



## 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

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**September 8, 2023**

### WELCOME BACK TO SCHOOL!

Dear Dragon Families,

We are incredibly excited to share that the District has approved our class 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 around class placements that we hope you will find useful.

The process of creating classes begins in May of 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 randomized process, but 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 with 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 honour 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 we appreciate your support of our thoughtful school-based decisions.

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 they 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.

**\*\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*\*** To facilitate after school pick up, please see below important notes about pick up/dismissal location:

- **All Primary students in grades 1 – 3/4 will be dismissed from the gym this afternoon, Sept 8th.** Parents/Guardians, please come to the gym to pick up your child.
- **French Immersion Intermediate (grades 4-7) students will be dismissed from the South basketball court (gym hallway)**
- **Neighborhood Intermediate (grades 4-7) students will be dismissed from the North Basketball court (library hallway)**

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

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

**IMPORTANT note for our students with serious allergies:** Parents/guardians with a student who requires an EpiPen, please be on the lookout for an email from the office ([dixon@sd38.bc.ca](mailto:dixon@sd38.bc.ca)) containing two attachments, a **Request for Administration of Medication at School** form and, a **Medical Action Safety Plan**. If you are a returning student/family, you may have already filled out this form – you may receive your last year's **Safety Plan** with your child's notice package for your review and signature. These forms **must be completed** every September. Please

communicate with your child's teachers to let the teachers know where your child's EpiPen is located. Please ensure your child is also aware of the EpiPen location and please add an orange 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 students.