

February 2023

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NO SCHOOL

Friday, Feb. 17th

and

Monday, Feb. 20th

Winter Break/
Presidents' Day

John Wood Elementary School
6100 E. 73rd Ave.
Merrillville, Indiana 46410
(219) 650-5305

The John Wood Parent Newsletter



From the Desk of Principal Igras

by Mrs. Igras

Hello Wood Family,

I can't believe it is almost March! All of the students have grown so much these past few months.

Just a few reminders about arrival and dismissal as it is so important for the safety of our students:

- Please do not go around or pass any cars in our lot.
- Students need to enter/exit the car from the passenger side only.
- Driver must remain in the vehicle at all times.

The admin team and grade level teachers are making plans for the upcoming state standardized tests. iREAD is the first assessment to take place and will be given to all 2nd graders and 3rd graders. The window for the assessment is March 6th – March 17th. If your child achieves mastery on the assessment, they will not have to take it again. Please make sure your child continues to eat a good breakfast and gets a good night's sleep.

For the rest of the year, the "Wood Rocks Reading" challenge will continue. New forms will be sent home every Friday and are due back the following Friday. Reading at home helps your child to strengthen their language, vocabulary, and comprehension skills. Please encourage your child to participate in the "Wood Rocks Reading Weekly Challenge".

Boost Your Child's Literacy Skills!

Ask questions before, during, and after reading aloud.

IgraSPY

Mrs. Igras

Every month, one John Wood student who is seen by me going above and beyond in the school setting, receives the IgraSPY trophy and certificate.

December

Daijon Jones – Ms. Halliburton

January

Maribelle Flores – Miss Talian

Dean's Discussion

By Mrs. Swift, Dean of Students

Hello John Wood Families!

"In a world where you can be anything, be kind!"

For the month of February, here at John Wood we are focusing on Kindness. Throughout the month there will be various activities happening in classrooms and building-wide. Students have also brought home Kindness Bingo sheets with several different options/ways for the student to be kind to others. Once your child completes an activity on the bingo sheet please sign or initial the boxes they have completed. When your child gets a bingo he or she will bring the sheet to the front office for a prize!

Please continue to have conversations with your child regarding being kind to others and following adult directions. If they are having an issue with a peer they need to find an adult and ask for help rather than "taking care" of the situation themselves by hitting or kicking someone else when they are upset with that peer. Just a reminder, if you have not reviewed the Merrillville Community School Corporation Elementary Handbook for school conduct and discipline policies and procedures, please refer to that document should you have any questions regarding discipline.

Starting this week, I will be challenging all of the students to do their best by showing kindness to others, following adult directions, and following all school rules. Any student from February 13th through March 24th who does not receive a discipline write-up or office referral will have their name entered into a drawing. Then, the week of March 27th (right before Spring break) I will select two names from each grade level. Those students will be invited to "Dine with the Dean" where I will provide lunch to those students as a way to encourage positive behavior school wide.

Thank you for sharing your children with us here at John Wood and let's work together "to spread kindness like confetti!"

New Staff

A member has joined the John Wood Staff. Former John Wood student, Mr. Trotter is our new Technology Coordinator! He replaces Mrs. Nikrin who recently retired. Welcome back, Mr. Trotter!

This brings the total to THREE former John Wood students currently on the staff in our building!

The C.A.P.S. Program

In January 2015, the Merrillville Town Court with the support of Merrillville Schools launched the C.A.P.S. (Consistent Attendance Promotes Success) Program. After Merrillville Town Court Ordinance #14-32 was passed, it opened the door to establish a truancy court system to support schools, students and their families in addressing attendance, such as being excessively absent and tardy to school.

Research has shown that students who attend school consistently have a greater likelihood of academic success. The truancy court focuses on addressing attendance problems head on by having students and parent(s) share with the Merrillville town court judge their attendance issues and they are given the opportunity to explain their circumstance. The judge then gives the student and his/her family options, which consist of community services and supports, rather than immediate fines traditionally associated with this type of noncompliance.

Those options come in the form of community support provided by the Geminus Corporation, while working in tandem with the Merrillville Town Court Judge to provide supportive alternatives.

Here in Merrillville Schools we want all of our students to have the opportunity to experience success on multiple levels, and we believe that the C.A.P.S. program supports Merrillville School students and their families in that endeavor.

Emergency Communications

In cases of inclement weather or other emergency situations, there may be times when school needs to be cancelled or delayed. In those cases, information will be broadcast over various Northwest Indiana and Chicago television and radio stations. MCSC also uses a variety of additional ways to notify parents.

