



Janet Carey, Principal

March 28, 2018

# Words from Winn Brook

Principal's Newsletter

## Safety Drills

Parents may hear the acronym ALICE in the news and wonder if we are using this intruder response method. Our staff received training from the Belmont Police Department. While this training included most aspects of ALICE (alert, lockdown, inform, counter, evacuate) we are not training our elementary students to “counter” or fight back. Our intent is to prepare students and staff to respond to an emergency without creating undue anxiety or fear.

In addition to our consultation with local law enforcement personnel, our work is being informed by other national organizations which outline best practices for school safety. The National Association of School Psychologists describe developmentally appropriate safety explanations and considerations specifically for elementary school children. Our drills and language fit these guidelines. Although each teacher may vary the wording slightly, we frame the message as follows:

*Every day, we do things to keep ourselves safe. Let's think of some examples. What do you put on when you ride a bike? What do you do before you cross the street? Another way we stay safe is by practicing for things that probably won't happen, but it is good to be prepared just in case. One way we do this at school is to practice fire drills. We have not had a fire, but we practice getting out of the building anyway. When we do a fire drill, the first thing we do is stop what we are doing and listen for directions.*

*One day soon, we're also going to practice a drill with a different alarm sound. Just like in a fire drill, what you need to remember is to **stop and listen to my directions**. I may tell you to sit by the pink sign, or I may tell you to follow me outside.*

As recommended by the National Association of School Resource Officers and the U.S. Department of Education, we are utilizing a hierarchy of training activities. We have already had a lockdown drill where the day, but not the time, was announced in advance.

As you may remember, we were able to complete the drill in two minutes. Next, we will move to a lockdown drill where the week, but not the day is announced. We will then do a random, completely unannounced drill. Finally, we will have an “options-based” practice. Individual staff members will decide whether to lockdown or evacuate based on what is happening close by. In some cases, depending on location and a variety of other factors, evacuation is preferable to lockdown. We will have an “options-based” drill before the end of the year but will utilize the same calm, low-key approach and language with the children. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions.

## Nursing Staff

We are happy to welcome Karen Kelly and Carol Kean to our school community. As you probably recall, Nurse Shaughnessy is out on a leave, so they will be job-sharing the nursing position for the remainder of the year. Both women have experience in the Belmont Public Schools and come highly recommended by our Director of Nursing. Starting next week, Nurse Kelly will work Mondays, Tuesdays and every other Friday. Nurse Kean will work Wednesdays, Thursday, and every other Friday. They have established strong communication systems in order to ensure continuity of care for our students. All health care plans have been reviewed by both nurses, but feel free to call if you would like to share additional information which may have been discussed with Ms. Shaughnessy. You may reach them by calling 617-993-5706.



Nurse Kelly



Nurse Kean



Respect

Community

High Expectations



# Planning for Next Year

Since student placement is an important, complicated and very time consuming task, we are ready to begin planning for next year's classroom assignments.



There are many factors which we take into consideration when creating class lists. We try to balance the classes in terms of gender, academic performance, and special needs. We take into consideration social issues and try to separate children who have a great deal of difficulty working together.

In order to be as thorough as possible, we involve a number of people in the decision making process. Current classroom teachers, specialists, special education teachers, school psychologist and the guidance counselor will assist in assigning students for the 2018-2019 school year.

It is not necessary for parents to submit a letter related to placement. We will place each child with a great deal of care and consideration regardless of whether or not we receive a letter from you. If, however, you have information regarding your child's learning style, academic strengths and weaknesses or physical, social or family issues that you wish to share with us, you are welcome to do so. All such information should be submitted in writing and addressed to Janet Carey. Although the placement teams will give careful consideration to the information you provide, we must consider a variety of factors as we determine the best situation for the grade level as a whole.

**We do not accept requests to place your child with a specific friend or a specific teacher.** If you wish to communicate information regarding more than one child, please send a separate letter for each student. Since students grow and change so rapidly, we do not save parental input from year to year, so please do not assume that we will consider information that you previously provided. Should you feel that a letter is warranted, it must be submitted by Friday, **April 27th**.

## Reminder:

**Our doors are locked at all times. If your child arrives late and there is no one at the door to greet him/her, please bring your child to the main entrance on Waterhouse Road and escort him/her to the office.**

# Upcoming Events

- ✓ **3/28** Belmont SEPAC Resource Fair, 7pm Butler School
- ✓ **3/29** 4th grade class photo
- ✓ **3/29** Kindergarten Information Night—for parents of students entering in September 2018
- ✓ **4/5** PTA meeting, 7pm in the cafe—Please join us! \*
- ✓ **4/10-11** Giles LaRoche art program for gr. 4 \*
- ✓ **4/12** Bingo Night for gr. 4 \*
- ✓ **4/12** Gr. 1 field trip to the Discovery Museum \*
- ✓ **4/26-27** Mass. Audubon presentation for gr. 1 \*
- ✓ **4/30** Gr. 2 presentation on bees \*
- ✓ **6/20** **Anticipated** final day of school (early release) pending School Committee approval & no additional snow days

\* PTA sponsored events

# Kindergarten Families

There is no school for our current kindergarteners on May 3rd and 4th so that we are able to screen kindergarteners who will be entering school in September, 2018. If you are the parent of an incoming kindergartener, please be sure that you have completed the registration process described on our website: <http://www.belmont.k12.ma.us/bps/Kindergarten>. Once electronic forms are complete and the required paperwork is submitted, we will set up an appointment for our Intake Screening Day. Your child must attend this 40 minute appointment with you. In a game-like format, we will assess his/her early learning skills. It is a nice opportunity for the children to see a typical kindergarten classroom and meet some of our teachers.

Parents who have fully completed the registration process by May 24th, will have children placed by June 1st and will be notified within 5 business days. Students whose registration was completed after May 24th will be placed by August 19th and receive notification within 5 business days.

# What a Treat!



Our staff is most grateful for the wonderful treats which, thanks to the PTA, mysteriously appear in our staff room. The cookies, candy and other snacks are thoroughly appreciated and quickly devoured! Thank you to the families who have participated in this initiative! We generally do not know who, exactly, is making these delicious donations. They are great for morale, making us feel most appreciated!

# A Fabulous Science Night!

Thanks to our event organizers Amanda Lubarsky, David Zipkin and Elisa Perry, along with an army of terrific volunteers, Science Night was an enormous success! The children saw cans crushed by air, examined a real lamb heart, experimented with sound and light, built bridges, launched rocket balloons and so much more.



**Please join us** on April 5th at 7pm for a brief PTA meeting and a wonderful presentation by Jaynene Dellitt-Young, who oversees reading, writing and social studies curriculum and instruction for our elementary schools. Ms. Dellitt-Young is an excellent speaker who will talk about recent changes to our reading program, how we support students through Rtl (Response to Intervention) and tips for reinforcing or extending learning at home.