

# Gordon Gazette

General Gordon Elementary School  
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Website: [www.gordonelementary.ca](http://www.gordonelementary.ca)

Principal: Margaret Davidson  
Associate Superintendent: Lynn Green  
Trustee: Patti Bachus

Vice-Principal: Noreen Morris  
Administrative Assistant: Marilyn Grant  
PAC Chair: Ingrid Sulston

2009 September 8

Newsletter #01

## CALENDAR REMINDERS

Wednesday	September 9	Students go to last year's classes
Thursday	September 10	Regular day of classes
Friday	September 11	Professional Day
Monday	September 14	Students will go to their new classes
Tuesday	September 15	Meet the Teacher BBQ (4:00-7:00)

## SCHOOL NEWS

Welcome to another exciting year at General Gordon. We look forward to meeting all our new students and their families. We have a number of new staff and welcome them to our learning community. Our Code of Conduct reflects how the Gordon community is caring, respectful and safe. **Choose to be Kind! Choose to be Safe! Choose to be Fair!**

Gordon School has followed William Glasser's Choice Theory, and we focus on three of his main criteria for a "Quality School:" meaningful work, a non-coercive environment and self-evaluation (where students reflect on their learning).

William Glasser states that "relationships are based upon trust and respect..." and that "staff, students, parents and administrators view the school as a joyful place." We are proud to be following these words of wisdom and we are anticipating an extraordinary year of fun events, enriched learning experiences and many opportunities for children to demonstrate their skills and talents.

We would like to welcome the following new staff to our school: Diane Major (Grade 4), Jane Kemp (Grade 4/5), Sarah Rossellini (Grade 3-Fridays), Katie Moore-Ostry (Grade 6/7), Myriam Sawicki (French Resource Teacher), Julie Mann (Grade 4/5), Kelly Smith (Kindergarten) and Donna Paproski (counselor).

**SCHOOL ORGANIZATION:** I would like to thank the parents and the staff for being patient as we work on putting a school organization together that is able to meet the needs of most everyone. There are a number of factors that become important when looking at the make-up of the different classes. Some of the factors are that we are bound by a collective agreement, others are ministry guidelines that we need to follow, and others involve individual children and looking at their learning styles, their friendships, their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers spend hours and hours of their time making the best educational decisions for grouping the students. It is difficult for us to organize our classes by the first week as families move in and out of our catchment area throughout the summer. We hope to have everyone in his or her classes by Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>. Please let us know if you have any information about families who may have moved over the summer.

## **COMMUNICATION:**

**Administration:** At General Gordon there has always been an open door policy where students and parents are able to come and speak to the administration when they have concerns about their child's education. We found last year that with our schedules being so busy either at meetings; teaching or working with students it was difficult for parents to know when we are available. In the mornings the office area is very busy and we are usually working with the student morning announcers and it is a difficult time to talk to parents. It also makes it a very noisy place where it is difficult for the office staff to concentrate. This year I will be placing a schedule of 15-minute time slots on the days and times that I am available outside the office. If after that meeting we need more time we can arrange another meeting. Thank you for your patience and I look forward to meeting all of you.

**Teaching Staff:** Please be respectful when setting up meetings to talk to the teachers about your child's learning. Right at the beginning of class is not the best time as teachers are prepping for the day and need that time to organize their lessons. Please speak to the teacher at the end of the day to make a convenient time for both of you. We thank you for your consideration towards and respect of our amazing staff at General Gordon.

**PAC WELCOME:** Hello and welcome to the new school year from your PAC (Parent Advisory Council) Chair. My name is Ingrid Sulston and I have a son in grade 3 and a daughter in grade 1. The PAC at Gordon Elementary is active in many events and activities at the school, complementing the work of our teachers and staff. We help parents navigate school issues, facilitate communication between the parents and staff or with outside organizations, organize social and fundraising events for the school, and are an advocate for a quality school.

