Minot Forest School’s Newsletter
October, 2019
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Congratulations to our September Owl Winners: Mrs. Panzone, Mrs. Antonellis, Mrs. Slazas, Mrs. Lapointe, Mrs. Lasorsa, Mrs. Laber, Ms. Drinkwater, and Mrs. Potter for modeling Respect, Responsibility, and Kindness.

Dear Families:

Happy Fall. The weather will be getting cooler now. Please have your children dress appropriately for the changing temperatures.

_Late arrivals:_ Parent drop off by the auditorium doors is from 8:15-8:28. At 8:29, the staff come in the building and close the doors. This gives the students a minute to get to their classroom. The school day begins at 8:30 when attendance is taken. Please do not pull in to the bus loop in front of the building in the morning when the orange cones are present. If you are dropping off your child after 8:29 or if you need to come in to the school, please park in a parking space in the parking lot across the street from the school, cross in the crosswalk and enter the school through the main door. The oval is restricted for bus use at this time and again in the afternoon from 2:35PM-3:00 PM. Once the cones are removed, you can pull in the oval and park in a visitor’s spot. Thank you!

_Student Attendance:_ Minot Forest's Attendance Team is rolling out a new initiative to improve our school's attendance! Mrs. Atwood (School Social Worker), Mrs. Ottaviano (School Counselor), and Ms. Ambrose (School Nurse) will be working together to implement new interventions that will support students' attendance and in turn, their academic achievement. When a child is absent or tardy from school, they are missing valuable instruction time that can impact them academically, socially, and emotionally. Research show that "Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or be held back" (Attendance Works, 2014). In addition, MA State Laws require that children attend school 95% of the time, meaning a child should not miss more than a total of 9 days of school for the year. If your child is having difficulty getting to school on time, everyday, please let us know. We are here to help!

As a friendly reminder, students are expected to arrive to school everyday between 8:20 and 8:29 AM. If your child has a fever, has had diarrhea or vomiting in the last 24 hours, or has a communicable condition that prevents them from coming to school, please call (508) 291-3555 to let us know they will be absent. Please send a written note when they return to school. If you visited their Physician or Urgent Care, please ask for a Physician's note to excuse their absence. Notes can be e-mailed, faxed, or delivered to school.

Helpful Tips:
- Maintain regular bedtime and morning routines to get to school on time. Students who are tardy miss important information to start their day and need to catch up with the class
- Schedule routine appointments after school or over school vacations
- Schedule travel and family vacations during regular school vacations or breaks
- Communicate with your child's teacher or the Attendance Team regarding any absences or challenges

    We will be monitoring student absences closely throughout the year as the school is monitored by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for chronic absences. MA
State Law also requires schools to notify families in writing once students reach 7 days of absences. Ms. Coady, our Social Worker, will be reaching out to families if needed.

**School Pictures:** Lifetouch, our school photographer, will not send home class photos until students who were absent or need retakes have been done. Once pictures have arrived from the October 1 picture day, picture retake day will be scheduled. This will allow all students the opportunity to be included in the class photo. The class photos will therefore arrive at a later date, separate from the packages.

**Cell Phones:** Students are not allowed to have cell phones on in school. If you feel your child must have one, it has to be off and kept in the backpack. Cell phones are not to be taken out and used on the school bus. Videos and pictures are prohibited as some students, for safety and other parent reasons, cannot be photographed. Students do not have permission to post any pictures or videos on any social media platform. Please review this with your child to prevent violations and any potential consequences.

**Bus Safety Week:** October 21-25 is Bus Safety Week. Bus evacuation drills will be held this month. Please see additional safety tips towards the end of the newsletter.

**Meeting with Administrators:** Very often, the administrators have meetings first thing in the morning and right after buses leave at the end of the day. If you wish to speak to us, it is best to make an appointment to make sure we are available. We will gladly meet with you if we can, but often can’t do it on the spur of the moment, due to other commitments. We will do our best to accommodate your needs. As a reminder, please begin with the teacher first if you have concerns regarding your child. The teacher is the best person to try to solve the issue.

**Correspondence to School:** When sending in forms or notes to school, please put your child’s first and last name on all documents and make sure any names are written clearly and neatly. This is especially important when the child’s last name is different from the parent/guardian’s last name. Also, there may be multiple students with the same first name and the office staff will not know which student the note is referencing if the parent name is not legible. Any changes to a child’s dismissal must be made in writing and sent in to his/her teacher in the morning. The teacher then forwards all notes to the office.

**Volunteers Wanted:** Do you have some time to volunteer? We welcome volunteers to our school. A current CORI form must be on file. Please stop in at any of the schools or the Superintendent’s office and complete the necessary paperwork. CORI’s are good for 3 years.

**Stop & Shop A+ Bonus Bucks:** The Minot Forest Elementary School has once again registered for the Stop & Shop A+ Bonus Bucks program. You do not need to reregister your card. If you have not registered a card yet, log on to www.stopandshop.com/aplus and register your card. You will need to enter our school ID number, which is 07866. If you have any relatives who shop at any Stop and Shop, they can choose Minot Forest when they register their card. Pass along this information. This will be another way for our school to receive funds after you or others have completed your shopping.

**Technology Reminder:** Students need earbuds/headphones for their Chromebooks. Please send in a pair if you haven’t done so already.

