

West Bridgewater Public Schools

Rose L. MacDonald School, Stepping Stone Drive, W.Bridgewater, MA 02379

Mrs. Keitha Goulet M.Ed., Principal

kgoulet@wbridgewater.com

[Rose L. MacDonald/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/Rose-L-MacDonald/)

Tel: 508 894-1240

Fax: 508 894-1242

[@rlmschool](https://www.facebook.com/rlmschool)

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Dear parents/guardians:

Thank you to parents and volunteers who were part of our Elf Shop and Cookies with Santa this past weekend. We are always grateful to all who help the event be successful. We need not look far to teach our children the meaning of kindness and generosity. In the month of December children see many parents being generous with their time and talent. We, at the RLM school, extend a big "Thank You" to all the volunteers for all the hard work putting together the fun events. A special thanks to Mrs. Torrey who was the coordinator of Cookies with Santa and Mrs. Aldred who organized the Elf Shop. Cookies with Santa provides the parents an opportunity to have their children's picture taken in a casual atmosphere instead of driving to a big crowded mall. The Elf Shop provides many children and their parents the fun and convenience of picking out gifts for friends and family. Both events provide an opportunity for family time.

Our PTO provides educational programs, supplies and equipment for our students and staff. Consider attending the next PTO meeting on Tuesday, December 19th at the Howard School Library at 7pm. All parents and staff are welcome to attend.

SAFETY CHECKS: Dr. Oakley and our staff continue to work with our fire and police departments to ensure the safety of our students, staff and community. Since the beginning of our school year I have attended monthly safe school meetings. During these meetings we collaborate on issues of concern and review procedures in place.

- **Police Visits:** The WB police have been working with us and visiting our school twice a day. The visits are strengthening our already positive relationship with the police department and are helping to ensure the safety of our students and staff. This is a valuable service reflective of our ongoing partnerships within our community and reflects our mission to provide a safe learning environment for all.
- **Bus Evacuation:** Earlier in the fall the children practiced a bus evacuation. WB Safety Officer Winkler visited our school to conduct our yearly bus evacuation drill. In accordance with School Committee Policy 6300 #V bus evacuation procedures will be rehearsed with all students at the beginning of each school year.
- **Staff ALICE training:** Last week we had a staff meeting to review the ALICE training. Officer Thaxter presented the new updates to us with a special powerpoint. The police are always updating and educating us on school safety. ALICE = Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate.
- **Fire drill:** Last week Kenneth May, Deputy Fire Chief, from our WB Fire Department conducted a fire drill with our school. In accordance with School Committee Policy 6300 #IV our school is required to have four rehearsed fire drills which are conducted during each school year under the direction of the WB Fire Department. A special thanks is extended to Leonard Hunt, Fire Chief, for his dedication to our community. He will be retiring the end December. Mr. Kenneth May will take over as our Fire Chief in January 2018.
- **Parent Pick Up Line:** We are always reviewing our dismissal procedures including our PPU line. Officer Thaxter has been working with us since 2009 with our dismissal procedure. Last week he came to review our procedure again. He watched the process from inside and outside the building. He saw our dismissals log notes that allow us to match up the children with the parent/relative/friend who is picking the student(s) up. He told us to continue the Walkie Talkie communication. This is a good way to keep in touch in the back PPU area with the front office area. He has gone to many schools outside of West Bridgewater and is amazed how orderly and safe our line is. Thank you to all our parents who help make our dismissal orderly by sending in "change of dismissal" notes, putting down cell phones once the line begins to move and not using the playground area during the wait.
- **Safe School Absence Procedure:** Thank you to all parents who have been calling our Attendance Line at 508 894-1240 Press 1. As a reminder, if your child is absent and you have not called the Attendance Line or emailed the school, Mrs. Everett will follow up with a phone call. You may email your child's teacher but please "cc" Mrs. Everett (peverett@wbridgewater.com) The safety of the children is our top priority and we want to be certain that if your child is not in school, he/she is safely at home.
- **Afterschool Presence:** Students not engaged in an approved school activity or under the direct supervision of a faculty/staff member must leave the building and all school grounds immediately at the close of school. Loitering and/or failure to immediately leave are grounds for disciplinary consequences.

