

November 2020

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REMINDER **No Classes**

Wed. Nov. 25th
Thur. Nov. 26th
Fri. Nov. 27th

Thanksgiving Break

John Wood Elementary School
6100 E. 73rd Ave.
Merrillville, Indiana 46410
(219) 650-5305
<https://www.mvsc.k12.in.us/8/home>

The John Wood Parent Newsletter



Principal Petralia's Page

by Mrs. Petralia

Dear John Wood Families,

The end of the first trimester is Friday, November 13th! Please look for your child's report card on Skyward on November 20th. If you need help accessing Skyward, please contact our main office at 219-650-5305.

Virtual learning can be stressful for everyone. I have been in many classrooms and watched as teachers lost students in their Google Meets for no reason or the video they wanted to show wouldn't work. Please know that the teachers at John Wood are here early, late into the evening, and are asking questions over the weekend because they're trying to make this easier for everyone.

As a parent, I know that virtual learning is difficult for parents as well. Children behave differently at school than they do at home. Getting up and going to school daily provides a routine for families. Students may not show the same effort while they are learning from home.

We know that this is a challenging time for everyone right now. We can only get through this if we support each other and communicate when we need help.

Thank you for your partnership with us!

Follow our MCSC superintendent and our John Wood principal on Twitter!

Both Mr. Brown, our MCSC superintendent, and
Mrs. Petralia, our John Wood principal are on Twitter!

Follow Mr. Brown at @MerrillvilleSu3.

Follow Mrs. Petralia at @PrinPetralia.

Important Message from the Superintendent

Dear Merrillville School Corporation Parents and Guardians,

I would like to share an important update regarding COVID-19 in our district. I have been in conversations with the Lake County Department of Health about concerns with the increasing positivity rates and how this impacts our community. The Merrillville Community School Corporation will continue with our current virtual learning plan (including food service and other programs) until we return from our holiday breaks which is January 4, 2021. This decision has been made for several important reasons.

- The positivity rate for Lake County has been increasing consistently since late September. The Board of School Trustees approved my recommendation to provide in-person learning as an option for the second trimester on October 6th. At that time, the unique positivity rate was at 10.2% and today it is at 20%. The Lake County Department of Health chart indicates we should be in a virtual learning experience due to the current rate of positivity.
- The district is experiencing rising cases and subsequent quarantines of their close contacts. This is impacting the district's ability to properly staff buildings and provide bus service. This increased unique positivity rate has had an impact on our current staff at all levels. The percentage of staff required to quarantine for COVID-19 related issues has increased to a level that impacts our ability to provide an in-person learning experience for our students if offered today.
- Holiday breaks which provide an opportunity for families to gather together may increase the potential of being exposed to someone that has tested positive for COVID-19. We believe families may have a better idea of whether they were exposed to COVID-19 over the holidays and are therefore a close contact who must quarantine.
- It is also a concern that during the months of November and December, with the holiday breaks and people getting together, there will be increased staff quarantine issues impacting our ability to provide in-person learning as well as possible increased positivity rates in Lake County.

The district will remain with our current virtual learning plan through January 4, 2021. The high school courses being taught in a blended learning experience will continue to be taught in a blended learning experience through January 4, 2021. Parents that selected in-person learning in the recent survey will be provided that option when we return January 4, 2021.

If your child is currently enrolled in Adventure Club or Boys and Girls Club, please reach out to them for updated information.

If you have any questions, please reach out to your school principal for additional information. Thank you for your understanding and patience as we continue to navigate this school year.

Sincerely,
Nicholas G. Brown, Ed.S
Superintendent of Schools

Book Rental

All book rental was due on the first day of school and is now past due. All balances remaining on your account after the end of the first trimester (Nov. 13th) have been turned over for collection.

ECD Fees - \$75
Kindergarten - \$80.78
1st Grade - \$73.63
2nd Grade - \$73.94
3rd Grade - \$75.24
4th Grade - \$83.02

Thank you to all of the parents who have already paid their child's book rental.

Good Citizens October 2020

ECD

Legend Hudson –
Miss McCorkle (Miss Kati)
Raiden Moffitt –
Mrs. Straley (Miss Kim)

Multi-Grade

Liam Perez – Mrs. Gates

Kindergarten

Kingston Richardson -Mrs. Anderson
Londyn Harvey – Mrs. Scott
Camden Toney – Mrs. Shalla

1st Grade

Zoey Moreland – Mrs. Matthews
Maya Castro – Mrs. Pace
Kellen King – Miss Welsh

2nd Grade

Brooklynn Phillips – Mrs. Carney
Dani Hart – Ms. Foster
Keiridon Mays – Mrs. Marshall

3rd Grade

Antoni Babel – Mrs. Busch
Tyler Eich – Mrs. Cseke
Jaylon King – Mrs. Mahy

4th Grade

Abigail Velasco – Miss Jongsma
Isabella Balbosa – Miss Vlassopoulos

Coats for Kids

Thanks to all who were able to donate a coat during our recent coat drive. Our school was able to contribute an astounding 209 coats! Your contributions helped to keep many families warm this winter (and you helped John Wood retain the trophy for the most coats collected!).

