

Published 2009

Muheim Memorial Elementary School Handbook





Welcome to Muheim Elementary School

The staff at Muheim would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our community and share with you some of the things that we think will enhance your student's participation. In the included pages is all kinds of information which we hope you will find beneficial. If, as you read through this handbook, you find areas where there could be clarification or perhaps more information, please let the school know so we can make any necessary changes for future editions.

School Philosophy (success isn't an accident)

Muheim Elementary is dedicated to the learning of our students both academically and socially. We believe that we, our staff, parents and community, can improve the life chances for our students by increasing their ability to think and reason. Strong students do not happen by accident, but are the result of a planned education built upon sound practices. To do this, we work on three main objectives: to teach the structures of learning, the strategies of learning and the communication of learning. At Muheim, we explicitly teach the structures of learning; how to connect to material, process material, change oneself in accordance material and finally to reflect on success and mistakes to improve learning efficiency and effectiveness. We also teach students the strategies of learning: how to use imaging, make inferences, determine importance of materials and find big ideas. Finally, we also teach students to communicate their understandings in a variety of ways. Of course we focus on writing but students also show their learning by improving their behaviour, improving their health and eating habits and working with a variety of technology tools. Student success is no accident at Muheim but rather the result of a goal oriented process focussed on individual students and their needs.

Excellent Behaviour (also isn't an accident)

Muheim Elementary staff and students work hard to exemplify our school behaviour code: at Muheim we take care of ourselves, each other, our school and our world. The students of Muheim Elementary school maintain very high standards of behaviour on a day-to-day basis. They are assisted by the behaviour team in the school which includes the principal, vice principal and learning support staff. Minor behaviour incidents are usually dealt with at the classroom level by the child's teacher (see *Muheim Elementary Student Management Policy* near the end of this handbook). Occasionally, students may need the help of the principal or vice principal to improve their behaviour. Anytime the principal speaks with a student their parents will be notified with a phone call. Behaviour which is impactful on the learning environment or on other students, may result in suspension or enrolment in the Blue Book Home School Support program. This time away from school allows the learning environment to be re-established. Positive behaviour enhances the school environment and improves the academic performance of students. Anytime you wish to discuss the behaviour or performance of your child, don't hesitate to contact the school.

A Guide to the School Communication

Over the years there has been a strong surge from both the home and school to keep both parties informed about the progress of children in various areas of academic and social development. For communication to be effective, it must take place frequently and be honest and open. If both the home and school are informed about events that are transpiring in a child's life, we are in a better position to be sure that there is a consistency when dealing with situations



as they arise. On the school's part, the staff will be encouraged to contact you, when concerns arise. The staff will also be encouraged to contact you about some of the positive things that are happening here at school for your children as well. If between reporting periods or between conversations with your child's teacher you feel that some aspect of your child's education needs addressing, please contact the teacher directly to arrange an interview. Face to face meetings rather than telephone conversations are suggested when discussing problems. Telephone conversations tend to be less effective when all communication signals need to be working. An elementary school is a complex organisation made of families with diverse backgrounds, lifestyles, standards, and philosophies. The staff vary as well in their approach to life. Children are assigned to teachers and a solid attempt is made to provide a good match but it is easy to understand and even to expect that there will be misunderstandings. When you have a concern it is important that the concern be taken quickly and directly to the teacher for discussion.

Formation of Classes

Each school year, teachers and support staff are involved in the process of making educational judgments about the class placement of each individual student. Classes at Muheim are formed to provide for the educational needs of the children in the best possible way and to take optimal advantage of the resources available. Classes formed are either composite classes with two year levels or single year classes. Because teachers educate children according to their individual needs, each class arrangement is equally valid and provides a quality educational environment for the children. When forming classes, teachers take into account the academic, and social needs of each child, and the progression of children from Kindergarten through grade 7. Other factors considered are:

- the total enrolment and numbers of children in each year level
- class sizes clustering around 22 in Kindergarten, 24 in primary and 30 in intermediate
 - social and academic distribution of children across classes
 - friendship groups
 - gender balance in each class
 - parent requests for special placement
 - working groups
 - special placement needs

Classes formed and the children in each, will reflect the best possible combination, taking into account the factors listed above.

