

# ***FIRESIDE FOCUS***



## Fireside Focus – September 1st

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### *Upcoming Dates*

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- Monday, Sept 4 – Labour Day (no school)
- Tuesday, Sept 5 – First Day of School for Students with Last Names Starting with A-L (staggered entry, M-Z stay home)
- Wednesday, Sept 6 – First Day of School for Students with Last Names Starting with M-Z (staggered entry, A-L stay home)
- Friday, Sept 8 – International Literacy Day
- Tuesday, September 12 - Grade 7 & 8 Option Courses Begin
- Wednesday, Sept 13 – School Council (7:00 - 8:00 pm) and Friends of Fireside (8:00 - 9:00 pm) meetings
- Friday, Sept 15 – Terry Fox Run
- Friday, Sept 22 – Photo Day
- Thursday, Sept 28 – Orange Shirt Day
- Friday, Sept 29 – National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (no school)
- Friday, Oct 6 – Professional Development Day (no school)
- Monday, Oct 9 – Thanksgiving (no school)

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### *From the Admin Desk*

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Hello Fireside Families & Friends,

Next week, we're excited to officially welcome back all the Hawks to our Fireside "nest," both returning students and those new to our school as well. And we were so glad to see many students, families, and community members yesterday for our Open House and New Student/Families Orientation. It was wonderful to kick the year off with a pancake breakfast prepared by Calgary Stampede volunteers and kindly served by our amazing Learning Assistants. Seeing everyone and connecting again after the summer was awesome!

Grade 7 & 8 students will learn about their CTF (Option) courses next week, but these classes won't start until the following week (Tuesday, September 8th). Gym, on the other hand, will start up right away. Mrs. Hamilton (our exceptional physical education specialist) would like to remind everyone to wear gym-appropriate footwear, clothes suitable for physical activity, and (if necessary) outdoor wear for when classes are outside. For the benefit of students' safety, Crocs and "slides" won't be permissible during phys ed.



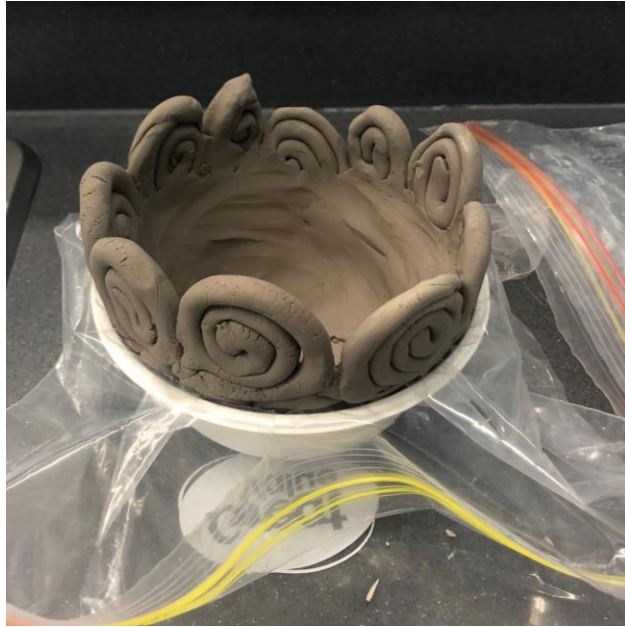
Along with preparing for students to arrive, staff engaged in professional learning and team-building opportunities this week. Divisional Learning Specialists presented on cross-grade literacy and comprehension strategies. We also welcomed the RVS Director of Indigenous Learning Cindy Stefanto and members of her team to further our knowledge around Indigenous practices in school. Grade 7 Teacher Leah Hanson gave us a peek at her pottery course she'll be teaching this year, leading us in a pottery making session and reminding us of the importance of creativity and personal expression. We're excited to bring this learning into our classrooms in a variety of ways this year.

We're looking forward to another year of learning, growth, and connecting with you and your children this school year, and we wish you a lovely long weekend.

