

Valley Elementary School



Student & Parent Handbook

2017 - 2018

We develop lifelong learners, encourage responsibility and promote achievement of individual potential.

Website: <http://ves.ccrsb.ca>

Facebook Group: Valley Elementary School

Telephone: 902-896-5540

96 Salmon River Road
Valley, Nova Scotia B6L 2S5

Valley Elementary Staff 2017-2018

Mrs. Janice Groves, Grade Primary
Mrs. Bronwyn Dodsworth, Grade Primary / 1
Mrs. Natasha Ferguson, Grade Primary / 1
Mrs. Shannon Thiesen and Mr. Chris McInnis, Grade 1
Mrs. Lisa Smith, Grade 1 / 2
Mrs. Angela McCarthy, Grade 2
Mrs. Natalie Doroshenko, Grade 3
Mrs. Janice Sutherland, Grade 3
Ms. Kimberly Aarts, Grade 4
Mrs. Tessa Faulkner and Mrs. Colleen McCulloch, Grade 4
Mrs. Janice Newcombe, Learning Center
Mrs. Shannon Thiesen, Reading Recovery
Mrs. Janice Newcombe and Mr. Chris McInnis, Resource
Ms. Katelyn Hull, French
Mrs. Tracy MacKay and Mr. Todd Croft, Physical Education
Mrs. Marianne Berry-Michaud, Music
Mrs. Nadine Arnold, Guidance
Ms. Mary Jane Crosby, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Dawn Griffiths, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Cathy Weatherby, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Maxine Citulsky, Educational Assistant
Mrs. Tanya Hupalo, Educational Assistant
Ms. Donna Flynn and Mr. Nathan Yorke, Custodians
Mrs. Tessa Davison, Administrative Assistant
Mrs. Lisa Smith, Vice-Principal
Mrs. Kimberly Wall, Principal

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2017 – 2018

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| September 5 | Orientation Day for staff – No Students Present |
| September 6 | Site-Based Professional Development – No Students Present |
| September 7 | First Day for Students |
| September 8 | Picture Day (Pridham's Studio and Portraits by Johanna) |
| September 14 | Family Orientation (6:00-7:00 pm) |
| September 29 | Site-Based Professional Development – No Students Present |
| October 9 | Thanksgiving – No School |
| October 27 | Provincial Conference – No School |
| November 13 | Remembrance Day Observed – No School |
| November 17 | Assessment & Evaluation Day – No Students Present |
| November 29 | Report Card Day |
| November 30 | Parent-Teacher Meetings (6:00 – 8:00 PM) |
| December 1 | Parent-Teacher Meetings (8:10 – 10:10 AM) – No Students Present Site-Based Professional Development (PM) – No Students Present |
| December 14 | Holiday Concert |
| December 22 | First day of Christmas break |
| January 3 | School Reopens |
| February 19 | NS Provincial Holiday – No School |
| March 12-16 | March Break |
| March 23 | Assessment & Evaluation Day – No Students Present |
| March 30 | Good Friday- No School |
| April 2 | Easter Monday – No School |
| April 5 | Report Card Day |
| April 19 | Parent-Teacher Meetings (6:00 – 8:00 PM) |
| April 20 | Parent-Teacher Meetings (8:10 – 10:10 AM) – No Students Present Site-Based Professional Development (PM) – No Students Present |
| May 18 | Site-Based Professional Development – No Students Present |
| May 21 | Victoria Day- No School |
| June 28 | Administration Day – No Students Present |
| June 29 | Report Card Day |

WELCOME!

We are excited to welcome you to the Valley Elementary 2017/18 school year. We have students in Grade Primary to Grade 4.

At Valley Elementary School, we believe that positive relationships between students, staff and the community create a positive and safe environment that is conducive to student learning. This includes an environment that allows students to strive for excellence in academic, social, and extra-curricular endeavors. On behalf of VES staff we look forward to another fun and fulfilling school year. We invite you to collaborate with us so the educational programs at school will be enhanced and rewarding for all involved.

USING THE HANDBOOK EFFECTIVELY

The contents of this handbook are for use by students and their parents. Some of the information is subject to change throughout the year, so parents and students should be aware of this possibility and ensure they read notices and listen to announcements.