Attendance

Attendance at school develops an attitude about its importance and sets a tone, in the long run, about how students approach work responsibly. We also know that attendance patterns are often set in the early primary years. If parents allow children to stay home for reasons other than illness at this early stage, then those students tend to miss a significant number of days later on in school. Add up the total number of missed days over the years and its effects on the child's attitude and education can be seen. If your child will not be attending school due to illness or a scheduled appointment, please contact the school (250 847-2688) in the morning. If not contacted the school will attempt to call you to determine the whereabouts of your child. Students who arrive late should check in at the office before proceeding to class.



Coming to School

It is important that children come directly from home to school and return home by the shortest safe route. Students within walking distance of the school need to be particularly vigilante and walk on the appropriate shoulder / sidewalk.

Bus Students

Bus routes and times are available from the school office and the school district website www.sd54.bc.ca. At the end of the day students wait for the bus with a supervisor. If students are not taking the bus home they must let their teacher know so they can be marked off the bus list.

Student Conduct on Buses

The School Board views that a bus is an extension of the school and requires students to conduct themselves on the bus in a manner consistent with established standards for classroom behaviour. Students taking the bus to and from Muheim are advised to be at the designated pick up points a few minutes early each day. Students who regularly take the bus need parent permission if they intend to not take the bus home. A note or phone call to the office is required. Parents of older students who routinely might choose to visit a friend after school etc. may work out a suitable arrangements with the classroom teacher.

Leaving School During the Day

No child will be given permission to leave the school premises during the day unless a signed dated note has been received from the parent or a suitable alternative arrangement has been made in person. We ask that parents needing to collect children during the day to please:

- make sure the child knows the time you are coming;
- send a note to the teacher; and
- **meet the child in the school.**

During school hours, students may only be picked up inside the school.

School Supplies

It is important that each child has the materials he/she needs to fully participate in the learning experiences provided by their teacher. This ensures that each student has the exact learning tools needed. Information about school supplies is sent home at the end of each year and is always available from the office or teachers. If you are having difficulty providing school supplies for your child, please let a staff member know. Kindergarten students do not need to bring school supplies as the school provides these.

School Lunches

New research is pointing to the connection between healthy eating and general school performance. Students are required to bring nutritious lunches and snacks for their own consumption. A dedicated group of staff members provide a donation supported breakfast and snack program to supplement the home supplied meals when and where necessary. The program is supported by Safeway, community groups and by the generous donations of parents. At lunch time, sharing and trading food is not promoted due to the possibility of food allergies and other complications. Students who either have forgotten their



lunches or do not have enough food at home will be provided for at school by our breakfast program.

Update of Information

If your address or phone number (home/work) should change, please inform the school at the earliest opportunity. This ensures that contact can be made easily and quickly should the need arise. Should changes in family circumstances (including death of a close relative) occur, or should the child have a specific medical problem, class teachers should be advised. Social and academic performance can be affected by changing circumstances. When the teacher is aware, the situation can be handled with sensitivity.

Student Dress Code

It is important for students to not be unreasonably restricted from their learning. Clothing or personal items which act as a distraction to the student or a classmate will not be allowed.

Electronics

It is recommended that students leave electronics and other valuables at home so that they do not interfere with the learning environment. Students who choose to bring electronic devices to the school are responsible for their safety and appropriate usage. Devices which are used inappropriately will be confiscated and may not be returned during the school year.

Medication

The school maintains a uniformly safe and efficient way of dispensing medications at school. If your child requires medication at school and you have not filled out the required form, "Medication and/or Treatment Data"(available at the school), it is imperative that you do so. The school can not assist with any medication unless this form is completed. This procedure complies with Board policy regarding medications to be taken at school. This form refers to medication taken on a regular or emergency basis. If an alternative arrangement is necessary please contact the office or classroom teacher.

