

## Welcome to a New School Year!

A special welcome to all our new Southridge families, and to our returning families, welcome back! It is wonderful to have everyone here with us at Southridge as we look forward to a new year filled with learning, growth, opportunity and community engagement. Although we are returning to school under unusual circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to assure you that the Southridge experience will continue to be an excellent one.

Of course, things will be different around the hallways and classrooms at Southridge this September. Our drop off routines have changed, as have our pick-up procedures; and how we manage the flow of students throughout the day is new for everyone, too. One thing's for certain, though, and that's the emphasis we've placed on the health and safety of our students, our teachers, our staff and our families. So please make sure to review the information in this special edition of the Southridge Wednesday to make sure you're up to date with the routines, rules and expectations we have in place to help protect our community.

Mrs. de Hoog, Mr. Smith and our educational leadership teams in the Junior and Senior Schools have been hard at work to make sure our educational programs are meeting and exceeding Ministry of Education expectations. Southridge has developed a comprehensive and flexible system that will allow the school to move easily between the stages of education we will face throughout the school year. Although we are beginning the year in Stage 2, for example, we anticipate flexing between other stages, depending on the directives set out by the Provincial Health Officer and the Minister of Education.

We also recognize the need to actively cultivate the special sense of community we've all come to appreciate at Southridge. Being intentional about creating opportunities for families to come together in ways that help them feel connected to the school and one another is important to us – and all of you, I am sure. With that in mind, our management teams have been very intentional about identifying imaginative ways for our parents to interact as a community. So, stay tuned for more information about opportunities to come together in ways that will be renewing for all of us. We've missed our Southridge families and can't wait to see you all again soon.

If there's one thing we learned during these last five (almost 6!) very long months since COVID-19 forced schools across the province to significantly restrict in-person teaching it is that we can't take anything for granted. This goes as much for the community connections that exist at Southridge as it does for our educational programs. The pandemic experience also reinforced the perseverance that's part of Southridge's history. It's what helped our school get started and it's what will see us through these new times, too. Come what may, I know Southridge will continue to flourish because we've got gumption, courage, tenacity, shrewdness and YOU. Don't underestimate the power of your own influence as we face the new normal of the 2020-21 school year together!

Drew Stephens  
Head of School