



## Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

September 5, 2024

### Dates to Remember:

Monday, September 9 ~ First Day of Birch Buddies ~ Fall HIKE!

Tuesday, September 17 ~ BGCS Board Meeting at 4:00

Thursday, September 19 ~ Annual K-5 Painting in the Woods!

Thursday, September 26 ~ *Hazard Heros!* show- The National Theater for Children

Monday, September 30 ~ No School, PD/Workshop for Staff

### Mission Statement:

*Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting to prepare students to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners.*

#### **From Ms. Diane Blanchette:**

*School Director, Birch Grove Community School  
Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service*

It has been another great start to a school year! We started our week with the Bell Ringing Ceremony on the first day of school. Welcome to all of our new and former families - we are glad that you are here!

BGCS will strive to give every child what they need to make significant growth throughout the year, but we will need your help to do it. Please communicate with your child's teacher, encourage and support your child with any homework they may have (there shouldn't be much), use time at home to promote learning, see to it that your child is read to, or reads independently at home, and make sure your child knows you think school is important. These are just a few things that you can do to promote growth. The



educational staff will have other ideas and resources for you throughout the year. Please never hesitate to contact us if you have questions, concerns or ideas.

**The front entry doors open at 7:55am and close at 8:10 am.** If you arrive after 8:10, please ring the bell for entry. All K-5 students are able to walk themselves into the building – we got this! At the end of the school day, you may pick your K-5 or Sapling up in the afternoon between **3:05 and 3:15 by the pavilion.**

Newsletters will be emailed each week, usually on Thursdays (sometimes Fridays if it is really busy around here!). Newsletters will be emailed to the address that you indicated on enrollment forms. If you would like to add an email address to the newsletter email group, please let us know. Newsletters are also posted on our school website at [www.birchgroveschool.com](http://www.birchgroveschool.com)

Be sure to check out our website at [www.birchgroveschool.com](http://www.birchgroveschool.com). You can find the school year calendar, weekly newsletters, lunch menus, school board minutes, upcoming events, resources, and more. I hope that you will be a regular visitor to our site.

Facebook:

Be sure to “Like” and “Follow” Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 Facebook page, and be sure to share with others! We post regularly – it can help to keep you up to date with events and activities!

Each Sapling and K-5 student has been given a Take Home Folder. Please check this folder daily. Use this folder as one form of communication with your child’s teacher. You can return forms and paperwork, send bus passes, etc. **Take Home Folders are checked every day – backpacks are not!**

Bus passes – if you have a change in your child’s normal busing, please send a written note. For instance, if your child is being picked up by someone and not riding the bus home, please send a note, email, or call. If your child is getting off at a different scheduled bus stop than normal, please send a note. Email will also work, but send it to both me and your child’s teacher in the event that one of us is absent. Also, emails should be sent well before the end of the day so that they are sure to be opened. If you decide to come to Birch Grove and pick your child up instead of having your child ride the bus home, you don’t need to email or call to let us know, you can just show up. If you want to do this, you just need to wait for your child to come out between 3:05-3:15 and let your child’s teacher know you are there. Buses leave at 3:15, so just be there before that. Thank you!

Hot lunch is served on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. We do not have hot lunch on Wednesdays so that Senior Lunch can happen, as it has for decades in the BG building. We appreciate you sending a lunch from home on Wednesdays. For now, please do not send anything that needs to be heated, as we will be eating outside on Wednesdays as much as possible and microwaves are not available outside. In November(ish), when we start Lantern Lunch on Wednesdays (inside the building), microwaves will be available at that time. Looking forward to Lantern Lunch!

Please send a backup lunch to be kept at school for the inevitable day that one is forgotten at home or on the bus. Backup lunches will be kept in student lockers. Non-perishables foods should be used for back-up lunches.

My Opinion Piece! 😊

In my experience, a good portion of the children that have a “bad day”, “melt down”, make poor choices, refuse or have a hard time focusing on their work, or end up in the school office to see me for challenging behaviors, **ARE TIRED.** In my opinion, if all of the children that came to school were well rested each and every school day, I believe that it would cut down on at least 50% (maybe more) of challenging behaviors, and would increase the percentage and gains of academic growth across the board.

I have included a few sleep charts below. All children are different – your child might require more/less sleep than what you see below.