Allergy Awareness

Please notify the school of any allergies or changes in allergies your child might have. For a copy of the Muheim Allergy Policy please ask at the office.

Illness or Accident

In the event of a child becoming ill during the day or having an accident, every attempt will be made to contact the parent or the emergency contact provided by the parents. Staff will seek professional medical assistance when necessary. In the unlikely event of a serious medical issue the school will contact emergency officials while contacting the parents.

Emergency Response Plan

Muheim Elementary, like other schools in District #54, has an Emergency Response Plan in place in the event that a serious threat is posed to the students. The plan is designed to account for and evacuate (if necessary) all students and school personnel. Please be sure that you have up to date emergency contact information filed with the school office.



Lockdown

Lockdown refers to an emergency procedure used in extreme situations to keep students safe. Fortunately, lockdowns are exceedingly rare and are only used when the safety or security of students and/or staff is directly threatened. If the school is in “lockdown”, immediate information can be obtained from the school board office (250) 877-6820. Please do not call the school as personnel will be busy following their prescribed duties. It is important in any emergency to keep clear of the school and to ensure that vehicles aren’t blocking the emergency access points around the school. An elementary school in British Columbia is statistically a very safe place. Staff and students practice emergency procedures to ensure that we are prepared for exceedingly rare events. If you have any questions about Muheim Elementary’s plans in case of emergency please contact the principal.

Homework

Parental responsibility is to provide a place and supervise a time when homework is done. Parents are not responsible for helping with the subject matter but, of course, if you can and if you wish to and it is a positive experience for you and your child, please help. If, however, it is a negative experience for you and/or your child, it is likely better “to stick with” providing a study place and supervising him/her. In grades 1 to 3 teachers may assign reading and other tasks. In grades 4 to 7 more work may be assigned on occasion. Unfinished class work may be in addition to regularly assigned homework. If not done, parents are requested to provide a written excuse. Homework is checked by the classroom teacher. If assignments are not being completed teachers will attempt to notify the parents as part of the reporting process. This and possibly a lower rate of achievement will be the main consequences for not completing homework.

Learning Assistance

From time to time students may require special assistance to help them with their learning. This assistance can be presented in a variety of ways. Students may leave their regular classroom and work individually or in small groups with the learning assistance teacher or one of the support teachers. Or, the support teachers may work with the students in their classroom. The length of time that students receive special assistance is completely dependent on the difficulties that an individual may encounter, and the progress that the student is making. This service is accessed through the classroom teacher. If you feel your child could use extra help in an academic area please contact your child’s teacher first to discuss areas that you feel need improving. Your child’s teacher may then make a referral for special assistance. At Muheim, student progress is monitored through “School Based Team” which includes the learner support teacher, educational assistant, principal and district personnel.

Information Technology

The school has a number of computers that are housed in the computer lab, classrooms and the library for students to use. Appropriate computer use is taught at all age levels and strict adherence is required.



Field Trips

Field Trips designed to stimulate student interest and inquiry and provide opportunities for social growth and development are considered appropriate extensions of the classroom. To be educationally beneficial, a field trip requires thoughtful selection, careful advanced preparation of the class or student group and opportunities for pupils to assimilate the experience during and at the conclusion of the trip. To this end, staff consider the following in the selection of field trips:

- Value of the activity to the particular class group or class groups;
- Relationship of the field trip activity to a particular aspect of classroom instruction;
- Suitability and safety of the activity and distance traveled;
- Mode and availability of transportation;
- Cost.

To assist the school in providing a greater number of field trip experiences there will be requests for monies for each child. Some families will not be able to afford the required amount and in these cases the school uses special funding to assist. To access special funding please talk to any school staff member.

Reporting

Provincial regulations for the reporting of student progress require that parents be provided with a minimum of three formal written reports and two informal contact opportunities each school year. Comments in student progress reports describe, in relation to curriculum:

- what the student is able to do;
- areas of learning that require further attention or development;
- ways the teacher is supporting the student's learning needs (and, where appropriate, ways the student or parents might support the learning.)