Dave Banderk (Principal; [dbanderk@rockyview.ab.ca](mailto:dbanderk@rockyview.ab.ca))

Tara Sly (Assistant Principal, Grades K-4; [tsly@rockyview.ab.ca](mailto:tsly@rockyview.ab.ca))

Jason Ness (Assistant Principal, Grades 5-8; [jness@rockyview.ab.ca](mailto:jness@rockyview.ab.ca))



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### *Staggered Bus Departure*

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Our school's pretty full this year, and that means our buses are too! SO full, in fact, that we can no longer fit all of them in our bus lane. To accommodate all the buses, we will be loading students in two waves at the end of the day. Students riding buses 14, 15, 172, 174, 221, and 258 will load immediately after school. These buses will depart at 2:30. The second wave will then pull in to load buses 26, 195, 227, and the Boys & Girls Club bus. These buses will depart at 2:40. We will ask students riding the second wave of buses to stay back of the sidewalk, allowing those on the first wave to get to their buses on time more easily.

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### *New Safety Measures*

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Feeling safe is foundational to overall wellness, and we are committed to ensuring our school is a safe place to learn and work for all students and staff. To enhance safety in all Rocky View Schools' schools, new protocols and systems have been introduced for how schools and facilities are accessed, and we wanted to be sure to share them with our Fireside Families.

The RVS Board approved the safety practice of locking all outside doors, except the main entrance, throughout the school day. This means students entering the building after the start of school will need to come through the main entrance. All visitors need to enter the school through the main entrance/office doors. This aligns with safety practices in many Alberta school divisions and helps ensure all visitors enter through the office and not through another part of the building. At recesses, staff will assist students in re-entering through their assigned doors.

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### *Learning Teams*

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Learning Teams support students and families alongside classroom teachers toward the growth and development of children. While the classroom teacher is your primary point of contact for discussing your child's learning, each grade grouping is also supported by an Assistant Principal (student conduct & administrative concerns), a Learning Support Teacher (academic and behavioural supports), and a Child Development Advisor (social/emotional development). Please feel free to reach out to these individuals if you have specific concerns or questions.

- Kindergarten & Grade 1: Assistant Principal Tara Sly, Learning Support Teacher Leslie Hall, Child Development Advisor Corey MacDouell
- Grade 2, Grade 3, and Grade 4: Assistant Principal Tara Sly, Learning Support Teacher Kirsty Reade, Child Development Advisor Corey MacDouell
- Grade 5: Assistant Principal Jason Ness, Learning Support Teacher Kirsty Reade, Child Development Advisor Kelsea Soch
- Grade 6, Grade 7, and Grade 8: Assistant Principal Jason Ness, Learning Support Teacher Sinead Holzer, Child Development Advisor Kelsea Soch
- Child Development Advisor Charlene Abrahams's role includes being a connection point and support for new students and their families. Additionally, she has a focus on community connections and student leadership opportunities for younger students.

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### *New Staff Welcomes and Staff Farewells*

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We are excited to welcome some new staff members to Fireside School this year. We are glad to have them as part of our team!

- Tanya McIntyre (Grade 3, covering Chelsea Grainger's )
- Breanne Pyle (Grade 7)
- Lindsay Whyte (Grade 8)
- Sarah Warwick (Grade 8)
- Tony Courville (Head Building Operator)
- Mel Sheepy (Building Operator)
- Fred Jayson (Caretaker)

We'd like to wish a fond farewell to our Head Building Operator, Lisa Boerson, who has had that role at Fireside School since it opened. Thank you, Mrs. Boerson, for keeping things safe and clean for us; we

will miss you. Ms. Brown (Learning Assistant) has also moved on from Fireside School; we will miss her sunny energy and positive attitude.

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### *Cell Phones in Class*

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Cell phones may not be used by students during instructional times. These devices must remain in lockers while classes are in session (except in cases of specific medical needs). Students are welcome to use them during recess and lunch periods. Should a student be using their phone during class, they will be instructed to return it to their locker. If this is not a viable option, or the requests have been made repeatedly, the phone must be secured in the office and may need to be retrieved by the phone's owner (typically parents).