We wish you a happy, exciting and successful year. Ultimately, this handbook is only as useful as you make it. Regard it as a reference tool to consult when wondering about school policies and guidelines. The handbook is also posted on our website – ves.ccrsb.ca

REGISTRATION

We require ALL students to have a completed registration form. A copy of each new student's birth certificate or passport is required. New students should attach last year's report card to the registration form.

Each September we send home a copy of your registration to be updated. Please assist our Administrative Assistant by highlighting any new or changed information. We must have an alternate contact telephone number for all students in case an emergency arises and we need to notify someone to take responsibility for your child.

ALLERGY ALERT

Valley Elementary has students with anaphylactic allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, and eggs. Our policy below outlines expectations for staff, parents, students, and the cafeteria.

Allergen Policy: Peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, tree nut butter, eggs, mayonnaise, ranch dressing and Caesar dressing are not to be brought to Valley Elementary. In addition, foods which cannot easily be distinguished from the above products are not appropriate to send to school.

SCHOOL HOURS

The school day for students is **8:20 am – 2:15 pm**. Supervision of students begins at 8:05 and ends at 2:15. Please make sure your children arrive early enough to be settled in their classroom by 8:20 for attendance and morning announcements.

Recess is 9:55 – 10:10 & Lunch is 12:00 – 12:45.

LATE ARRIVAL

It is reasonable to expect each student to be on time for school. Repeated lateness is a sign of disrespect and is discourteous to the rest of the students in the class. Daily announcements are made at **8:20 am.**, followed by an overview of the day in each classroom. It is important for students to be here to receive this information and missing it often results in confusion. In addition, being punctual is a habit to be encouraged, especially for the future world of work. Parents are required to sign late arrivals in at the office. Late students may go to their class after being signed in at the office. Parents will be notified of habitual lateness.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend every day that school is in operation, unless prevented from doing so by reason of illness or some other unavoidable circumstance. When students are absent they miss opportunities and learning experiences that cannot be recovered.

Valley Elementary School takes the following position with regard to class attendance:

- 1.** Regular attendance is essential to successful progress since many learning experiences are oral, group or 'hands on' and cannot be duplicated at home.
- 2.** Any successful attendance system requires the full cooperation of teachers, school and home.
- 3.** Parents are asked to ensure that student absences are legitimate and that the school is notified.
- 4.** Parents will receive notification of attendance concerns.

Children who are ill should be home. This helps prevent the spread of infectious diseases and allows the student to recover in a comfortable environment. When students return to school they must be well enough to participate in a regular school day including outside recess and lunch play.

Parents are required to call the school if their children are absent. V.E.S. has a **Safe Arrival** program and will contact parents if students are absent and unexcused at the beginning of the school day. If we are unable to contact parents we will call your alternate/emergency contacts. Messages to inform us of student absences may be left on voice mail at any time.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

It is the expectation of the Chignecto-Central Regional School Board that instruction occurs each day of school, and since absence from school during the term may jeopardize the student's academic and social progress, the school takes the position that extended leaves are to be avoided if at all possible.

Assignments cannot be provided in advance of extended absences as students miss the instruction required and teachers adjust assignments as learning progresses. Contact your child's teacher for further information. Students absent for extended periods of time are likely to miss assessment and instruction opportunities which will affect their overall progress and evaluation for report cards. Parents are asked to consider extended holidays during school time carefully as teachers are not able to compensate for lost time. In-school instruction plays a vital role in the learning process.

PERMISSION TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL

Parents are required to advise the school office when taking students out of the school during the school day. Early departure of students should be avoided whenever possible. Elementary students, except those who normally go home for lunch at noon, are **NOT PERMITTED** to leave the school grounds.

SAFE AND SECURE SCHOOL

The staff and administration support a safe and secure environment at Valley Elementary School. We require that **ALL VISITORS**, to the school including parents, proceed directly to the office and sign in with the administrative assistant to indicate the purpose of their visit. Parent visits during class time are disruptive and take the attention of the teacher away from instructing students. The administrative assistant will make the necessary contact with the teacher, classroom, or accompany and/or direct the visitor to the appropriate area of the school. We would strongly request parental cooperation in this endeavor to maintain security within the school, and to have knowledge of any visitors and their whereabouts while in the school. We will be routinely locking all entrances after the morning entry of our students.

