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February 2023 Newsletter

Character attribute for the month of February

Inclusiveness: We include everyone in what we do and value their contributions.

Significant days, holy days, holidays and heritage recognition occurring in the month of February

Date	Name
February	Black History Month
Feb. 1	Imbolc Wicca
Feb. 2	Groundhog Day
Feb. 5	Magha (Sangha Day) Buddhism
Feb. 15	Nirvana Day Buddhism
Feb. 15	Nirvana Day Jainism
Feb. 15	National Flag Day of Canada
Feb. 17	National Random Acts of Kindness Day
Feb. 18	Maha Shivratri Hinduism
Feb. 20	Family Day (ON) Provincial Holiday
Feb. 21	Losar (Tibetan New Year) Buddhism
Feb. 22	Ash Wednesday Christianity
Feb. 22	Pink Shirt Day
Feb. 23	Isra'a and Mi'raj Islam
Feb. 26 to Mar. 1	Ayyám-i-Há (Intercalary Days) Bahá'í
Feb. 27	Clean Monday Christianity

Notice to students and parents/guardians of students regarding out-of-area-requests

Under Simcoe County District School Board procedures (APM A7000 – School Attendance Areas), it is possible for students to apply for and receive permission to attend an out-of-attendance-area school. Students will be permitted to continue in attendance as long as there are pupil places available. They may be required to return to their home school or transfer to another school when the capacity of the school they are attending has been reached and space is required for students residing within the designated attendance areas. An approval may be revoked at any time by the superintendent of education, after consultation with the receiving school principal, for reasons related to the student's behaviour, attendance, actions or inactions. Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the out-of-attendance-area student and/or parent/guardian.

Black History Month

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) recognizes and celebrates Black History Month every February. The SCDSB is committed to improving equity of access and opportunity for Black students, staff, and parents/guardians, and to creating a safe and caring learning environment that promotes the human rights of staff, students, and parent/guardians. The initiatives undertaken by the SCDSB have been embedded in teaching and learning at all school levels, and centrally, for Black History Month and throughout the year. Follow the SCDSB on social media to see how schools are recognizing Black History Month.

Kindergarten registration for September 2023 is open!

Kindergarten is the beginning of a wonderful journey of learning, and we want your child to begin their journey in a SCDSB school! Do you have a child who is turning four in 2023? If so, we invite you to register your child for Kindergarten. To register online or for more information visit: www.scdsb.on.ca/kindergarten.

Early learning and child care

The Simcoe County EarlyON Child and Family Centres have locations throughout Simcoe County. These centres offer a variety of services including programs that help prepare children and parents for kindergarten. Programming will be offered in the spring of 2023. Check with your local EarlyON provider for dates and times: <https://linktr.ee/earlyonsimcoe>.

Child care programs available on PA days, holidays and March Break

Child care programs for children in Kindergarten to Grade 6 are provided by independent, third-party child care operators in some SCDSB schools. To support your child care needs, some operators offer child care on PA days and holidays, including over the March Break (Mar. 13 to 17). Registration in advance is required. Please contact the child care operator directly to discuss fees and to register. For more information and contact numbers, please visit: https://scdsb.on.ca/elementary/planning_for_school/childcare_before_after.

SCDSB Character Education program

Our SCDSB Character Education program was developed over 20 years ago. As a school board, we are moving forward to update the SCDSB Character Education program, along with the attributes. The intended implementation date for our new Character Education program will be

September 2023. To make this successful, it is imperative that everyone has an opportunity to have a voice. Currently, we are eliciting student voice from our elementary and secondary students and understanding the important partnership with parents/guardians; we are asking if you could take a moment to fill out the below survey.

The survey opens on Feb. 6 and will remain open until Feb. 10:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/M2BF38X>.

Join us! A learning series for parents/guardians with Pine River Institute

Mental health and well-being continues to be a key strategic priority within the SCDSB. We are pleased to continue our partnership with the Centre for Family Initiatives at Pine River Institute (CFI@PRI) to provide several curated learning sessions focused on student mental health and well-being to SCDSB families, staff and within the SCDSB's broader school communities.

There are five webinars in the learning series specifically planned for parents, guardians and other caregivers during this school year. The remaining sessions include:

Feb. 9, 2023	Guide to Attuned Limit Setting
March 2, 2023	Emotional Regulation for Kids and Adults
April 27, 2023	The Biology of Stress

We hope you save these dates in your calendar and join us for these learning opportunities. For more information and to register, please visit the SCDSB website: <https://bit.ly/3jGaC74>.

