

Good Morning Falcon Families!

I hope you are enjoying the weekend so far. Today's weather is certainly better than the mixture of precipitation we had on Friday. I don't think any of us were prepared for the rain/snow that we received. It's a good reminder for us to come prepared for anything at this time of the year. The rain brought us inside at the beginning of the day however when the white flakes started to fall we were able to get outside for the rest of the day to enjoy the Ontario winter weather. Quite a few students were not dressed appropriately. I would encourage parents to send extra clothing(pants and socks) in case your child needs to change. As you can imagine it is very difficult to keep the children away from the "forbidden territory" of puddles, slush and mud. Because we are following the cohorting protocols, each class has a designated area for play and we do not have the luxury of keeping everyone on the pavement. Many students didn't have boots and some were uncomfortable in their wet pants. Please consider sending extra clothes, especially for our young Falcons. Speaking of extra clothing, please take an inventory of clothing and remind your children to check the Lost and Found. It is beginning to fill up. If your child is missing a sweater(seems to be the majority of what we see left behind) please remind them to check the Lost and Found. We will tweet out a picture so you can see for yourself and maybe identify some missing items. We will be donating anything left over after the holidays. I am happy to share that we are back tweeting again thanks to Ms. Bourque our new VP. Please check out our account to see what's happening in the Falcons' Nest.

Speaking of what's happening....Mrs. Currie's grade 8 class attended a virtual small Theatre presentation recently. It's not the same experience as attending in person however we have to be creative and mindful that many companies that would normally host large school audiences or visit schools for presentations are really struggling and finding ways to bring their presentations to us virtually. Ms. Oliveira's grade 7 class attended a virtual presentation along with many classes from our district, moderated by the Safe School's Department. This presentation included special guests sharing their lived experiences with addiction and mental health issues. The presentation was very thought provoking and provided our students with the opportunity to think and ask questions in a safe place. When I looked around at the students, I couldn't help thinking that I remember seeing this bunch in SK and now some of them are months away of becoming teenagers! It's so important that we provide them with strategies and opportunities to talk about the affects of drugs and alcohol and community agencies that are available to help. However, the most important lesson that I hope they came away with is that every child needs to have a safe adult to go to. Whether it's a close family friend, an educator, a coach, or a parent, it doesn't matter. What matters most is that we teach our children to find someone to talk to that provides a safe place to share their thoughts/concerns in a nonjudgmental way.

On Friday, we were happy to have PC Bruce visit Ms. Jerva's grade 6/7 class. PC Bruce is our Police Liason Officer. He services over 40 schools and we are looking forward to working with him throughout the year. He will visit us again on Wednesday to speak with our grade 7 and 8 students and practice our Lock Down drill.

I invited PC Bruce to speak to our classes about social media and the laws around the proper use of devices such as cellphones and tablets. Before PC Bruce visited the class I took the opportunity to share some thoughts:

Developing and sustaining friendships at any age is a lot of work. It is especially difficult during this time because we are not able to meet in person and do things together. Being able to connect with our friends, or meet new friends through extra curricular community opportunities (sports, music, etc.) especially during the early teenage years, is probably the most important thing kids think about today. So, I know that using devices such as cell phones is one of the ways we can keep in touch with our friends. Having such a powerful device needs to come with instructions. It is really easy to get caught up in drama when you don't have to face the person you are speaking to or about. I reminded the students that everything they write and post is never lost. You can't take back something once you've sent it. I also reminded them that if the climate of the school is compromised by something that happened on social media, it is my responsibility to deal with it at the school. PC Bruce spent about an hour speaking with the students about the laws governing social media and he asked the students how many of them played games online and chatted with people they don't know. Many hands went up and he made a request for them to stop chatting with strangers. He also requested that they not participate in group chats. He said, you never really know who is in the group. I hope that the students really thought about what PC Bruce said.

Parents are often very surprised when I show them or tell them what their children have posted on social media if I am investigating a situation. Students only share when they are the victim or the target. Resolving these unfortunate situations often leads to hurt feelings, consequences and sometimes police involvement. This can all be avoided if we work together as a team, home and school, to teach these young minds how to navigate social media and use their devices appropriately. Let's not also forget that some students do not have devices and find themselves on the outside looking in...they should certainly not be tormented or bullied for a decision that was made by a family to not have a device. These are your children who have devices just like adults do and we can't assume that they will know how to use them appropriately unless we teach them. Please engage with your children if they have devices, know what they are doing and monitor their usage.

Last Spring, during distance learning, Mrs. Kittle and Mrs. Downie's Kindergarten class made rainbows signifying love and hope and they shared them with the Long Term Care Facility, Hillsdale Manor. The residents were so pleased and the staff were very touched by

this. The rainbows are still being displayed and still providing joy to all who see them. I am so happy to share that many of our classes have decided to create ornaments, cards, decorations, etc. to share with the 12 units of Hillsdale. As I visited classes last week, I saw rocks being painted, ornaments being designed and cards being written and decorated. It made me proud to be the Principal of Fallingbrook...our students are truly so kind and empathetic and they are happy to provide some holiday cheer to our friends at Hillsdale.

It doesn't surprise me in the least that I have received many inquiries from our community about donating to the food bank or collecting mittens and such, like we would traditionally be doing at this time of the year. Our community is very giving and so beginning on Monday, December 7th, we will be collecting GIFT CARDS for grocery stores to donate to Settlement House. If your family wishes to give a gift card donation, your child can drop it off to me and I will provide them with a tree ornament to hang from our Giving Tree in the front foyer. Usually this tree would be adorned with mittens, scarves and hats but this year, we will decorate with ornaments representing gift cards. I will take these donations to Settlement House on Friday December 11th on behalf of the caring community of Fallingbrook! We know that we also have many families who are not able to give this year and please know that we are not seeking donations from everyone, we are simply providing an opportunity to donate if you can and wish to.

Don't forget that our SCC has created a Fundraising opportunity for our community that doesn't cost you anything, helps you shop and earns us money....it's a win win! If you haven't already signed up for FlipGive please check out this letter and get started now!

[FlipGive](#)

Thank you to everyone who supported our virtual Book Fair and our Vandermeer Gift Card fundraiser. I must admit, I did miss seeing the beautiful plants and arrangements that we've had in the past however, they are all available in the store so I hope you enjoy these holiday treats!

Finally, I would like to thank you for your kind words, your generous donations and your support and trust. Our educators are working hard to provide learning opportunities that engage and inspire your children to be their best selves. We are proud of the work we are all doing to keep the learning alive and the health and safety of our students and educators, a priority.

Together we will get through this, one day at a time! And speaking of days, on Monday, we begin our 10 Days of Christmas countdown. I will send an additional email with a complete list of what we will be doing each day in the spirit of the holiday that many of our Falcons will be celebrating very soon.

I hope you have a super Sunday and please continue to stay safe, and take care of yourself and our Falcons!

cheers,

Mrs. Joseph