If you are picking your child up during recess or lunch please sign them out at the office before going to the playground. Administration will provide written verification for you to give to the student monitor or teacher. Please note our office is closed 12:15-12:50 each day.

EXPECTATIONS and RESPONSIBILITIES

To create and maintain a positive and productive learning environment we need co-operation from school, students and parents. The guiding 'Fair Play' principles that we expect everyone to observe are:

Show RESPECT
Increase SELF DISCIPLINE
Improve COMMUNICATION
Promote SPORTSMANSHIP
Demonstrate POSITIVE ATTITUDE

We believe that children learn best in a safe, orderly environment. This type of environment can best be achieved when children demonstrate self-discipline and accept responsibility for their own behavior. When children meet the five expectations outlined below they are demonstrating good school citizenship. Children who have difficulty meeting these expectations will be invited to find ways to choose better behavior. If they are unable to find solutions on their own, parents will be requested to assist them to make choices appropriate to our school environment.

Student Expectations:

1. Use appropriate language and actions.
2. Look after and care for our school.
3. Use your class time effectively.
4. Arrive on time with all of the materials required for class.
5. Respect yourself, others around you, and the learning environment within the school.

ZONES OF REGULATION

Teachers and support staff have been in-serviced on The Zones of Regulation. This is a program that teaches students to recognize and acknowledge emotions of themselves and others in a positive manner.

The Zones of Regulation TM:
Blue-sad or tired
Green-ready to learn
Yellow-excited or agitated
Red-Angry, hurt or in distress

COMMUNICATION

We have found through experience that when all stakeholders involved in the education of your children are communicating with each other, problems or concerns are soon addressed or prevented. All of our teachers offer an open invitation for you to call us at the school to discuss your child or any concerns you may have. Please let us know if you have a question, concern, or problem by calling the school or communicating in the student agenda or communication folder.

- Parents are encouraged to use the agenda to communicate to their child's teacher by writing directly into the agenda. Teachers will respond in the agenda or by a means mutually agreed upon.
- The school will issue a newsletter once a month to keep parents and students informed of various activities and programs.
- Report Cards will be issued three times a year. Parent/Teacher Interviews are scheduled after the first and second reporting period.
- Newsletters, annual reports, school links and current information will be posted on the school website – ves.ccrsb.ca.
- In order to facilitate timely communication with minimal impact on the environment, V.E.S. communicates electronically as much as possible. One of the ways this is done is by using a system called ALERT. This system will communicate a message via email, text or voice message. Parents will be asked to select the method(s) they prefer.
- Notices and / or memos will be sent home electronically or posted on the website as reminders of events / deadlines or information you should be aware of between newsletters.
- Valley Elementary has a Facebook group. This group can be accessed by searching for Valley Elementary School and requesting to become a member. This is a closed group and member requests are screened to ensure a legitimate connection to our school community. All parents are encouraged to join this group. It has proven to be a very efficient way to communicate pertinent information. Photos from school events are sometimes posted here as well.
- The Administrative Assistant is in the office 8:00 – 12:15 and 12:50 – 3:30. This is the best time to contact us by phone. The office is closed 12:15 – 12:50. Messages may be left on our voice mail. If you leave a message regarding dismissal arrangements for your child please do not assume it will be acted upon unless you have spoken directly with a staff member. In the performance of her duties the Administrative Assistant is frequently out of the office and may not check voice mail until after the students depart.
- Please contact your child's teacher with any concerns or questions you have about class related activities. If you have concerns of a more general nature or if you have contacted the teacher and wish to discuss the matter further please feel free to contact Mrs. Wall.
- PowerSchool is a secure website where you and your child will be able to see a current standing of academic achievement, marks on individual assignments and attendance. A letter will be sent home to new parents containing access directions and availability of information in September.

USE OF THE TELEPHONE

The school telephone is a business phone. Responsibility is acquired when children learn to remember for themselves things such as supplies, homework, lunches, permission slips, etc. When we allow children to call home for things they have forgotten we are not giving them the opportunity to develop this responsibility. Students will not be able to use the phone to make social arrangements for after school. Teachers generally will NOT be called out of class to answer telephone calls. Messages will be taken and forwarded to teachers at the end of instructional time.

HOMEWORK

All schools in Nova Scotia will be follow new **Provincial Homework Policy**. It is expected that developmentally appropriate homework will be given at all grade levels.