Average Sleep Needs	
Age	Hours
Newborns (0-2 months)	12 - 18
Infants (3 months to 1 year)	14 - 15
Toddlers (1 to 3 years)	12 - 14
Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)	11 - 13
School-aged children (5 to 12 years)	10 - 11
Teens and preteens (12 to 18 years)	8.5 - 10
Adults (18+)	7.5 - 9



## At what time should your child go to bed?

Age	Wake-up time						
	6:00 AM	6:15 AM	6:30 AM	6:45 AM	7:00 AM	7:15 AM	7:30 AM
	Sleeping time						
5	6:45 PM	7:00 PM	7:15 PM	7:30 PM	7:30 PM	8:00 PM	8:15 PM
6	7:00 PM	7:15 PM	7:30 PM	7:30 PM	8:00 PM	8:15 PM	8:30 PM
7	7:15 PM	7:15 PM	7:30 PM	8:00 PM	8:15 PM	8:30 PM	8:45 PM
8	7:30 PM	7:30 PM	8:00 PM	8:15 PM	8:30 PM	8:45 PM	9:00 PM
9	7:30 PM	8:00 PM	8:15 PM	8:30 PM	8:45 PM	9:00 PM	9:15 PM
10	8:00 PM	8:15 PM	8:30 PM	8:45 PM	9:00 PM	9:15 PM	9:30 PM
11	8:15 PM	8:30 PM	8:45 PM	9:00 PM	9:15 PM	9:30 PM	9:45 PM
12	8:15 PM	8:30 PM	8:45 PM	9:00 PM	9:15 PM	9:30 PM	9:45 PM



### Good Attendance is Necessary for Learning:

We understand that families sometimes take vacations, have family emergencies, special people may come up north to visit, or families may go out of town early for special events, etc., and some families may pull their students from school on these days. Please keep in mind that your child could (and most likely will) get sick later in the school year and may be absent for a number of days, adding to the total number of absences that were not illness related. Please plan for your child to be sick **5-10** days in the school year, and consider this when pulling your child from school for other reasons. We are required by law to report excessive truancy/excessive absences whether excused or unexcused, to the appropriate agencies, and no one wants that. Should your child's absences become concerning, we will always reach out to you first. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Please send your child to school in layers. We go outside everyday in all but the worst weather! Children can leave a sweatshirt/jacket here at school so that they will always have it and it is not forgotten at home.

New ice skates, helmets and snowshoes have been arriving at Birch Grove! Thanks to an Arrowhead Round Up grant, we have been able to update our outdoor equipment and discard well-loved (but broken) equipment, as well as increase the amount so that classrooms can enjoy winter activities together! Thank you, Arrowhead! Pictured: Jenny Buckman, BGCS paraprofessional and organization queen.



K-5 Education Team for school year 24-25!  
Sara Knottski: K/1 Teacher  
Sara Silence: Special Education Teacher  
Stacy Coronis: 4/5 Teacher  
Jenny Buckman: Paraprofessional  
Samantha Forster: 2/3 Teacher  
Jessica Klemmer: Paraprofessional

Birch Grove Community Service team for school year 24-25!

Jessica Klemmer: Coordinator, Saplings & Seedlings Sub

Sara Silence: Coordinator, Summer Saplings & Summer Seedlings Sub

Pam Holm: Saplings Teacher

Emily VanDoren: Seedlings Teacher



Please have your child read (or be read to) a minimum of 20-30 minutes per day/night. If there is one thing that you can do at home that has a huge positive impact on your child's academic growth, this is it! Happy reading!



If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us:

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Website: [www.birchgroveschool.com](http://www.birchgroveschool.com)

School Spirit Store Link: <https://birchgrove.logosoftware.com/> You can use GRAB15 for 15% off and free shipping for orders over \$125

Face Book: [Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 | Facebook](#)



One of the joys of living up North -  
Every Friday is "Flannel Friday" at Birch Grove! Join us!





**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedlings Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

I am so excited to be the Seedlings teacher and have enjoyed working with your children this week. We took advantage of the beautiful weather by taking walks along the bike path in the morning. After our walks, we have Art/Sensory Time where we will learn about colors, shapes, counting, and lots more! We spent some time this week learning about our facial features through coloring pages & an “eye” spy worksheet. We played with play dough to work our fine motor skills, and incorporated learning about shapes and colors.

