mind, this helps ease the anxiety of the child. One strategy is to acknowledge their concern and anxiety and reassure them that their feelings around a new class and a new teacher is normal and experienced by most students.

Another useful strategy is to give it some time. Before making assumptions or jumping to conclusions, giving your child a minimum of a week to settle in can make a huge difference. Almost always, once they have had time to bond with their teacher and classmates, concerns resolve themselves on their own.

Perhaps the most important message we can give to parents is to talk to your child’s new teacher. They can give you an accurate picture of how your child is adjusting in the classroom. Working together with your child’s teacher will help to optimize your child’s learning experience and build connections and trust.

Finally, please try to remember that some children are more sensitive to change, and September can be especially challenging. These children can be highly impacted by the emotions of their parents and guardians. You can help your child adapt to new situations by remaining calm and reassuring them that it is normal to be nervous or uncertain, but that you believe in their ability to work through their emotions. Telling your child “I know you can handle this, and your teacher is here to support you” will help to build your child’s resiliency and ensure that the are able to adapt to the changes that are a natural part of life.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child’s teacher or myself or Ms. Orzen.

To facilitate after school, pick up, all Primary students in grade 1 – 3 will be dismissed from the gym this afternoon. Parents of Primary students – grade 1 – 3, come to the gym to pick up their child. Intermediate, grade 4 – 7 French Program students will be dismissed from the South basketball court, and our Neighborhood Intermediate students will dismissed from the North Basketball court.

Our Resource Team will be outside to direct parents to the correct pick spot after school.

First Pizza Day is up on Munch a Lunch – please order before September 12th for our first pizza day on September 16th.

We are looking forward to an exciting new school year full of connections, growth and learning.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Ms. Wallace, Ms. Orzen and The Dixon Staff

***One important note for our students with serious allergies:*** *Parents with a student that requires an epipen, please see the email from* *dixon@sd38.bc.ca* *containing two attachments, a “Request for Administration of Medication at School” form and,* ***a Medical Action Safety Plan was emailed to parents last week – please update with contact information and return to*** ***dixon@sd38.bc.ca****This form* ***must be completed*** *every September. Please connect with your child’s teachers to let the teachers know where the child’s epipen is located. Please ensure your child is also aware the Epipen location. Please add an orange identify tag to your child’s backpack with the word “Epipen” on the tag. We wish to ensure the location of the epipen is visible to all staff and to the student.*