



DMS Newsflash

D e c e m b e r 2 0 2 0

Dear Parents & Guardians,

'Tis the Season for Online Safety

During this pandemic, the internet has allowed us to stay connected to others, access education, and communicate with loved ones. While the benefits are clear, our kids and society are using technology more than ever. It is amazing to have access to unlimited information and people from around the world, but the internet has plenty of pitfalls when it comes to your child being safe online. As your children navigate the internet in a variety of ways, concerns often arise about sites they visit, who they interact with, and information that is shared. The school monitors student internet usage on SPS devices through an educational technology platform called GoGuardian. GoGuardian allows teachers the ability to monitor what sites students are using and directly communicate with a student to redirect them, if needed. It also alerts school administration if students access inappropriate sites and/or engage in inappropriate behavior. In addition, it allows us to restrict certain sites as needed.

As a parent, what can you do to help keep your child safe? Here are some tips:

- 🍏 Limit the use and access to technology to specific times. It is a really good practice to store your child's devices with you at night. It is recommended that students not store their chromebooks and/or other devices in their bedrooms where they are not being monitored.
- 🍏 Set clear expectations for appropriate internet behavior (i.e. searching, social media limitations, privacy - not sharing any personal information)
- 🍏 Give careful consideration to various mechanisms your child may use to communicate (i.e. cell phones, computers, tablets, gaming mechanisms, etc.)
- 🍏 Ensure your child is not a "friend" with anyone online who he or she has not personally met and could identify on the street. Promote "stranger danger" to your child with internet usage.
- 🍏 Set up parental controls on your child's devices. Consider purchasing a program like bark.us that will allow you to monitor your child's text messages, YouTube accounts, email, and over 30 social media networks.
- 🍏 Encourage your child to immediately report any issues or concerns from the internet to you and his or her teachers.
- 🍏 Remind your child that if he or she is unsure about something on the internet, it is best to ask a trusted adult.

'Tis always the season for online safety! We realize many parents will purchase electronic devices for their children for the holiday season. Much of the technology out there today has amazing possibilities. As your child continues to learn how to utilize technology in various ways, please consider having a deliberate plan to ensure your child is safe as possible online.

Happy Holidays!



What's Inside

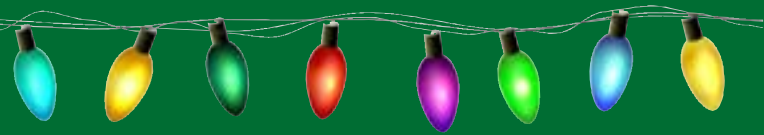
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Important Dates

December

- 4 Grades Close
- 10 Board of Education Meeting • District Office • 7 PM
- 11 Report Cards sent home • Cohort B & Distance Learning students
- 14 Report Cards sent home • Cohort A
- 15 Picture Day • Cohort A
- 17 Picture Day • Cohort B
- 22 Holiday Cheer Spirit Day
- 23 Early Dismissal • 12:10 PM
- 24-1/1 • Holiday Recess



January

- 4 School resumes
- 14 Board of Education Meeting • District Office • 7 PM
- 18 No School • Martin Luther King Day Observance

School Pictures

Lifetouch



Picture Day is Coming!

School Name:

Deans Mill School

Picture Day Dates:

**Tuesday, December 15
&
Thursday, December 17**



~Full Distance Learning Students are welcome to participate.~
~More information to come!~

Picture Day ID:

EVT9VQ47H

P T O

Dear DMS Families,

We would like to start by saying how incredibly thankful we are for our amazing teaching and administrative staff we have at DMS, as well as the continued support of our families at home. This year wouldn't have been half as successful as it has been without everyone working together.

This year we are doing our own **DMS Giving Tree**. There are many families in the community that have been greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and could use our help to make this holiday season brighter. We have collected wish lists from these families and will have the tree up by the Front Office at DMS. If you feel so inclined, you and your family can grab a tag and purchase a gift for one or more of the children.

We ask that all items please be turned into the front office by Friday, December 11, 2020, unwrapped.

Please bring your tag that you pulled in with the item you're donating.

If you have any questions, you can email Katie Quinlan at quinlanpto@gmail.com.

We hope you all had very Happy Thanksgiving!
The DMS PTO



Specials Update

Our goal for the year is to keep families informed about grade level curriculum in Art, Library, 5th Grade Band, Music, and Physical Education, and how they can support their children at home.

Art

Miss Biernacki



A great way to stay engaged in the arts over winter break is to experiment with different crafts at home. Decorating a tree, making gingerbread houses, icing cookies, building sculptures in the snow, drawing and painting greeting cards, even crafting bows and decoration for gifts out of recycled materials - the possibilities are endless! Our winter break will probably be a little different than what we're used to but that's just an excuse to exercise our creativity! Enjoy your time as a family and have fun!