I love playing music in the classroom so that gives us plenty of opportunities to dance, sing, and even do a little learning. In the afternoons before rest time, we read LOTS of books, which seems to be a favorite for all the Seedlings.



I am looking forward to this school year and am very excited for all the fun, learning, and growth that will happen. If you have any questions/concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

I would like to say thank you for the warm welcome! It has been great getting to meet many of you.

This first week has been primarily devoted to getting to know each other and settling into our classroom routines. Everyone is enjoying the yellow playdough as we stamp letters and cut out school buses. We've talked about colors as I read Pete The Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes by Eric Litwin. We also talked about what comes next (sequencing) with the story There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Desk by Lucille Colandro.

Aspiring artists are in the making. We went over the rules of markers and glue sticks, making sure the lid clicks. We used glue sticks on squares and circles to make our school buses. We practiced using a glue bottle with “just a dot of glue will do”.



A reminder to send in family photos next week as the theme will be "All About Me". I am looking forward to our special time with your child this year. I anticipate a great school year, with much learning, sharing and fun!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**  
*K & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

K/1 had an amazing start to the school year! We spent this week learning the expectations in school. We learned to walk in the halls, sit on the carpet, and care for our classmates and school materials. We also spent time outside enjoying the beautiful weather! We played many games and got to know new friends in our class. I can tell it is going to be a great year!



We also spent time writing and drawing about ourselves, and we learned a lot about our classmates. It was great to see the new first graders step up and be role models for the new students.

Note: We have a snack twice daily, one mid-morning and one mid-afternoon. Please let me know if you wish your child not to have a snack during one or both of those times. Please pack two small healthy snacks for this time (especially on hot lunch days). The children cannot eat desserts or drink juice during this time.

Each child needs a back-up lunch, gym shoes, and an extra set of clothes at school. **Please pack a back-up lunch, gym shoes, and an extra set of clothes for your child to keep in their locker for the rest of the year.**

I look forward to a great year with the kindergarteners, first graders, and you!

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**From Ms. Samantha Forster**

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

The first week of school is completed! It was packed full of expectations and routines. We focused on writing and reading goals, expectations, and how to become a great reader through our literacy block each day! Students are applying skills that they learned last year and the new ones they are learning this week! The goal this week is to understand how to operate our readers' notebook, learn how to be safe inside and outside, and to find a routine that works for everyone in the classroom. As always, we made time to play outside. This involved going to the campsite, learning how to play games on the playground, and a long walk down the bike path. This week has been so important to the success of the year.

Thank you all for the classroom supplies! I really appreciate it. We drink a lot of water in our classroom so please ensure that your student has a water bottle. If they forget, I make sure they have a clean spare one. Also, we eat one to two snacks a day. Please send your student with a snack each day and an extra one if you would like them to have one later in the day. Thank you for your support as we start the new school year!



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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**

*4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

The school year is off to a great start in the 4/5 classroom. We have spent time learning about our new classroom and each other. Great discussions took place about how to be respectful, responsible and safe while learning and growing together. Students created a set of rules that will help everyone reach their potential this year!

4th and 5th graders enjoyed learning three new math games called Pyramid Addition, Subtraction War and Multiplication Squares. These games were not only fun, but they helped us review our basic facts. The cooperation, sharing and kind comments that students shared with each other during the games was inspiring and helped make everyone feel included. During our Reader's Workshop time, we learned about how our classroom library is organized, the different types of genres and as one student





said, " I just love reading because it makes me feel like I am somewhere different and I forget about time." How wonderful is that?! I had the chance to sit and read with each student individually to get to know them as a reader. It is obvious that Birch Grove develops avid and enthusiastic readers! Hopefully your child is finding time each evening to read at home either alone or with an adult. During our writing time we gathered different types of leaves to create leaf rubbing art and then wrote Haiku poems about autumn. Fall is in the air at Birch Grove!

Please watch for any upcoming handouts and papers that will be sent home daily in your child's folder. This Friday you will find a letter from Mrs. Coronis with contact information so that we can work together for an amazing year of learning! Thank you so much for sending your child to school with a water bottle and a snack each day to keep them hydrated and full of energy! We have needed the extra water this week as we have been exploring inside and outside each day at school. What an exciting start to a wonderful year ahead!

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