



"Home of the Thunderbirds"

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Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends,

School in the time of COVID -

It is hard to believe that it is November.

Given the context of a global pandemic it is important to pause and take stock of how much our school community has accomplished together. This term the Carisbrooke Team has focused on **"connection before curriculum"** during this highly stressful time.

My end of August letter to you highlighted key health and safety planning to ensure a safe return to school. After planning for physical safety, the Carisbrooke team worked to support Social Emotional Learning and positive Mental Health. **Children cannot learn unless they feel physical and emotionally safe and cared for by their adults at school, as well as internally calm and ready to learn.** Finally, the Carisbrooke team collaborated on instructional models and design which allows for an efficient transition into hybrid or remote learning if required by the PHO and VCH. Aspects of this curricular planning include: all classes are on MS Teams, a 'Weekly Window' is posted on Teams, and staff have collaborated on a grade group unit of inquiry planning for the term, including rubrics and key assessments. Some primary staff will be sending home 'just in case' packages in case of the need for learning from home.

Student-Family-Teacher Conferences -

The Carisbrooke team is looking forward to working with you and your child(ren) to set individual student goals at the upcoming conferences. These goals typically reference the development of an aspect of the Core Competencies. You can learn more about the Core Competencies here: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies>. Students express their understanding of key concepts identified in the Curricular Competencies through the Core Competencies, ie: critical thinking regarding communities can be communicated in words or pictures. Information regarding grade specific Curricular Competencies can be found here: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/>.

Get ready for the Student-Family-Teacher conference by completing any preparatory materials the teacher sends home. If you have specific questions or concerns get them ready to ask.

The most commonly asked parent question at conferences is how to best assist a child with their learning. There will be specific discussion on this topic as you set the learning goal. Don't be shy about asking questions if you have a specific area of curiosity.

Below are more general tips on how to support learning within an inquiry-based, student-directed learning environment. They have been taken from an online blog.

How can I help my child with their learning? (Tips taken from T. Bond Clegg's blog, Making Good Humans.)

1. Take an inquiry stance - *Meet a question with a question.* This approach is a golden opportunity to have learners not only learn 'that thing', but also learn something about how to learn. Try: *Great question! How could you find that out? What resource could you use to discover that? How could you figure that out?*

Be prepared to inquire together. Sometimes, when you meet a question with a question, you get an "I don't know". Try: *No problem! Let's figure it out together. Maybe we can try this.... Have you ever used this... Let's see if this resource has the answer....* This way you are still supporting them to figure out what they are trying to figure out, but along the way you've also helped develop their skill as an independent learner.

Ask the magic question – "What do you notice?". No matter what subject, what area of learning, or what age – the secret ingredient to inquiry-based learning is asking learners to think about what they notice. Whether your child is learning their letters and looking at the letter "B", or building their multiplication fluency by looking at a multiplication table, that one question works every time, and can always be followed up with "what else do you notice?" to probe for further thinking.

Support conceptual understanding: *Value process.* As often as possible get your child thinking beyond what they did and what they learned, and more about how they learned. Some great questions include: *How did you do that? Why did you do that? What strategy did you use? How did you learn that strategy? What steps did you take?*

Prioritize Reflection: *Get them thinking about their thinking.* There are two questions you can ask your child to help them think deeper, about whatever it is they are learning. *How do you know? What makes you say that?* Again – any subject, any topic. Whether they are showing you the solution to a math problem, discussing parts of a book they are reading, summarizing information, sharing their perspective on a world event... these questions have super powers!

Support your child's agency: *Invite and involve their voice.* Give space for them to articulate what they like and don't like about learning, and why that is. Listen to when they are advocating for what they need as learners.

Respect and support their choices. Be aware of what choices you are making for your child, that they could probably be making themselves. Coach them to make informed choices, by making the decision making process explicit (*What choice are you making for yourself?*), then follow up with a reflection about how effective that choice was and whether it's a good choice to be made again in the future (*How did that choice work out for you? How do you know? What will you choose differently next time?*).

Emphasize ownership. Sometimes learning can be something that gets misrepresented as something done *to* learners, or *around* learners. This creates a false sense that they are passively drifting through the process, and have no impact on their own learning. We want learners to know it's their learning, they own it, they impact it. It is something done by them, for them, and we are the supporting actors. Use words and phrases that build that sense of ownership over their learning: *It's your learning. You're in the driver's seat. Your learning, your choice.*

Remembrance Day -

Remembrance Day, a statutory holiday, is coming up on the 11th. There will be no school in session on that day. Students will be given poppies on Monday to wear during our virtual assembly on Tuesday. Please consider sending in a donation in support of the Lynn Valley Royal Canadian Legion.

And finally -

Attached to this email is the NVSD annual communication 'Student Threat Assessment: Fair Notice and Process for Students and Parents'. Please read it.

Additional information regarding the contact tracing process has been added to the NVSD public website [NVSD Managing Illness and Confirmed Cases FAQ](#), in the section headed: CONTACT TRACING (SOURCE: VCH). As we see an increase in COVID-19 cases in BC and, consequently, in contact tracing occurring in schools, you may find these new questions/answers to be helpful.

Thank you for your ongoing support of your child(ren)'s learning. Thank you also for conducting the Daily Health Check each morning and not sending your child to school if he/she/they are ill. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa Upton

Principal, Carisbrooke