Music

Mrs. McMinn



As we enter the holiday season each year, we are usually busy preparing and practicing for one of our favorite times together at DMS, the "Holiday Sing Along." This year is different, as we won't be able to sing together in school, but we know that it will not be permanent! So instead, I encourage you to have a "holiday sing along" at home with your family! I have listed a few songs with Youtube links below to get you started. Wishing your family Happy Holidays!

["O Hanukkah, O Hanukkah"](#)

["The Dreidel Song"](#)

["We Wish You a Merry Christmas"](#)

["The 12 Days of Christmas"](#)

["Kwanzaa Celebration"](#)

["A Kwanzaa Song"](#)

Library

Mrs. Anderson-Halbert



Students often have a favorite picture book, one that they can read over and over again. This month, I encourage students to become the author, and try their hand at writing their own story! They could create a picture book or short story, and this is a great month to share their writing with family and friends! You could even record it and send it to family you aren't able to visit right now. Stories come in all different formats and sizes: computer generated, hand drawn, or in poem form. Students could base their story on their favorite characters, continue the story after a book has ended, or create their own story from their imagination. Also, if you're looking for something to do during the holiday break, there are some great make-and-take crafts, online story times, and curbside pickup of books going on at the public libraries in town, so be sure to check them out. They may be some inspiration for your child's next story!

Physical Education

Mrs. LaPalme



Staying active throughout the winter can be fun with different family activities. How about creating a winter olympics? You can do this inside or outside. Try paper plate curling, create a luge track through the snow, or a snowball biathlon! Even if it is a little too cold outside, creating a "floor is lava" game or tossing sock balls into a laundry basket is a great way to stay active and have fun!

DEI Goals

The Stonington Public Schools has been focusing on promoting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion throughout the district. Here are some highlights from across the district on the good work underway to meet our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) goals.

- Eight staff members, with two representatives from each school, began an intensive DEI series offered by the Capitol Region Education Council on November 4th. They are collaborating to identify key resources and activities to implement districtwide. The series will continue over the winter months and conclude in the spring.
- Stonington High School is awaiting the review of a grant application submitted by Safe Futures, which would sponsor the school's participation in the Green Dot Program. The Green Dot program creates a school culture that supports proactive, preventative behaviors and teaches students skills and strategies to intervene in potentially high-risk situations.
- Discussions are underway to develop a professional learning session for all teachers, in conjunction with our alumni specific to their own experiences as recipients of microaggressions and prejudicial treatment.
- The faculty from West Vine Street School and Deans Mill School will commence a professional development series on trauma-sensitive instructional practices to improve student engagement beginning in January. Both Stonington High School and Stonington Middle School continue to work on these practices with consultants from EASTCONN to improve student achievement through active student engagement.

GETTING TO KNOW

Ms. Selinger Guidance Counselor

Nora Selinger is joining the DMS family as the school guidance counselor. She earned her B.S. in Human Development and Family Studies from UConn and her M.S. in School and Professional Counseling from Central Connecticut State University.

Nora has worked as a school guidance counselor for eleven years, and as a licensed professional counselor. She is excited about her new position at DMS and getting to know the students and staff.

During her personal time, Nora enjoys spending time with her three-month old daughter Bridie, two-year old son Joey, her husband, and extended family. She is an avid tennis player, skier, and runner.



NORA SELINGER

Get Psyched

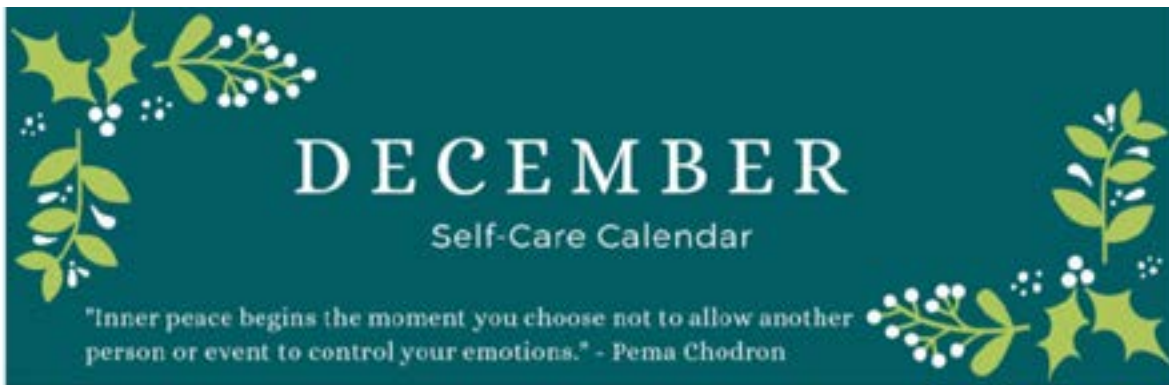
A Mental Health Note

Dear Families,

While the holiday season is often filled with joy and excitement there are also a number of associated stresses for parents and caregivers. This year is certainly no exception as we all continue to navigate through the pandemic. One of the best things that we can do to support our children is to remember to take care of ourselves. Self-care is frequently put aside as we care for our children and other members of our families. We invite you to try some of the self-care activities below on your own or as a family.