We communicate through our PAC meetings, our website ([www.gordonelementary.ca](http://www.gordonelementary.ca)), this school newsletter, the bulletin board near the school office, and through talking in the playground. Our first PAC meeting is Monday Sept 28th, starting at 6:45pm in the library. PAC meetings through the year alternate between Monday and Tuesday evenings. Come to the first meeting to hear more about what we do, bring your questions and comments, and to help us start to plan parents' involvement in the school this year. If you would rather be involved through specific events, rather than meetings, look out for the parent volunteer sheet coming home in the next week or so. You can also contact me directly any time with questions or comments at [isulston@gmail.com](mailto:isulston@gmail.com) or (604) 263 1920. Welcome to you all, and wishing you an enjoyable and productive school year.

**LUNCH NOTICES** Lunch notices will be going home today. Hot lunch will start on Thursday, September 10. Please bring your hot lunch notices with your cheque included in the envelope.

**COMPUTER UPDATE:** The school board is making a commitment to updating our schools with new computers and technology. This summer, through the tremendous efforts of the LIT team supported by student volunteers from David Thompson Secondary School, 102 schools received new computers. That means that in 31 business days, the largest single managed deployment of computers that any school district in BC has ever seen was completed successfully. The actual number of computers installed during this phase of the project was 5782. This was by all accounts an extraordinary achievement which required the commitment, skill and energy of our schoolboard people as well as logistical support from our vendor, Dell Canada and the transportation company Purolator. The net effect as stated at the outset of this endeavor is that our students and staff will have far greater opportunity to access contemporary, appropriate and sustainable technology in support of their learning and communication needs. The Computer Sustainability Project does not cover all the needs of the school district, but it should establish a firm base from which to build upon. General Gordon has received a new lab of 30 computers and one new computer for each classroom. The staff at General Gordon wish to thank the LIT team for all their hard work.

**H1N1 UPDATE:** The health and safety of your children and our staff is always a priority. There will be a pamphlet sent home to parents in the coming weeks. We ask you to reinforce and model the following three prevention measures in your home:

- 1) Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds (sing Happy Birthday twice)
- 2) Cover coughs and sneezes with the inside of your elbow or a tissue
- 3) If your child is feeling sick, keep them home. Please call the office to notify the school of their absence. If your child should get sick at school you will be called to come and pick them up.

**BIG SLIDE NEWS:** The beloved slide on the west side of the school is due to be removed by the Vancouver School Board. It fails the safety standards in so many ways that the VSB are unable to remove, repair and reinstall it. PAC can fundraise to buy a new wide slide that could be installed in an alternative location (about \$15K). There is one avenue open to parents who would like to pursue having a slide in the old location: hire an independent playground inspector who would make recommendations for a modified slide on the stairs. This would require some significant time and fundraising efforts (upwards of \$20K) by parents. There is also no guarantee that at the end of this process installation on the stairs would be approved. If there are parents who are willing to take this on, please contact Ingrid (PAC Chair) at (604) 263 1920 or [isulston@gmail.com](mailto:isulston@gmail.com) by Thursday Sept 10<sup>th</sup>. If there is no response, there will be a farewell ceremony for the big slide at the BarBQ on Sept 15th.

**NEWSLETTERS/INFORMATION BULLETINS** Regular communication is one important way that parents can be well-informed about what goes on at school. Please expect two newsletters a month. We have been posting the newsletter on the website that Ingrid and Paul Sulston have set up for us at [www.gordonelementary.ca](http://www.gordonelementary.ca). There will be hard copies of the newsletter available in the office for those families who need it. Also this newsletter on the back will have the school calendar for the year 2009-2010 showing our professional days, holidays and parent-teacher conferences. If at anytime you have questions about the school or your child's learning please don't hesitate to make an appointment with your child's teacher or phone the office for an appointment with the principal or vice-principal.