Criterion referenced letter grades in grades 4 to 12 indicate student's levels of performance as they relate to the expected learning outcomes set out in the provincial curricula. Letter grades are not required and generally considered inappropriate for grades Kindergarten to grade 3.

Promotion Policy

Promotion policies are changing in our schools. Evidence from a wide variety of research projects are very conclusive: Retention of students in school does not get the desired result. We know that learning does not progress evenly, it is more sporadic, happening in waves. If we are to achieve continuous progress with each student, retention or keeping a child at the same grade level rarely works. Some children will work more slowly than others and all children will plateau and spurt in their learning. If a child needs greater or lesser time to complete the primary or intermediate program, he/she will be accommodated, but generally students will be placed with their age appropriate peers.

Newsletters

Newsletters are sent home every month with every child in the school. Newsletters are also available on-line at www.sd54.bc.ca. Each newsletter brings you up to date information from around the school and the school district. It is important that parents regularly set aside time to read the newsletter. The



calendar section of the newsletter is very important to parents and students as it contains the schedule for upcoming events.

Parent Volunteers

Parents volunteering to help in the classroom, library, or at school functions are an integral part of Muheim Elementary. Please talk to your child's classroom teacher for more information and opportunities.

Parent Advisory Council

The Muheim Parent Advisory Council is a volunteer organisation composed of parents with children at the school. General meetings are monthly and are open to all parents. With any volunteer organisation, people willing to donate some of their time make up the heart and soul of the PAC. Parent volunteers are always welcome and invited to participate in the meetings and activities that the council organises.

CPF (Canadian Parents for French)

Muheim's chapter of CPF works to promote French language and cultural opportunities within our school and district. Contact information is available at the office or school web site.

Extra-curricular Activities

Students at Muheim have traditionally participated in large numbers in all major School District athletic and academic events. Teams or groups have been coached and sponsored by volunteer staff members, often with valuable parent assistance. If you wish to volunteer to coach or assist in some way, contact the school or PAC.

Extra Curricular opportunities include:

Sample Sports include: soccer, volleyball, basketball, track and field, ultimate frisbee and a new addition, disc golf.

Sample service opportunities include: breakfast program, recycling program, canteen, laptop monitors, recess monitors, office helpers, and video techs.

Being involved in school activities positively impacts a student's academic growth. Encourage your students to be involved in school activities.



MUHEIM ELEMENTARY Code of Conduct and STUDENT MANAGEMENT POLICY

The following pages outline how staff are asked to handle discipline matters throughout the school. In some cases, teachers may need to make differing decisions but will do so in the general framework of the concepts below.

Aims of the Student Management Policy

To create an environment in which teachers can exercise their right to teach and children can exercise their right to learn, without interruption. To assist children to make responsible choices about their behaviour and to accept the consequences of those choices. To implement an approach to behavioural problems which is consistent throughout the school and is understood by the total school community while reflecting individual and situational differences including: age and abilities of students. To create a positive, non-adversarial climate within which children, teachers, and parents can work together to help children solve their problems in a creative, supportive, and non-threatening manner.

Guiding Principle

At Muheim we take care of ourselves, each other, our school and our World. Behaviour which does not support these 4 principles is not acceptable. Retaliation behaviour is also not acceptable.

Understanding Children's Behaviour

The Muheim Student Management Policy is based on proven methods practiced in schools around the province. Effective behaviour strategies typically are founded on principles developed by Dr. William Glasser which says that individual has five basic needs which must be satisfied if he/she is to lead a happy and contented life, or in other words, be in control of his/her life. These needs are: survival, love and belonging, fun and learning, freedom and choice, power and competition. All behaviour is geared to satisfying one or more of these needs. No individual has the right to satisfy their own needs at the expense of another person. This is a fundamental premise of the classroom situation and upholds the BC Human Rights Code against discrimination.