Over 300 coats were handed out at the distribution at Impact Church on November 7th.

If you were not able to attend the distribution, but are in need of a winter coat, please contact our social worker, Mrs. Robbins, and she will assist you.

Student of the Week

Every Monday we recognize one of our students. The teachers choose a student who has been a shining star that week. It can be for a variety of reasons, effort, behavior, participation, mental attitude, being kind, etc. Maybe they did something special this week or overcame a specific difficulty. Whatever the reason, we are proud of these students and want everyone to know how great these children are.

Each "Student of the Week" will be highlighted in the weekly announcements, on Mrs. Petralia's Twitter, and on the MCSC and PTO Facebook pages.

October 26, 2020

Claire Jania
ECD, Miss McCorkle (Miss Kati)

November 2, 2020

Jeremiah Martinez
4th grade, Mrs. Spoolstra

November 9, 2020

Isaac Estes
1st grade, Ms. Hannigan

Attendance "Beary" Award - October

Each month we have a fun reward for the class with the best attendance. The class with the highest percentage of attendance for the month receives the "Beary" Attendance Trophy at our monthly Pirate Power meeting.

October "Beary" Winner
Ms. Foster's 2nd Grade Class
99.67%

The class will have the honor of having the "Beary" trophy as a special guest in their classroom for the next month.

Remember, attendance is critical to learning, now more than ever. Make sure to be on time and ready to work for ALL classes!

The Book Nook

Students have the opportunity to participate in the Young Hoosier Contest:

- K-3 – read and complete activities for all 20 picture books.
- 4th grade – read nine chapter books and one picture book.
- Qualify for ribbon/medal.
- Library YH party
- Vote for your favorite with other students across Indiana in May.

Young Hoosier books are located in students' Classwork Lesson. Contest ends April 23, 2021!

Effective immediately, there will be a change to our Curbside Library Days. We are adding an additional pick-up day. You will now be able to pick-up books on Tuesday AND Wednesday between 2:00 and 3:15 p.m.

Please do not reserve a book if you will not be able to pick it up during one of the designated times. Every week we have had books that were reserved and never picked up.

PTO News

We have temporarily suspended all social activities and meetings during this time. However, there are still things you can do to help our PTO.

Box Tops/Coke Codes

We are not doing any contests at this time, but are still encouraging you to participate in this program. Most participating products have switched over to digital "clips" so it's vital that you download the Box Tops for Education app and scan your receipts. Don't just scan your grocery receipts, scan them all! That package of pens you picked up at Menards or the Lysol you picked up at the dollar store may be a valid box top item! By scanning your receipt, the app will automatically look for qualifying products and will give us the credit immediately.

A few products still have the old "clips" the need to be torn off the box and sent in. Don't forget to still look for those and drop them off at the school.

Continue saving those Coke product codes! Those nickels add up quickly!

Strack & Van Til's/ Apples for the Students

We are once again participating in this program. This is an easy way to help earn goods for our school. Just collect all Strack & Van Til receipts and drop them off in our office. We will accept all receipts dated between Sept. 1, 2020 and Mar. 1, 2021. As we submit the receipts, we will earn points that can be redeemed for computers, iPads, sporting goods, A/V equipment, science supplies, and hundreds of other items! Ask your friends and relatives to save their receipts, too!

Toys for Tots

We are an official Toys for Tots drop-off location. Students will receive a Toys for Tots paper train engine with their name for each toy donated. The trains will be posted on the windows at the front of the building. Remember that they only accept **NEW**, unwrapped toys. Toys will be accepted until Friday, December 4th.

Rada Cutlery Fundraiser

We are trying a fundraiser like no fundraiser we have done before.

- Rada products are 100% American made – from raw materials through construction – so you know you are getting outstanding craftsmanship while supporting American jobs.
- Rada products come with a lifetime guarantee and will replace any product made by them that is returned due to defect in material or workmanship.
- Rada Cutlery has been around since 1948, so generations have grown up using (and loving) these products.
- Rada knives are crafted with surgical quality high carbon stainless steel and sharpened by hand so you can enjoy a razor-sharp edge.

We are attempting to do this sale online only since our students are still virtual learning. Orders can be placed at any time by going to: <https://radafundraising.com/?rfsn=4830060.22fc62>.

All orders placed online will be delivered directly to your house. Our fundraiser is from now until November 30th. Orders placed using this link will result in a portion of your purchase going to our PTO.

Pop Tab Collection

We are continuing to collect pop tops for the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana. Collected pop tabs are recycled, generating much-needed funds to support the Ronald McDonald House and the nearly 1,500 families we serve each year.

Simply remove the pop tab from aluminum cans and put them in your favorite collection container. When you are ready to send them to school, just put them in a Ziploc-type bag and drop them off at school. There's no competition, no goal, no prizes...just the gift of compassion.

