



# KSD *family* CONNECTION

October 12, 2021

Dear KSD Community,

This is our monthly communication, KSD Family Connection. On the second Tuesday of each month we send a themed email with:

- Relevant and timely information based on the month's theme
- A health and safety section
- A brief spotlight on one of our district programs, clubs, services, etc.



## this & month

In October, as the weather cools and the leaves begin to turn, we reach for the comfort and warmth of familiar delights: pumpkins, candy corn, and Homecoming. We look forward to celebrating our annual Homecoming traditions here in Kelso on October 22. Until then, please enjoy a sneak peak of one very special tradition below.

This month is also host to:

- [Digital Citizenship Week](#) (10/18-10/22) - to help students reflect on how technology impacts their social and emotional well-being.
- [Learning Disabilities \(LD\) Awareness Month](#) - 1 in 5 students across the country have learning and attention challenges. (Special thanks to our incredible Special Education team for all they do.)
- [National Principals Month](#) – Please take a moment to extend gratitude to your principal and assistant principal(s).



## health & safety

The health and safety of our students and staff is always a top priority. We continue to work closely with state and local health authorities, such as Washington Department of Health (WDOH) and Cowlitz County Health & Human Services department (CCHHS) to ensure our mitigation strategies are strong and effective.

From the [October 6 CCHHS report](#):

- Weekly new case counts have decreased since their peak in mid-late August and may be leveling off or continuing to slowly decrease. Cowlitz County's new per capita case rate is currently about double the state rate.
- A recent [report](#)\* found that Cowlitz County case rates since the emergence of the Delta variant are 3-4 times lower among residents who are fully vaccinated compared with those who are not vaccinated. (\*And hospitalization rates are 7-13 times lower for those who are fully vaccinated.)
- Cowlitz County saw an average of 5 residents hospitalized for COVID-19 each day from September 20-26.
- An average of 1-2 Cowlitz County residents have died from COVID-19 each day in September.

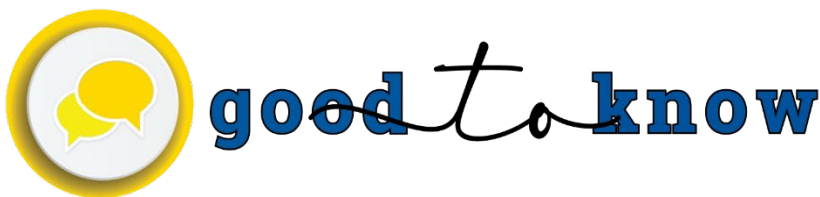
COVID-19 links and resources:

- WDOH [K-12 COVID-19 Requirements](#)
- CCHHS [COVID-19 Reports & Presentations](#)
- WDOH [K-12 Isolation and Quarantine Decision Trees](#) – **NEW: Updated language in the Return to School boxes**
- Kelso School District [COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

## SPECIAL FEATURE: Digital Safety

Kelso School District takes student online safety seriously. We use a variety of tools to control online access and monitor usage, which are listed below. Please take time as a family to review and reinforce digital safety.

- Our filter, Linewize, blocks categories of websites that are considered unsafe or distracting. This filter also generates Red Flag warnings to the appropriate staff if students persistently engage in searches that signal unsafe or unhealthy behaviors. These may be shared with school counselors who would contact parents if needed.
- In addition, we use a monitoring system called Bark that scans Google Drive and Gmail for dangerous words or content. Building administrators receive emails for severe Bark alerts and follow up as appropriate.
- Many teachers use Classwize, which allows them to monitor student online activity to make sure students are on task when online.
- We allow YouTube to most students, but it is a version that has a strict level of filtering.
- Only secondary students have access to Gmail accounts. For safety, we block outside senders (with a few exceptions) to all students but seniors.
- Probably the most important tool we use to keep our students safe is education. Students receive Internet safety lessons at all grade levels. They receive this in library, STEAM, technology, and health classes where they learn how to stay safe online and be good digital citizens.



One of the defining characteristics of Kelso is our deep roots in tradition. In the 1840's, Kelso was founded along the banks of the Cowlitz River by a surveyor named Peter Crawford. He named the town after his Scottish home. Kelso's unique historical past is heavily reflected in Kelso School District. The use of the Buchanan tartan, the Hilander mascot, and even the annual performance of the beautiful and challenging dance: the Hilander Fling.

The Hiland Fling is one of the oldest forms of dance in Scotland and requires both athletic and artistic skill. It was originally a war dance performed after a victorious battle and only by men. Performing the Fling is an honor and long-standing tradition at Kelso High School that goes back to before 1950. Six varsity cheerleaders spend countless hours perfecting the dance, which is presented at the Homecoming football game each year.

Even the uniform, worn only while dancing the Fling, is traditional—directly replicating what is worn in Scotland. The sash and kilt are made from Buchanan plaid. The horsehair sporran, passed down each year, is signed on the leather strap by each Hilander who wears it. This year's team (Alexa Abel, Emma Baumgartner, Lainey Ellison, Keatley Hammer, Kaylin Januscheitis, Chloe Willis) graciously allowed us to film them practicing in late September.

Come be a part of the October 22 Homecoming fireworks, festivities, and Friday night football. Meanwhile, enjoy this [sneak peek at the Hilander Fling](#).



As always, if you have any questions, feel free to email me.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Tack, Superintendent  
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