## **GORDON SCHOOL AGENDA PROGRAM and PERFORMANCES**

**Agendas:** Student agendas are another very useful communication and teaching tool. There are 2 added supplements to the agenda including an "online safety" module and a "health and wellness" module and attached to their agenda is the school handbook. The cost of the agenda for the Grades 4-7 students is **\$10.00**.

**Performances:** Catherine MacIntyre, our music specialist has taken the time to research and book some exciting performances to show our children and school community this year. These performances are costly and in order to maintain the variety of experiences and number of performances we are asking for **\$10.00 from each student**. The school and the PAC will also be providing funds for some performances. Catherine always chooses a variety of performances for the students to enjoy. These performances will be described in the upcoming newsletters. She will book five performances and then our PAC sponsors two extra performances so that our students benefit from numerous enriching experiences. We welcome families to come and join us for these performances and times will be posted in the upcoming newsletters.

Intermediate students (4-7)	Agenda/planner & performances	\$20.00	
Primary students (K-3)	Performances		\$10.00
Kindergarten students	Performances	\$5.00	

*Please send cash or write a cheque made payable to General Gordon School by Friday, September 19*

*Please don't hesitate to contact us at the school if you have difficulty with finances as all our students need to benefit from the ongoing learning experiences we provide at the school.*

## **STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE**

The Vancouver District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) has recommended that Industrial Alliance Pacific Life Insurance Company be the provider of 2009/2010 Student Accident Insurance plan, IAP Kids Plus. The Vancouver Board of Education supports the DPAC approved plan to provide accident insurance coverage to students and encourages schools to distribute the relative information. There is always the potential risk of an accident occurring on school grounds, but just because a student is hurt during a school related activity, it does not mean the school district is responsible or liable. As the school district does not carry accident

insurance for students, payment would be made by our insurers only where there is negligence on the part of the school and/or district.

Here are some benefits of IAP Kids Plus accident insurance coverage:

- Offers protection against unexpected accidents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Supplements existing health and dental insurance
- Provides coverage for services, such as chiropractic treatment and physiotherapy, which are not covered by BC Medical
- Benefits those families who have not resided in BC long enough to qualify for medical coverage

Further information regarding insurance coverage can be found in the enrolment forms which have been distributed to all schools. Please distribute the enrolment forms to all students in your school and ensure the parents in your school are aware that this voluntary coverage is available to them. Please contact me at (604) 713-5004 if you require further information, or require more enrolment forms. Enrolment and claim forms, as well as detailed information, can also be found on-line at [www.iapkidsplus.com](http://www.iapkidsplus.com).

## COMMUNITY NEWS

**VANCOUVER EAGLES YOUTH BASKETBALL**: a member of Basketball BC and Steve Nash League, invites students to join one of 4 basketball League teams. Our Teams are divided by age group: League 1- ages 6-7 years old; League 2 – ages 8-9 years old; League 3 – ages 10-11 years old; League 4 – ages 12-13 years old; We teach basketball skills and children play regular games and tournaments. **We offer 12 scholarships**: 8 scholarships for Vancouver School District students, who need financial assistance with the registration fees; 4 scholarships for: Van Horne, Trafalgar, Carnarvon and Jamieson Elementary Schools. Fall Season starts September 14, 2009. Practices and games: in Van Horne and Trafalgar Elementary School Gyms every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 5-9pm. For more information on how to register for the current season, please visit our website: [www.cplc.ca/basketball](http://www.cplc.ca/basketball) or phone: 604-738-2377.

**GIRL GUIDES/BROWNIES**: You are invited to join Girl Guides of Canada. September 14 is Registration Day. If you need information for Brownies (Girls in Grades 2 & 3) please call Cinda Graham at 604-931-5228 and leave a message.

**FALL PROGRAMS AT LYCEUM**: Please see the brochures on the PAC bulletin board or go to [www.christianehayward.com](http://www.christianehayward.com)