Upcoming Events

Every Monday and Thursday
Virtual Learning Meal Distribution
11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

See the article on page 3 for more information.

Every Tuesday and Wednesday
Curbside Library
2:00-3:20 p.m.

See the article on page 5 for more information.

Every Thursday
Buddy Blue Day

Wear blue to remind you to be a buddy!

Every Thursday
Early Dismissal
1:15 p.m.

Students will be dismissed early on this day so teachers can attend Professional Development.

Every Friday
Pirate Pride Day

Wear purple or spirit wear to show your support.

November 25-27

No Classes, Thanksgiving Break

Enjoy time with family and friends and remember all the things you have to be thankful for this year. Classes will resume on Monday, November 30th.

December 4

Last day for Food Drive and Toys for Tots
Collection containers are located in front of the building during school hours and near the meal distribution area on Mondays and Thursdays.

December 21-January 1
Winter Holiday Break

No classes. We hope everyone has a joyous holiday. We'll see you after the new year begins. Classes resume on Monday, January 4, 2021.

January 4, 2021
School Resumes

We are tentatively scheduled to begin in-person learning on this day for parents who choose this option.

January 15
Picture Day

This day is tentatively scheduling **IF** we are back to in-person learning.

**Our PTO has a Facebook page!
Friend us at:**

www.facebook.com/johnwood.pto

We try to use this page to pass along important information and reminders from the school.

A Word from the Social Worker

Mrs. Robbins, LCSW

During the month of November, students celebrated Anti-Bully Week. It is important to understand that bullying often takes place online more and more these days. Please be aware of whom your children are talking to; what they are talking about; or if others are not being friendly to your child. Do talk to your children about reaching out for help if they are dealing with someone who is not being nice to them online.

Also, as COVID-19 still causes undue hardship at an often already financially difficult time of year, there are resources available.

There are food resources as well as Christmas gift resources available. These resources are not limited to this time of year and there are many others available on the Merrillville School website <https://sites.google.com/mvsc.k12.in.us/mcscsocialworkcovid-19/home>. As the usual contact and family interactions are looking very different this year, please feel free to reach out to me if you need any assistance. All help and resources will be confidential.

You can contact me at drobbins@mvsc.k12.in.us or via cell, call or text at 219-649-0059. If I am unable to answer, please leave a message with the best time and way to reach out to you.

John Wood School **BEST** Pledge

John Wood is the **BEST** of schools,
Spell out **BEST** you'll know the rules,

First is **B**, that's the way.

Be responsible every day.

Next is **E**, that's correct.

Everyone deserves respect.

Third is **S**. This is cool.

Safety counts when you're at school.

Finally, it's letter **T**.

We will **T**alk appropriately.

Student Council Virtual Food Drive

Our student council has had the opportunity to help with a few things already this year. They recently made posters and decorated the front of the school building with drug abuse awareness posters and red ribbons during Red Ribbon Week in October.

Currently, our student council is organizing a food drive (and more) for our local food bank. A collection box will be placed in front of the school near the main entrance during school hours.

During this time of need, suggested items include (but not limited to):

- Food items – canned fruits and vegetables, nuts, pasta, cereal, crackers, etc.
- Personal hygiene items – soap, shampoo, facial tissues, toothpaste, deodorant, etc.
- Cold weather items – newly purchased socks, hats, mittens, etc.

All items will be packed up and donated to the Ross Township Food Bank. They are always appreciative of our support.

Thank you in advance for your support of this worthwhile endeavor.

The Latest Scoop from the Kitchen

All students are currently able to receive breakfast and lunch at no cost due to a waiver that has been granted by the USDA. This waiver was originally only until the end of 2020, but it has now been extended until the end of the school year.

Meal distribution will continue to be every Monday and Thursday from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Entrance C on the east side of the building.

If you have any questions, please call the Food Service Dept. at 219-650-5300.

A Reminder from the Nurse

With the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in addition to the cold and flu season, I'd like to remind you of a few things to help keep us all healthy.

- Hand washing is one of the most important things you can do to keep yourself and your family healthy. Spend some time with your child and go over this important skill. Remind them to wash frequently, especially after using the restroom and before eating. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Remind your child to keep their hands, fingers and other objects out of their nose, eyes, and mouth. These areas are entry points for germs.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or arm and not into your hands.
- Wear a mask whenever you are in public. Remind your children that they need to keep the mask over their nose. When we return to in-person, they need to wear the mask correctly while in the building.
- Remember to stay at least 6 feet apart from people who don't live with you.
- Most importantly, if you are not feeling well or are showing any symptoms, please stay at home.

Device Reminders

Turn off your device every night so that you are sure to have all the latest updates.

Make sure your device is fully charged before starting class in the morning.

Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

If you are having a problem with your device, please contact technology at:

helpdesk@mvsc.k12.in.us

or

219-650-5376.