Be well and stay healthy,

Ms. M(oniz) and Mrs. R(obenhymer)



<i>Journal Prompt</i>	<i>Selfless Acts</i>	<i>Acceptance (Repeat to yourself)</i>	<i>Relax & Chill</i>	<i>Self-Lovin'</i>	<i>Move Mindfully</i>	<i>Connection</i>
1 I'm proud that I...	2 Donate some clothes, food, pet items, etc... this week	3 I choose to live in the moment and take things one day at a time.	4 Enjoy a warm drink and read a book	5 Create something festive to hang	6 Take time to stretch	7 Spread some joy by baking & sharing w/ others
8 What are 5 life lessons you've learned so far?	9 Write a note for 12 days of Love Letters (Sharing one on blog Dec. 10)	10 I am grateful for who I am.	11 Make time for an extra slow morning	12 Try out a 5 minute meditation	13 Try out a yoga class or some poses you enjoy	14 Enjoy a holiday film w/ friends or family
15 How do you maintain balance in your life?	16 Volunteer your time somewhere this week/month	17 I am gentle with myself and treat myself with kindness.	18 Light a candle and listen to some holiday music	19 Find a quote to display for the new year	20 Run/exercise watch free	21 Listen deeply to a conversation you are having
22 What is a quote that inspires you? Why?	23 Leave a positive note in a random place	24 I am enough just as I am, right now and always.	25 Take a nice walk & admire all the holiday lights	26 What's an intention you want to set for next year?	27 Do a simple body scan before you go to bed	28 Enjoy quality time w/ those you love
29 Try writing a poem about anything that comes to mind	30 Pick up trash in an area you go	31 I am strong, empowered and capable of anything.				

Hearing and Vision Screenings Update

Initial screenings have been completed. Families who are distance learning have the option of scheduling an appointment for screening. Please contact the school nurse if you would like to make an appointment.

If a vision or hearing problem has been suspected, the student will be rechecked at a second screening. If further consultation is recommended, families will be notified in writing of the findings and will be asked to seek further medical evaluation. If you have any questions concerning the screenings, please contact the school nurse.

Change of Clothes Reminder

Students in **all grades** should have a change of clothing (shirt, pants, undergarments, and socks, sneakers) to be kept in their lockers. Milk spills! Thank you.

Healthy DMS Community

Families, students and staff are doing a fantastic job adhering to the guidelines. and it is working! The incidence of spread within the DMS community has been minimal. Keep up the good work! Please continue to keep the DMS community **healthy!**

Face Masks

[How to Select, Wear, and Clean Your Mask](#)

As a reminder, Stonington Public Schools does not allow the use of neck gaiters or masks with exhalation valves.

Some say that you should change your mask as often as you change your underwear!

[Here are some reminders on how to protect yourselves and others from COVID-19.](#)

Our goal is to keep DMS as healthy as possible, especially during the pandemic, and we are asking that you continue to follow the

[Parent/Family Responsibility Form - Health Safety Requirements.](#)

Flu Shots

Flu shots are recommended by the CDC.

Study suggests that [flu vaccine may lower risk for severe COVID-19.](#)

Diabetes Workshop

Ledge Light Health District is offering a free [Live Well with Diabetes Workshop](#) starting in January. Register by December 5th.

Stay healthy!



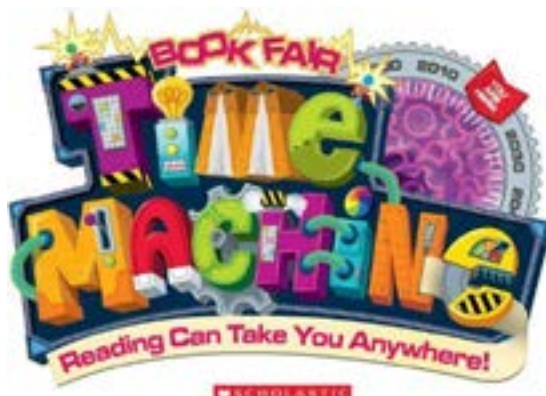
Nurse Lori
DMSnurse@stoningtonschools.org



**Food distributed every Friday
27 Chase Street, Pawcatuck**

**Each week children receive milk from a local dairy, cereal,
snacks, protein, fresh fruit, vegetables and bread.**

**Contact PNC Social Service Representative
by email: socialservices@thepnc.org
or call 860-599-3285, ext 103**



THANK YOU!!