Homework will have one or more of the following purposes:

- Prepare information or materials for future learning opportunities.
- Practice new knowledge or new skills.
- Enrich students' understanding of a topic and apply it in new ways.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

If your child is to receive oral medication of any kind, both prescription or over the counter, the school requires a medical form of instruction from the parent regarding the illness, medication, and dispensing instructions. Medications will be kept in the office for dispensing. School Staff are not able to distribute aspirin, cough drops, etc. to students.

MEDICAL CONCERNS

If your child has a condition which conceivably might require emergency treatment at school such as diabetes, epilepsy or severe allergies, please be sure the school has current information. For students such as these, an emergency plan will be developed by the school and parents to be posted in key areas of the school.

HOT LUNCH PROGRAM

Our cafeteria is part of the **Cobequid School Catering Society**. We have a board of directors, a food services manager, and a business manager. They collectively oversee the operation of the cafeteria. We try to offer a balanced menu of meals which are healthy and popular choices. The cost of a meal is **\$4.00** which includes the main meal and a drink. Milk, and snacks may be purchased separately. Please direct questions to our cook.

LIBRARY SERVICES

Our library is a center for learning that supports the curriculum and offers a wide variety of resource materials to students. The library is managed by the volunteer Library Coordinator and the Library Liaison from the teaching staff. Other volunteers assist during scheduled class visits and to catalogue books. Please consider volunteering in the library so we can continue to offer this beneficial experience to our students.

Overdue Items: Notices will be printed and given to teachers for prompting students to return materials in a timely fashion. New materials cannot be lent out until items are returned. Lost books are the responsibility of parents who will be required to pay for or replace the book.

SCHOOL DRESS

Weather conditions vary and it is important that students are dressed to suit these conditions. Students need to have a change of footwear for indoor use. They are expected to wear their gym sneakers each day in school. This will assist us in keeping our school as clean as possible. Indoor shoes must be worn at all times. Hats may be worn in the hallway only.

Extreme styles or obscene styles are unacceptable in our school. Students not conforming to these standards may be asked to change their attire before being admitted to class. More specifically, this includes offensive or inappropriate words, phrases and pictures on clothing. In addition, students are not to wear tops that are strapless, have spaghetti straps, are low-cut or backless; expose undergarments or the midriff; and shorts that are above mid-thigh in length.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A variety of afterschool and evening activities are typically offered each year. Information about these will be communicated as they are planned.

Many of these activities are offered by staff members. We also encourage parents to become involved as volunteers. Parents could also offer extracurricular activities in partnership with the school. Last year the Memory Book Committee worked under the direction of parent volunteers. If you have any ideas for an activity you would like to offer please speak to Mrs. Wall. Parents who volunteer to work with students are required to complete the **CCRSB Volunteer Package** available at the office.

ROLLER BLADES, SKATEBOARDS, SCOOTERS & 'HEELIES'

Supervision of these recreational items is not possible under most circumstances and therefore roller blades, skateboards and scooters must not be ridden on school property. C.C.R.S. B. policy prohibits the wearing of 'heelies' in its schools.

CLOSURE OF SCHOOLS AND CANCELLATION OF BUS SERVICE

Ultimately, parents have the daily responsibility of determining whether or not it is safe for their children to go to school.

When school is cancelled for any reason it is posted on the CCRSB website. Closures are also announced on the Truro radio stations. If school is in session and weather conditions threaten school cancellation please listen for radio announcements. It is important that you have a plan for your children before a midday cancellation occurs. Our procedure in the event of an early dismissal is to confirm arrangements with parents / caregivers. The first emails and calls for this confirmation will be made for bus students. Bus students will be dismissed after these calls are made. Parents who pick up their children will be asked to sign them out. Students who walk home will be dismissed after the busses leave.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

The cost of basic school supplies are the responsibility of the parent. The school will purchase these supplies for the year. Payment for these supplies is **due by Thursday, September 15th**. Art Supplies such as construction paper, water-colors, pastels etc. are not part of this program but are covered by the school budget.

Please provide your child with inside footwear that is suitable for Physical Education class, (ie. pair of running shoes) backpacks, and lunch bags.