**Phone Calling System:** The automated phone call system is used for attendance, to inform families of canceled school days, or as reminders for upcoming events. Please always make sure we have up-to-date phone numbers to ensure you get these important calls.
**Principal’s Coffee:** The next Principal’s Coffee will be held on Monday, October 21, 2019 at 9:00 AM in the Wareham Middle School Library.

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**Calendar of Events**

**October 7-11 is Fire Prevention Week**

**October 21-25 is Bus Safety Week**

10/1  Picture day by Lifetouch Photographers. Send in envelopes with picture money.
10/2  National Custodial Worker’s Day. Thank you for keeping our schools clean.
10/2  Grade 3 students will meet with member of the Elks Lodge to receive dictionaries. We are grateful to them for this annual donation.
10/3  CARE registration paperwork is due today
10/3  School Committee Meeting, 7:00 PM, MSC, 3rd floor. MCAS presentations will be done by each administrator.
10/4  **No School**-Teacher Inservice Day
10/7  Wareham Firefighters stop by to say a special hello before school
10/8  The Wareham Elementary PTA meeting, 6:30 PM at the Wareham Middle School Library
10/14 **No School**-Columbus Day
10/15 The CARE after school program begins today
10/16 National Boss’ Day
10/21 Principal’s Coffee, 9:00 AM in the WMS Library
10/21 School Building Committee Mtg, 6:00 PM in room 228 at Multi-Service Center (MSC)
10/22 School Council Meeting, 3:45 PM at the Middle School Library
10/31 Happy Halloween! We do not wear costumes to school.
10/31 Early Release Day. 12:45 PM dismissal for elementary students. Lunch will be served.
Bus safety and rules to follow

Bus safety depends on everyone, including students, parents, and motorists. Here are some tips to keep children safe:

- Be sure clothing and book bags are free of dangling drawstrings or hook-on toys that might catch on the handrail or door of the bus. Clothes often have strings on the bottom that can cause a child to fall. Make sure shoelaces are tied to prevent falling.
- Remind children about their responsibility to behave properly on the bus. If students are yelling, the bus driver cannot concentrate on driving safely. If he/she has to look in the mirror above them to see what is happening, his/her attention is temporarily taken away from the roadway which could lead to an accident. Students who do not follow proper safety rules will be issued bus conduct reports which may result in bus suspensions. Repeat offenders can be removed from the bus for the remainder of the school year.
- Children should be on time for the school bus. Please have your child outside at least 10 minutes prior to bus arrival. If the bus had to wait on every child for five minutes or more, it would take a long time for the bus to arrive at school. Running to catch up to a bus that is driving away is dangerous. At the end of the school day, parents should make sure the caregiver is at the bus stop to meet the bus at least ten minutes prior to its arrival. Children should stand back from the school bus as it approaches.
- When boarding the bus, remind your child to quickly choose a seat and stay seated while the bus is moving. Buses do not have seatbelts so it is vital that students stay seated and speak quietly to their seat partner.
- Children should not stand or walk in the aisles until the bus comes to a complete stop.
- When getting off the bus, children should stay away from the "danger zone" of the bus and cross well in front of the bus if he/she needs to cross the street. Even though the red lights on the bus are flashing, children should look at the driver before crossing to make sure it is safe.
- Bus evacuation drills will be held to practice how to get off a school bus in the event of an accident or bus breakdown.
- School rules apply while on the school bus. Students should not be using inappropriate language. Cell phones are not allowed out on the bus. Students cannot take videos or pictures of students on the bus and especially cannot post them on any social media platform.
Help Your Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early
School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

DID YOU KNOW?

• Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
• Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
• Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
• Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
• Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

• Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
• Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
• Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
• Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
• Don’t let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
• If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
• Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
• Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

When Do Absences Become a Problem?

CHRONIC ABSENCE
18 or more days

WARNING SIGNS
10 to 17 days

SATISFACTORY
9 or fewer absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit attendanceworks.org and reachoutandread.org
Dear Families,

Thank you for taking the time to read this. We are really excited to tell you about how we are recognizing positive behaviors here at Minot Forest.

For the last couple of years, we have implemented a framework called **PBIS**—**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports**. PBIS is a school-wide system for all students and staff that encourages positive ways of addressing behavior. The goal of PBIS is to create safe and effective learning environments, in order to maximize student achievement.

At Minot Forest, students are taught to be RESPECTFUL, RESPONSIBLE, and KIND in all settings.

Expectations for each location and procedure-- hallways, cafeteria, transitions between classes, and dismissal-- to name a few, are continuously modeled, practiced, and acknowledged.

A school wide positive acknowledgment system in the form of “golden leaves” is implemented. Any student can receive a golden leaf from any adult in building (e.g., teacher, secretary, custodian, etc.) when they are displaying a respectful, responsible, or kind behavior. The student who receives the golden leaf takes it back to their class, which goes in a class bucket. Each class that earns 100 or more leaves each week, is entered into a raffle for an extra 20 minutes of recess.

Students love this reward, and this year is already off to a great start! In addition, we recognize students every Friday with a Student of the Week certificate and pencil. Teachers nominate students and administrators visit every room to deliver the good news.

The Admin Patrol has started up again. The administrators pick students during the month who always do the right thing/follow the school rules. We surprise students after school at their house or after school activity with a certificate, balloon and pin that says Principal’s Award and they are invited to wear this pin every Friday.

We look forward to keeping families updated every month for PBIS home carryover tips and great things happening at Minot Forest.