Dear DMS Community,

Thank you for your continued support with our Fall Virtual Scholastic Book Fair! We are so grateful for such a wonderful school community. We are excited to say that we had nearly \$4,700 in purchases! Through these purchases, we earned \$1,200 in Scholastic Dollars to help the PTO to bring books and teaching supplies to all of our classrooms throughout the school year. Between generous student gifts and using Scholastic Dollars to purchase the remainder of the books from wish lists, we are bringing 170 new books to the classroom and school libraries this Fall! We may have had to do it differently this time around, but we are all in this together and we sincerely appreciate all of your help. We will see you for the Spring 2021 Book Fair coming in March. Stay healthy and stay well!

With sincere thanks,

The DMS PTO



November PTO Minutes**Draft: Deans Mill School PTO Meeting Minutes****Date: November 9, 2020**

1.Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by PTO President, Katie Quinlan at 6:33 p.m.

2.In Attendance: Principal-Jenn McCurdy, Vice Principal- Tom Bousquet, PTO President-Katie Quinlan, PTO Vice President- Jenni Adkins, PTO Secretary- Jen Flynn, Ashley Tewell, Brittany Bocian, Elyse Hicks, Rebecca Troeger, Karen Balestracci, Ruth Peterle-Dzurec, Whitney Myers, Merin Troutman, Tracey Strelczuk, Elizabeth Lillie, Pamela Choquette.

3.Secretary's Report Approval: Reviewed PTO Meeting Minutes from September 15, 2020. Motion to approve by Ashley Tewell, Second by Jenni Adkins. All in favor unanimous.

4.Treasurer Report Approval: Beginning balance of \$51, 965. Register balance \$43, 128.78. Not including apparel (\$2,800) Motion to approve by Ashley Tewell, Second by Merin Troutman. All in favor unanimous.

5.New Business

Principal's Report: Principal Jenn McCurdy provided this update.

-Continue to focus on COVID protocols. BOE will re-evaluate hybrid model in January 2021. Week after Thanksgiving will be full distance learning for all.

-Attendance & Engagement continue to be high. Attendance rate at 95%.

-Parent pick up going well. Please do not arrive before 3:25 p.m. as it causes traffic build up on Deans Mill Road.

-Please dress students accordingly as weather gets colder. Will continue to go outside for mask breaks and recess.

-Looking at possibility to allow students to use lockers to store winter gear. Would be closely monitored with only a few students going to lockers at one time.

Notification will be sent out if approved.

-Spirit Days will continue. Keep an eye out for upcoming dates.

-Winter Wonderland Walk is in the planning phase. Would be for both cohorts. More information to come on this fun event for students.

-In the process of scheduling dates for school photos. Dates will be sent out to parents. No class photo this year. Aiming for mid December.

Upcoming Chair Committee Updates

Liaisons: Ashley Tewell. Parent Liaisons have been identified for all classrooms. Goal is to send tokens of appreciation/thanks to teachers throughout the month of November. Email lists are being provided to liaisons for each class.

Directory: Katie Quinlan. Directory is just about finished. Will be printed and distributed ASAP.

Annual Appeal: Katie Quinlan provided update for Tracy Brunelle. Information will be included in the Newsflash for the next few months. Donations can be made throughout the entire year. Email blast as a reminder of the program will also be sent out. No envelopes/letters will be mailed out this year. PayPal link can also be used to donate.

Giving Tree: Looking to identify a chair for the Giving Tree. Program is run through the Pawcatuck Neighborhood Center. List will be provided by the center, with requests for gifts made by local children. DMS families can purchase gifts for families in need. Please reach out to Katie Quinlan if you would like to be a chair for this program. Program will happen either way.

Cultural Enrichment: Merin Troutman. Author/Illustrator Day. Scott Rothman has been identified as the presenting author. His book is Attack of the Underwear Dragon. Compensation will be donated back to the PTO. Event will be virtual. Date TBD. Exploring ideas for other virtual events as well.

Old Business

Mums Sale: Thank you Tracey Strelczuk for a successful event!

Apparel: Thank you for your orders! We are waiting on a few items to fulfill some orders. Most orders have been fulfilled. Reach out to Jenni Adkins with any questions.

Box Tops: No new information at this time. Box Tops information can always be found in the monthly Newsflash.

Book Fair: Thank you Heidi Redfern & Stephanie Gagnon! Virtual Book Fair was a success. More details to be included at next PTO Meeting.

Meeting was adjourned by PTO President, Katie Quinlan, at 7:14 p.m.
Minutes were transcribed by PTO Secretary, Jen Flynn