BIRTHDAYS WITH THE PRINCIPAL: December students' birthday celebration will be Thurs. Dec. 21 by grade level for lunch. Students bring a lunch from home or order their lunch at school

DISMISSAL PROCEDURES: Please be sure to send in ANY and ALL changes to how your child goes home. We have had quite a few children lately who are confused on what to do (go on the bus, parent pick up or Surround Care). Dismissal is a very busy time and runs much smoother if teachers, office and child know how they are getting home.

RLM FOOD DRIVE: This holiday season gr. 1 has organized a collection for our food pantry. Gr. 1 has invited all of RLM to take part in collecting food items for the WB Food Pantry. If you wish to participate in our Holiday Food Drive, non-perishable items may be sent to school any day until **Friday, December 15th**. This deadline allows all items collected to be sent to the WB Food Pantry and be available to our town residents in need during the holiday season.



NED SHOW ASSEMBLY: The children enjoyed an assembly on Dec. 4th which the PTO coordinated. This show was an innovative, character education assembly. Using humor, storytelling, audience participation and amazing object lessons including yo-yo and magic tricks students learn through the adventures of NED, a character kids can relate to. His name NED is an acronym for - Never give up - Encourage others - Do your best. Thank you Mrs. Donna Hulme for helping coordinate the show and to Mrs. Jamie Maloney for tallying and distributing the YoYo's. Deadline order date: Dec. 8th - Friday.

CHARACTER TRAIT-RESPECT: In December the children are being asked to think about what *respect* means. They are learning that *respect* means treating others how they want to be treated. Teachers have explained that *respect* also means that you care enough to think about others' feelings before you act. They have been taught that showing *respect* includes not calling people mean names, treating people with courtesy and listening to all adults. Teachers will be sending in nominations of students who are showing *respect*. Our assembly recognizing students who are respectful will be Dec. 22nd.

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES: Keep an eye open for the celebrations of the season from your child's classroom teacher. With the Wellness policy in effect, requests for food (if any) will be very specific, limited and closely monitored for adherence to the Wellness guidelines. Food allergies are serious, potentially life threatening and are a major consideration in school celebrations. Not all classrooms will be serving food during their celebrations. With wellness and allergy considerations many school districts have had to revamp the rules set for celebrations regarding food. We also want children to understand they can have a celebration without consuming an array of food (some of questionable nutritional value) choices. Do not send in any food unless requested by your classroom teacher.

GIFT GIVING: Just a friendly heads-up that the State of Massachusetts enacted ethics regulations a few years ago for all public employees and there are now specific guidelines for giving gifts to your favorite teachers that we must abide by. Teachers are allowed to accept a whole class gift with an aggregated value of up to a maximum of \$150 per year from current public school students and/or their parents as long as the gift is identified only as being from the class, and the identity of givers and the amounts given are not identified to the recipient. (In other words, no names can be listed on the card only from the class, even if some choose not to contribute.) Likewise individual gifts cannot have an aggregated value of more than \$50 over a 365 day period. Of course, kind words of thanks and wishes for a happy healthy new year are most cherished at this time of year by our staff and gifts are not expected or necessary. We are only sharing the regulation guidelines to avoid any discomfort and teachers must disclose gifts they receive at the holiday in a written format to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest or inappropriateness.

HALF DAY DISMISSAL: December 13, 2017 – 12 noon dismissal – no lunch served

DISTRICT WIDE SPIRIT DAYS: Our next district wide spirit day is Dec. 13th. Staff and children are encouraged to wear their new T-shirt . . . other dates include: 1/10, 2/7, 3/7, 4/11, 5/9, 6/6.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING: Meeting - Mon. - Dec. 11th - MSHS - The Learning Commons - 6:30pm.

PTO MEETING: Howard School - 7pm - Library - Dates: 12/19, 1/30, 2/27, 4/24, & 5/29 - All are welcome.

INCLUSION MATTERS: Meeting dates are Feb 5, March 5, April 2, May 7 and June 4 in the WBMSHS Learning Commons from 6-7:30.

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