Total Behaviour

An understanding of the concept of total behaviour will assist when teachers and parents are counselling children. This concept asserts that behaviour has four components; thinking, doing, feeling, and physiology. We have no control over the physiological components (ie. butterflies, goose bumps) and little control over our feelings, which is a component that often leads us to have angry thoughts and do things which are socially unacceptable. The purpose of counselling is to lead the child to an understanding that a choice can be made about what to do and think, and to point out that some actions are more acceptable and achieve more satisfying results in the long term. With most children, it will not be necessary to proceed through the full analysis as the cause of the behaviour will be identified easily and working through steps one to four will resolve the problem. However, in more serious and persistent cases, the necessary time must be spent if there is to be a satisfactory outcome for both the child and the teacher. It is at this point that the assistance of an appropriate member of the school based team should be sought. If further help is required the Principal will involve the school counsellor in the case.



Taking Action

Steps to Create the Environment

These steps are the most important in the program. Carried out regularly, these steps will create a positive, non-adversarial environment where the majority of children will act in a cooperative way. Teachers carefully and honestly analyse the classroom situation on a regular basis taking this policy and the guidelines into account, to see if what is happening in the classroom is what you really want. Teachers regularly analyse your relationship with each child. Teachers show the child that you really care by doing something enjoyable with him/her at a time when he/she is not in trouble. Teachers get to know the child as an individual - share their interests so the child gets to know you. Catch the child doing something good. Regularly they review their knowledge of each child. Periodically they go through their class list and see what they know about each child's interest and life outside school.

Management Steps for teachers- Classroom

After a child has broken a school or class rule, the following steps should be followed. It is important that as a general rule no step should be omitted. Only in very exceptional cases, where the child has repeatedly failed to respond, and has subsequently been informed that as a consequence certain steps may be omitted the next time a rule has been infringed, would the sequence be broken.

Step One

When the student disrupts, use any of the strategies you have found effective for stopping minor infringements. For example, stand near, look directly at the child, use "I" statements, or ask him/her quietly and respectfully to stop. If you have built up a positive relationship this may be enough.

Step Two

If a child fails to respond ask quietly but firmly;

"What are you doing?"

When the child answers, ask;

"Is that acceptable?"

This gives the child the opportunity to acknowledge he/she is engaging in an inappropriate behaviour in terms of the school or class rules. This is the first step in which you start to place responsibility for the student's behaviour where it belongs - with the student. If the child fails to respond, state the behaviour and that it is against the rules.

Step Three

If the disruption continues say to the child;

"Your behaviour is against the rules and is stopping others from working/learning.

If you continue with this behaviour you will have to work somewhere else. What are you going to do?"

If there is an unsatisfactory response, ask the child to go to the time out area in the class, saying to him/her; "We will have to work this out", or "We will have to make a plan".

Step Four

This is the counselling step and is critical in terms of correction. If you have developed a positive relationship then you will have more success with this step. Work with the child at a time convenient for you and at a time and place which will not cause the child embarrassment or give him/her the opportunity to gain the attention of peers. The plan must be positive. State precisely what the child is going to do, not what he/she won't do. The plan must have a reasonable chance of succeeding. It should be small and simple, not an attempt to address several behaviours at once. Come to an agreement with the child as to which aspects will



be treated. Make a time to check on success. Get a commitment to the plan. Both parties should sign and date the written plan.

Note - Time out is not for a specified time as this removes responsibility from the child. Re-entry occurs once a mutually agreed plan has been made. Plans may be oral, written or drawn.

Step Five

If a child continues to disrupt upon re-entry, or if it is apparent that time out in the classroom is not working and your attempts at correction have not been successful, then you have to say; "Things are not working out in the class. You and I have tried hard to work out the problem but it isn't working. Perhaps you need time to think - away from your friends."

The child may be sent to another teacher in another classroom. Negotiate with other teachers before sending a child to them. The teacher sending the child is responsible for helping the child to develop the plan. The teacher receiving the child is only required to provide supervision. If a child is in time out for more than one full session, a form should be completed and sent to the parent. If the tear off slip is not returned within two days, the parent should be contacted by phone.