- Delays and closings will be posted on the Merrillville Community School Corporation website at www.mvsc.k12.in.us.
- You will receive an automated call to the phone number you gave us as your primary number in Skyward. Do not change it to "unlisted" or you may not receive important notices.
- You may choose to receive an email notification by registering with an outside service. This site offers the opportunity to sign up for web alerts. The alerts can be provided to any email you provide. <http://www.cancellations.com/>
- MCSC and John Wood PTO may also post this information on their Twitter and/or Facebook pages.

Many factors go into the decision to have a 2-hour delay or school closing. To read an explanation about how the decision is made, go to the MCSC website. Click on "Parents", then "Emergency School Closing Information."

Reminder

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call and let the school office know why a child is not in school. Make sure you call 650-5305 then press 2 before 9 a.m. if your child will not be in school.

Good Citizens December 2022

ECD

Samara Alvarado – Miss McCorkle
(Miss Kati)

Multi-Grade

Jayden Washington – Ms. Polacek
Sara Webb – Miss Wiley

Kindergarten

Gabriel Sutton – Mrs. Anderson
Riley Kempke – Mrs. Scott
Dylan Windle – Mrs. Shalla

1st Grade

Greyson Moseley – Mrs. Pace
Jazelle Blevins – Miss Talian
Antwaun Hill – Miss Welsh

2nd Grade

Ashton King – Mrs. Carney
Nixon Mathias – Mrs. Foster
Brooklyn Ling – Mrs. Marshall

3rd Grade

Joyrdan Brown – Mrs. Cseke
Nathan Perez – Miss Hull
Cain Martinez – Mrs. Mahy

4th Grade

Isabel Whittinghill – Miss Jongsma
Latrice Hubbard – Miss Vlassopoulos

Good Citizens January 2023

ECD

Moriah Eatman – Miss McCorkle
(Miss Kati)

Multi-Grade

Jaiden Woodson – Ms. Polacek
Bre'ze Baker – Miss Wiley

Kindergarten

Marshall Vaughn – Mrs. Anderson
Brooklynn Lustro – Mrs. Scott
Haiden Brown – Mrs. Shalla

1st Grade

Jersey Finnearty – Mrs. Pace
Xavier Boone – Miss Talian
Trinity Dennie – Miss Welsh

2nd Grade

Myla Smoot – Mrs. Carney
A'Kerah Powell – Mrs. Foster
Mila Hall – Mrs. Marshall

3rd Grade

Tristen Dennie – Mrs. Cseke
Katelyn Aldridge – Miss Hull
Francisco Sanchez – Mrs. Mahy

4th Grade

Jaxx Annoman – Miss Jongsma
Isaiah Watson – Miss Vlassopoulos

Drop-off Reminders

For your child's safety, we strongly suggest that your child ALWAYS gets out on the curb side of the vehicle. Getting out on the traffic side puts your child into a dangerous location where someone may not see them.

Please remember that when dropping off at the curb in the morning, you must stay in your vehicle at all times. When parents pull up to the curb, then get out of their car either to assist their child or to drop something off, even a brief delay quickly causes traffic to back up and create an unsafe situation.

If you must get out of your vehicle FOR ANY REASON, please drop your child off first, then pull around to the front of the building and wait until the buses have finished dropping off students. After the buses have left, our office staff will be happy to help you.

In addition, please stay in the single file line while waiting to drop off. Do not create a second line. We do not want children stepping out of their vehicle and walking between cars.

Remember that the safety of our students is our primary concern as they are arriving at school. We appreciate your cooperation.

Upcoming Events

Every Thursday

Buddy Blue Day

Wear blue to remind you to be a buddy!

Every Friday

Pirate Pride Day

Wear John Wood spirit wear, Merrillville spirit wear, or even just purple to show support for our school community! Everyone who wears purple will have their name in a weekly drawing. One winner will be pulled from each grade level to win a small prize.

Every Friday

Turn in your weekly "Wood Rocks Reading" to be included in the weekly drawing for a small prize.

February 17-20

Winter Break/Presidents' Day

No School

February 20

Lake County Read-a-Thon Ends

Today is the last day of the Lake County Public Library Read-a-Thon. Please collect your money and turn it in to Mrs. Echols promptly.

March 2

PTO Meeting

6:00 p.m., Cafeteria

All parents/guardians are welcome! See our article on page 4.

March 3

End of Second Trimester

Today is the end of the second trimester. You may view your child's grades on Skyward the following week.

March 3-7

"Double Good Popcorn" Fundraiser

Watch for information to come home soon regarding this yummy fundraiser!

March 7-17

iREAD Testing Window

All third-grade students will take the iREAD test. Attendance is important on these days.

March 12

Daylight Savings Time Begins

Remember to set your clocks FORWARD one hour.

March 27-31

Disability Awareness Spirit Week

Watch the calendar for special spirit days as we conclude Disability Awareness Month.