LOST AND FOUND

The school is not responsible for lost articles, but does attempt to help in their recovery by providing a Lost & Found in the nook between the Primary area and the gym. Found clothing is often hung on the extra hooks upstairs where all students pass on their way to music. To help us return items to their rightful owners, please make sure that:

- All student belongings are clearly labeled.
- When you lose something check all the places you have been and the Lost & Found.
- When you find something, take it into the office immediately. We will include a description of the item in morning announcements the next day.
- Do not bring valuables to school. We will not be responsible for their care or loss. Students should check with their teachers before bringing items from home to school.

BUSSING

Students who qualify for transportation are bussed to and from their residence. Driving students to other places, including babysitters, is courtesy bussing. Whenever possible the transportation department allows courtesy bussing.

All inquiries for bus transportation must be directed to the C.C.R.S.B. Transportation Department. Students are not permitted to travel on any bus other than their own unless permission has been granted from the Transportation Department. Many C.C.R.S.B. busses are filled to capacity and therefore cannot accommodate courtesy passengers. The contact number for the **Transportation Department** is **902-896-5561**.

PRIVATE TRANSPORTATION

When bringing children to school or picking them up please note the following safety guidelines:

- Use the appropriate, marked driveway to enter and exit the school year.
- The longest loop leading to the front doorstep is reserved for busses, vehicles transporting students with special needs and vehicles transporting students to daycare.
- The shorter loop is for parent drop off and pick up. In the morning this loop is only to be used for dropping students off quickly. If your drop off routine involves getting out of your vehicle to assist your child or walk them into the school please use a regular parking stop.
- Students being picked up are dismissed at the side door facing the church after busses have departed.

BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS

Please distribute invitations to parties outside of the school if at all possible. If unavoidable, party invitations will be distributed at school if everyone in the class is invited. Not being invited to a party can ruin the day for a student and disrupt learning.

ELECTRONICS AND TOYS

Students are encouraged to leave electronics and toys at home. If they are brought to school they cannot interfere with the learning in the classroom. The school is not responsible for any lost, broken or stolen electronics and toys brought from home. Recess and lunch breaks are intended to encourage an active, healthy lifestyle therefore use of electronics at this time is strongly discouraged.

CUSTODY

If you and the other parent of your child(ren) are separated/divorced and you have legal/primary residential custody of your child(ren), we need to have a copy of your custody papers on file. Without this we are obligated to assume that both parents have equal access to your child(ren) and their records.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips may be planned by teachers for specific outcomes. Parents must give written permission for each individual trip for their child to participate. The exception to this is activities in the Nature Loop adjacent to school property. In September one permission form will be sent to parents for activities in this location throughout the year.

Behaviour standards during field trips are the same as those expected at school. Students who misbehave in class may lose the privilege of participating in future field trips.

SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL

The School Advisory Council at Valley Elementary is composed of elected parents, teachers, and community members who strive to improve the educational programs and school climate of our school. Please contact the school if you would like to become a member. There is a vacant parent seat filled each September. An election is held if necessary. Parents serve on council for three years.

HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

The Valley Elementary Home & School Association provides an excellent opportunity for establishing better communication between parents/teachers and to help in understanding the activities, opportunities and programs for learning. This is one of the best ways for parents to learn about school life. Our Home & School plays a very important role in our school, providing extra support to both students and staff. We invite you to join our Home & School Association.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

The purpose of emergency drills is to teach students the proper procedures to follow in the unlikely event of an emergency situation. Fire drills are practiced 6 times during the school year. **Code Blue (Lock Down)** is practiced twice a year. **Code Blue (Hold and Secure)** is practiced once a year. A relocation drill is practiced once during the year. During these drills students are expected to follow the directions of staff. Members of the local RCMP are usually involved in our **Code Blue** and relocation drills.

Valley Elementary School has a Crisis Team that has developed a plan for emergencies which may occur. This team updates and trains staff to care for students during an emergency at school. It is *critical* that you provide the school with correct home and work telephone numbers as well as cell phone numbers. Providing accurate numbers increases the chances of our being able to contact you in the event of an emergency.

COMMUNITY NOTICES

We are often asked to distribute information on behalf of community groups. This will be done electronically via our website under community. Posting a notice on behalf of a community group does not constitute a recommendation of that activity by us.

Have a wonderful year at Valley Elementary!