Step Six

A child who continues to choose not to control himself/herself may need to be sent to the front office. If this situation appears to be developing it would be advisable to inform the Principal of the problem so that he/she will be in a position to adequately deal with it if the child comes to the office. At this point, the Principal will counsel the child but seek the class teacher's approval before finalizing the plan. The student remains excluded until he/she is ready to work it out. He/she has two alternatives: to return to class and follow the rules, or to remain excluded. There will be no blaming or criticism, and no acceptance of excuses for the behaviour. Should the exclusion at the front office exceed one full session, the executive officer will send a notice to the parent.

Step Seven

If the child chooses not to control him/herself in the office area, the parents will be asked to take the child home. The student will be permitted to return and attend as long as appropriate behaviour is maintained and the student is prepared to follow the rules. If the student does not respond, she/he will be sent home again. Suspension can occur according to Ministry policy. If it is expected that suspension may occur, the teacher should keep detailed records of the counselling which has taken place.

Note - A child who consistently behaves in a way that indicates an inability to follow school rules and teacher instructions may be excluded from excursions, extra curricular activities, and/or camps as long as this consequence has been clearly stated ahead of the behaviour. A child who consistently wilfully interrupts the learning environment or who causes difficulty learning for another student through cruel behaviour may be subject to suspension, completing a Blue Book Program (school supported home school study), and/or referral to the school board for discipline or expulsion.

Management Steps for staff- Playground

It is the responsibility of each staff member to ensure that all children feel safe and secure when they are on the playground. In order to achieve this, staff must investigate problems that are reported and proceed through the established steps as far as necessary, even though the problem may seem to be trivial or unfounded.

Step One



Once the child causing the problem has been identified, the teacher should counsel the child. This will include helping the child to think of alternative and more satisfactory behaviours and make an oral undertaking to adopt one or more of them. Should the child fail to make a satisfactory commitment, it will be necessary to proceed to step two.

Step Two

Quietly ask the child to move to a location on the school grounds until ready to talk about the problem and make the commitment, or until your duty is completed and you can work with the child. If a satisfactory resolution has not been achieved at this point, the problem should formally include the classroom teacher in the presence of the child, or arrangements should be made for the child to meet with you again, at another time. This is also a counselling step.

Step Three

In the event of one child frequently repeating an offence within a short space of time, or if extreme aggressiveness or rudeness occurs, or if the child refuses to talk with the teacher or go to the designated location, it may be necessary to remove the child from the playground for a period of time. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure the child is aware that he/she is being removed from the playground. Inform the child's classroom teacher and the principal that a child has been removed from the playground. Complete the appropriate information form. At this point, the principal will assume responsibility for the counselling process. A child should not be removed for a specified time (ie. 1 week) but only until a satisfactory commitment has been made. It is the responsibility of the principal to determine when the child should be allowed to return to the playground.

Step Four

In the event of repeat or extreme violent behaviour in the playground, the child will be excluded/suspended from the playground/school for a period of time to be designated by the principal. This will be within the parameters outlined in the School Act and by School District Policy.

Notes Relating to Classroom and Playground Management

- This is not a lock step approach and the procedures should be used flexibly.
- There is no set number of times that a child should go through each step before moving to the next one. Each case must be judged according to circumstances. In exceptional circumstances a step or steps may be omitted.
- Agreements may be oral, written or drawn.
- While agreements should be short, simple and specific, the level of complexity will depend on the individual child.
- Agreements should have a built in check time, which may be fairly brief to ensure the child experiences success and to let the child know that we are interested in his/her success.
- Teamwork is essential for the success of this policy.



Note: Muheim Elementary's processes align with and are guided by the Ministry of Education's Safe and Orderly Schools Policy
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/resources.htm>

Code of Conduct Appendix A: Protocols

Review

The Code of Conduct is reviewed with staff, students and parents during the first months of each school year.

Making Expectations know

Behavioural expectations are discussed in class, each morning through announcements and are taught in assembly. Code of Conduct is available on the school website. Applies to all staff and students whenever they represent the school.

Monitor Conduct

Conduct data is recorded and discussed in Support Meetings weekly

Alignment of Codes of Conduct

All school codes in School District 54 follow the Ministry Order