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### *Fireside School Bell Times*

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#### Grades 1 to 8

7:50 to 8:05	Student Arrival and Entry
8:05 to 10:15	Instructional Time
10:15 to 10:45	Recess/ Literacy Time
10:45 to 12:10	Instructional Time
12:10 to 12:50	Lunch/Recess
12:50 to 2:20	Instructional Time
2:20	Student Dismissal
2:30 information)	Bus Departure (first set of buses; please see Staggered Bus Times above for more

#### Kindergarten

##### AM Classes

7:50 to 8:05	Student Arrival and Entry
8:05 to 10:47	Instructional Time
10:47	Student Dismissal

##### PM Classes

11:35	Student Arrival and Entry
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11:35 to 2:17	Instructional Time
2:17	Student Dismissal
2:30	Bus Departure (first set of buses; please see Staggered Bus Times above for more information)

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### *Lunch and Recesses*

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Everyone can benefit from fresh air and unstructured play. Students head outside for *at least* 35 minutes each day. We strongly encourage families to take note of the weather forecast each day and ensure students have appropriate clothing for the time they'll be spending outside.

Students in grades 1 to 8 have designated times as grade groups for two recess periods each day. Students staying at school for lunch will eat in their classrooms. As was the case last year, students are permitted to go home for lunch with parent/guardian permission. If your child will be going home for lunch, please inform the Homeroom Teacher. Please note that for safety reasons, we require this to be a consistent choice. Students who leave school for lunch must do so every day and may not choose when to stay and when to go.

Fireside School is a closed campus. As such, students may not leave the premises unless we have confirmation that they are going home every day for lunch. Please note: lunch time this year is from 12:10 pm to 12:50 pm.

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### *Therapy Dogs*

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Listening/Caring Tails is a Rocky View Schools approved program designed to help children increase their comfort and confidence by reading out loud (Listening Tails) to therapy dogs. The therapeutic help provided by our dogs is tailor-made to fit each situation, with the common theme that dogs provide a level of comfort that only they can (Caring Tails).

At all times, dogs in this program are on-leash and supervised. The success of the program stems from the fact that dogs love the attention they receive from children being with them and are non-judgemental listeners (Listening Tails). They also have a calming, relaxing effect on those who are having a problem self-regulating (Caring Tails).

Fireside School presently has three dogs involved in the Listening/Caring Tails programs. The participating dogs are Daisy, who will be based in Ms. Stark's grade 3 classroom, as well as Chewy and Solo, who will be based in Mr. Perratt's Kindergarten class. The dogs participating in this program have been trained, temperament-assessed, and health checked in order to join this program.

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### *School Council and Friends of Fireside Meetings*

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On Wednesday, September 13, Fireside School's School Council will have its first meeting here at the school.

School Councils are a tremendously important piece of a school's operation. Their role is to serve as parent voices and advisors, and School Council meetings are forums where parents can have a direct role in shaping some of the direction and priorities for a school. So that's why we need you... parents interested in having a positive impact on school culture, direction, and future... to consider attending School Council meetings or even being a part of the Council's Executive.

We will have further information in next week's *Focus* regarding positions that are open to be filled this year, as well as items to be included on the agenda. We hope to see you there!

The Friends of Fireside Society, fondly known as FOF within our learning community, will meet after the School Council meeting. This group is our school's amazing fundraising group, also made up by parents who wish to be part supporting programs in the school in a different way, through the fundraising that is engaged each year. Everyone is welcome to attend. There will also be a question and answer session. We hope to see you there!

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### *International Literacy Day September 8*

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Next Friday, September 8, is International Literacy Day. And many of you know that literacy and "Love of Reading" is a foundational cornerstone of Fireside School. One thing we heard from parents last year was that there is interest in sharing tips for how they can support their children at home. It seems appropriate we begin such sharing in advance of International Literacy Day.

A first step can be to discuss the books and stories your kids are reading by asking them to tell you about them:

- Who is your favourite character, and who do they remind you of?
- How do the pictures match the story?
- What do you see about the story in the picture?
- What are the top 3 things you learned from the book? What is the story about (in your own words)?
- What do you like best?
- What would you have changed in the story and how/why?
- What subject they'd like to read about in the future?
- What would you like to read next?



- Who is your favourite author is and why?

We look forward to sharing other tips with you throughout the year.