March 28

Spring Pictures

Photographers will be at John Wood this morning to take fun and casual portraits. Only students who pre-order online will have their photo taken. More information will come home as we near this date.

April 3-April 7

Spring Break

No school for all students. School will resume on Monday, April 10th.

PTO News

Our next PTO meeting will be Thursday, March 2nd at 6:00 p.m. As always, everyone is invited, including children.

Box Tops/Coke Codes

Box tops are now completely digital. In the rare case that you may find a physical clip that is not expired, there is no need to send it in. It will cost us more for the stamp than the amount we would get from the clip. The only way for us to receive any money from this program is for you to download the free app and scan your receipts! This will give us the credit immediately!

Continue sending in the Coca-Cola codes found under the cap of most Coca-Cola products. Codes can also be found on the tear-off corner of cases. Did you know that codes can also be found on cases of Dasani water? Look under the cardboard bottom on the inside of the shrink wrap!

Strack & Van Til/ Apples for the Students

We are continuing to collect receipts from any Strack & Van Til store. Receipts will be submitted and we will receive points for every dollar. We will be able to use these points to purchase educational and consumable products for our school. Receipts must be dated between September 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023.

Popcorn Fridays

We continue to provide this special treat for our students once a month. A half page note on purple paper will come home the day before. If you are interested in volunteering to help pop the popcorn, please contact Mrs. Hehr at 219-650-5305 ex. 6551.

Future Events

Our next fundraiser will be "Double Good Popcorn". Information will be coming home soon about this yummy fundraiser!

We have discussed the possibility of having a BINGO night or a Family

Board Game night. Interested in seeing us do something like this? Attend our next PTO meeting and give us your input!

Pop Tab Collection

John Wood School is still collecting pop tabs for Ronald McDonald House of Indiana. Simply remove the pop tab from the aluminum can and put them in your favorite collection container. When you are ready to send them to school, just put them into a Ziploc-type bag and send them with your child.

Curt Hoffman Scholarship

A \$500 scholarship will be awarded to a graduating senior from MHS who attended John Wood Elementary School for a minimum of three years. Students who were in the Honors Program are eligible provided they lived in the John Wood School district during those years.

The scholarship information will be posted on the MHS Guidance Department page in the next few weeks. Interested seniors need to fill out an online application and submit two letters of recommendation.

This scholarship was created in memory of Mr. Curt Hoffman. Mr. Hoffman was principal of John Wood School from 1989-1998, when he lost his battle with cancer.

A Few Words from the Nurse's Office

by Nurse Julie

Practice Good Health Prevention

I want to say thank you for doing your part by keeping your child home when they are ill. With our winter season still in full swing, we want to try to keep everyone safe and protected during this cold and flu season.

Remember to help protect and strengthen our own immunity by eating nutritious foods which include foods that contain vitamin C, making breakfast a priority, taking daily walks and being active, sleeping 8-10 hours a night, and finally implementing healthy hygiene habits in homes as well as at school by washing hands and wearing masks, when necessary.

February is National Children's Dental Health

It is important to care for your child's mouth and teeth. Please remind your child to brush their teeth for 2 minutes at least twice a day, floss daily and visit the dentist every 6 months to prevent cavities and other mouth condition

Important Information

It is vital that we have your current home phone number on file in our office. When we have two hour delays and school cancellations due to weather conditions, we have an automated system that is used when we need to notify you quickly with important information. If we have an incorrect or disconnected number, you may not get the notice.

Please do NOT go into the Skyward system and change your phone number to "unlisted". If you do, you will not receive crucial automated calls.

Winter Recesses

During the winter months our students go outside whenever the actual temperature or wind chill temperature is 15° or above (as long as the playground is in an acceptable condition). The students are outside for up to 30 minutes. This is a long time if they don't have proper winter clothing. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately with a winter coat, boots, hat, gloves or mittens, and scarf. If you need assistance providing these items for your child, please feel free to contact our social worker.

The winter months also bring more requests for students to stay indoors for recess. The handbook states that if a student needs to stay inside for more than three days, a doctor's note is necessary.

Tips for Staying Healthy

Keeping your family's immune system strong is especially important this time of year. Getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet, drinking lots of water, managing stress, and staying active are all ways to naturally boost your immune system.

Hand washing is the easiest and most effective thing your family can do to keep healthy. Teach your child that they should soap their hands for as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice. Remind them to wash frequently, especially after using the restroom and before eating.

Remind your children to keep their hands, fingers and other objects out of their nose, eyes, and mouth. These areas are entry points for germs.

Finally, remind them to cough or sneeze into their upper sleeve or arm and not into their hands. If they do cough or sneeze into their hand, they should wash their hands right away or use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

December/January Attendance

As we continue to encourage good attendance, we would like to recognize the classes with the highest percentage of attendance during the months of December and January.