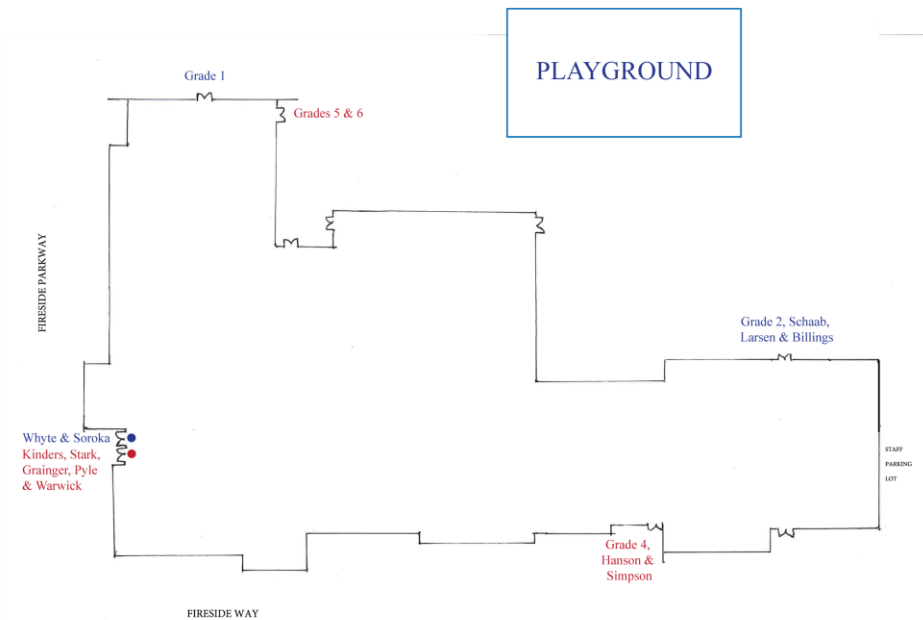
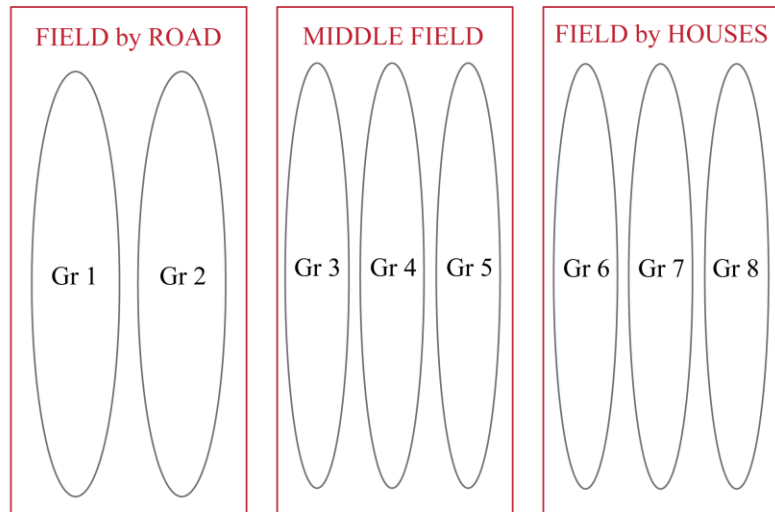
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***Reminder: Staggered Entry & Door Assignments***

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On your child's first school day (Tuesday, Sept 5 for A-L; Wednesday, Sept 6 for M-Z), all Grade 1-8 students will meet their teachers on the back fields. The map below shows where you can expect to find your child's teacher according to their grade. Each teacher will be holding up a sign with their grade and last name on it. Kindergarten students will meet their teachers on the front steps of the school.

For the remainder of the year, students will enter and exit the school from an assigned door. The map below shows which door your student will arrive and depart through each day.




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### ***Reminder: Drop-Off and Pickup***

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Fireside continues to grow, and with more than 900 students enrolled this year, arrival and dismissal times will be very busy. Safety is our highest priority, and we'd like to ask drivers to keep their speed down and watch carefully for pedestrians. We encourage those students who are able to walk, bike, and scooter to school to do so, with bike racks at the front of the school for students to store their "rides."

The "Kiss-and-Go" lane at the front of the school is meant for quick drop-offs and pickups. We ask that families not use the lane as a parking or waiting zone.

The parking lot at the back of the school is not meant to be a pickup or drop-off zone. Additionally, please bear in mind that we have a number of students who require the use of the accessible parking and loading zones. Please keep these spots available.

School bus parking zones on the north side of the building will no longer accommodate all the buses we need this year. Some buses will be picking students up on Fireside Parkway (along the field fence). Once Rocky View Transportation has given us route information, we'll communicate bus locations for end-of-day pickup.

We will again have crossing guard students controlling the crosswalk at the front corner of the school on Fireside Way. Please listen for their signals and help all our students stay safe this year.



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### *Reminder: Absences*

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Please report all student absences using the Safe Arrival app or website. Information can be found on the RVS website [HERE](#).

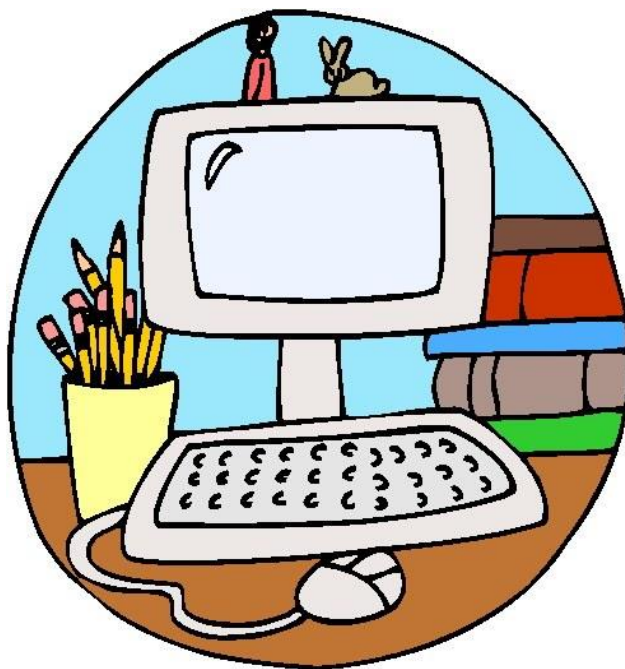
If a student will be picked up for a scheduled appointment, it is helpful to have the student's teacher made aware in advance with a note or an email. Students must be signed out at the office and may only be signed out by parents, guardians, or adults that have been approved in the student's PowerSchool information. Either of the two iPads at the front of the office can be used to sign a student out. Students must also be signed in if they are returning later in the day or are late for school. If there are individuals who are restricted from picking students up, please inform the office.

Students are not allowed to leave the school premises unless they are picked up by a guardian or have a signed permission form (grade 7 & 8 only) at the office. Permission forms are found in [School Engage](#) or at the office. All students must check in and out at the office.

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*Reminder: School Cash, PowerSchool & School Engage*

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Each student has a [SchoolCash Online](#) account that is used to pay for any school fees, field trips, or other school-related expenses. We cannot accept cash or cheques at the office.

All parents have access to RVS' PowerSchool Parent Portal, where student class assignments and achievement are reported. More information can be found on [our website](#).

Permission and demographics forms can all be filled out in School Engage, which can be accessed from within PowerSchool or with [this link](#).

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*Updated: Allergy Awareness and Scent-Free Policy*

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Fireside School has a number of students and staff who are highly sensitive to certain allergens. We ask that all people entering the school please refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, body sprays, scented products, and essential oils. We also ask that nuts and nut products also remain out of the school.

- Please refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, or scented products when coming into Fireside School.
- Please refrain from bringing perfumes, colognes, or scented products into our school and (most especially) from spraying them in the school.
- We are a Nut-Aware School; therefore, please do not bring products with nuts into the school.

We thank you for your attention to and respect for these health concerns and for helping us to keep everyone safe from allergic reactions this school year. If your child has allergies, please bring them to the attention of the Homeroom Teacher so that we are aware of those allergy cautions as well.

**Contact Us!**

Fireside School

403.932.4868

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