December

Miss Hull – 3rd Grade – 98.16%

January

Miss Jongsma – 4th Grade – 98.96%

These classes had the honor of having the "Beary" attendance trophy in their room for the month following their outstanding attendance and each student received a small prize. Congratulations to these classes for successfully staying healthy!

Clothing Requests

Do you have clothes that your children have outgrown? We are always looking for backup clothing for the office. Occasionally children have "accidents" or slip and fall into mud or water. We try to provide clean, dry clothing for the child so that they can get back to class quickly. As you are beginning to go through the closets looking for items to put into your garage sale, try to keep us in mind. **We are particularly in need of sweatpants and new, unused underwear (especially smaller sizes for our K-1 students).**

When selecting clothing for young children to wear to school, please be mindful of buttons or buckles that are sometimes difficult to undo. Many of the "accidents" result from the child not being able to undo their clothing quickly enough.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation.

Coaches' Corner

Instructional Coaches –
Mrs. Lavelle, Mrs. Matthews,
Miss Zorich

Building Your Child's Vocabulary

Having conversations with and reading to your child are two great ways to help them hear and understand new words. Sharing new words with your child doesn't have to be a chore or take a long time. The best words to explore are words that are common among adult speakers but are less common to see in your child's books.

When introducing new words, keep in mind:

1. Provide a simple, kid-friendly definition for the new word.
2. Provide a simple, kid-friendly example that makes sense with their daily lives.
3. Encourage your child to create their own example.
4. Keep your new words active within your house.

Ways to Help Your Child in Math

1. Look for patterns and shapes in real life.
2. Have your child measure ingredients for a recipe you are making.
3. Play a card or board game that incorporates counting or patterns.
4. Point out ways math is a part of everyday life.
5. Compare: tallest, shortest, longest, fastest, hottest, most expensive etc.

Reminder

Remember to bring the following to school EVERY DAY!

- Charged device
- Device charger

Coming in next month's issue:

3rd and 4th Grade Honor Roll

Perfect Attendance for the Second Trimester

Updates from Specials Teachers and more!

Gold Note Dismissal Forms

A signed and dated "Gold Note" is needed from the parent if:

- your child is going anywhere other than their regular after-school destination.
- your child is going home with another student. (We will also need a note from that parent.)
- your child will be picked up instead of riding the bus.

Please refrain from calling at the end of the day with verbal directions. Things get hectic, and messages are not always received on short notice. Changes should be made no later than 2:00 p.m.

If there is no note, students will go home on the bus as usual.

Extra Gold Notes are available in the school office and on the school's website.

Disability Awareness Month at John Wood

March is Indiana Disability Awareness Month. Our Special Education staff will be doing educational projects and announcements throughout the month. There will also be a bulletin board contest between the classes.

We will have a "Spirit Week" one week in March. More details will be on the monthly calendar that will come home with students on February 28th. This year's theme is "Beyond the Conversation".

Remember to wear blue every Thursday to remind you to "Be a Buddy, Not a Bully".

Kindness Bingo

During the month of February, we are promoting KINDNESS. Kindness Bingo sheets went home with every student near the beginning of the month. We are encouraging students to do kind things for others throughout the month.

When students have a Bingo (across, up and down, or diagonal), they can bring their signed sheet in and receive a small prize. Once a sheet is completed, they can take home another sheet, if they choose.

We hope that by seeing the reaction when they do a selfless kindness, they will continue doing Random Acts of Kindness throughout the year and for many years to come!

Facebook/Twitter

Did you know that our John Wood PTO has a Facebook page?
www.facebook.com/johnwood.pto

The PTO tries to keep this updated with reminders of things happening at John Wood School.

You can also follow our Principal, Mrs. Igras, and our MCSC Superintendent, Mr. Brown, on Twitter!

Mrs. Igras' Twitter
@WoodPrin

Mr. Brown's Twitter
@MerrillvilleSu3

Black History Month

Throughout the month of February, John Wood staff and students have been celebrating Black History Month. Every morning over the PA, our 4th grade students have been sharing facts about prominent black scientists, musicians, mathematicians, activists, athletes, etc. In the classrooms, teachers have been reading books by black authors to the students, having students write short biographies and then present them to the class, creating freedom quilts using geometrical shapes, watching short biographies and discussing the importance of what they watched, bulletin boards are being created by staff and students with important facts, and much more. At the end of the month the students will be participating in our end of the month Black History Month Celebration.

John Wood School Mission Statement

Together with parents and community, the John Wood team shall provide a safe learning environment and prepare students to be productive, tolerant, and respectful citizens by fostering individual development and striving for highest academic achievement.