Pine River Institute is a live-in treatment centre and outdoor leadership experience for youth aged 13 to 19 struggling with addictive behaviours and often other mental health issues. Combining therapy with a fully-accredited education program, PRI reinforces the healthy life skills required for a successful future. CFI@PRI extends PRI's knowledge, experience and evidence-informed treatment approach to families and care providers in the community to support youth mental wellness and prevent the need for more intensive interventions. Learn more about PRI by visiting their website at www.pineriverinstitute.com.

Interested in learning more about the ways that the SCDSB supports students with special education needs and their families? Join us for a virtual special education outreach series

In 2023, the Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is hosting virtual special education outreach sessions to assist parents/caregivers in learning more about programs, supports and ways that we work together to support students with special education needs. The remaining sessions include:

Supporting students with autism spectrum disorder

Feb. 14

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Supporting students as they transition into school, from one school to another, and from school upon graduation

April 20

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Working with families to create safe and supportive environments for children who have experienced trauma

May 9

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Participants are asked to register in advance. Information to access the sessions will be shared via email with individuals who have pre-registered. Learn more about each session and how to register on the SCDSB website at

www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/special_education/special_education_outreach_sessions.

Registration now open for summer eLearning!

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) is offering summer school courses in July 2023 for current high school students or adult learners who are interested in earning a new credit or upgrading a previous mark. Students can advance online learning skills, earn missed credits or fast-track preparation for graduation or post-secondary in just four weeks. eLearning is fully supported by certified teachers who are available electronically daily.

Summer school program details can be found on the Learning Centres website at

<http://thelearningcentres.com/high-school-student/summer-school>.

SCDSB Anti-sex Trafficking Protocol and resources for parents/guardians

In 2021-22, the Ministry of Education directed Ontario school boards to develop an anti-sex trafficking protocol that was tailored to the needs of their community. The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) has developed a protocol and relevant training and resources for staff, students and parents/guardians. The focus of the SCDSB's protocol and resources is to protect students and empower school communities to play a key role in fighting sex trafficking and keeping children and youth safe from sexual exploitation.

More information, including a link to the SCDSB Anti-Sex Trafficking Protocol and associated resources, is available on the SCDSB website:

www.scdsb.on.ca/elementary/safe_schools/anti-sex_trafficking_protocol.

Evaluating early literacy

The Ministry of Education has directed all Ontario school boards to begin implementing the recommendations outlined in the Right to Read Inquiry. As a result, primary educators are shifting from using leveled texts for reading instruction as they encourage reliance on guessing strategies to solve unknown words. Instead, educators are beginning to use a scope and sequence to systematically teach phonemic awareness (awareness of the sounds in words) and phonics

(understanding of the letters that represent sounds). Students may apply the phonics skills they have learned by reading 'decodable' or 'phonetically controlled' texts.

As a result, educators are moving away from using PM Benchmarks and moving towards assessments that measure foundational reading skills. For example, in Grade 1, educators will be observing a child's ability to identify the sounds they hear in a word, identify the letter(s) that represent the sound, and their ability to blend the sounds together to decode (read) the word and encode (write) the word. In later primary, educators will be observing a child's understanding of more complex letter/sound relationships such as prefixes and suffixes.

Educators will also consider a child's achievement in reading fluency, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension when assigning a report card grade for reading.

To support your child at home, the following documents provide activities that may help foster these foundational skills:

1. Phonological Awareness Activities for Families

<https://bit.ly/3WVsexb>

2. Supporting Reading Development at Home

<https://bit.ly/3X3wB9w>

Math games at home

Playing math games at home is a great way to reinforce math concepts that students learn at school. The YouTube channel MMMathMania has a large number of videos of math games that can be played using paper, dice, and/or playing cards.

Check out the channel at: www.youtube.com/@mmmathmaniamathgamesmore3985 or search MMMathMania on YouTube.

Exercising together can make your family stronger and healthier

Families that exercise together get stronger in more ways than one. Getting your daily dose of exercise not only helps to prevent health risks, it builds strong muscles and bones, develops positive body image, supports mental health, and strengthens the family bond. With so many great reasons to get moving, why aren't Canadians doing it more often? One of the most common barriers reported is time. This is also one of the biggest roadblocks to spending quality time together as a family. With Family Day just around the corner, why not plan a weekend of activities that gets the whole family out and moving! Here are some tips to help make family fitness fun for everyone.

Put family first

Make the focus of family fitness about family time. Use this time to connect with one another, share stories, discuss interests, check in on the day, or just make each other laugh. Quality family time is important, no matter your age!

Take classes together

Ask your local health and fitness centre about classes offered to parents and kids, or family-oriented drop in programs. Centres like the YMCA often have open family swim times for family members of all ages to enjoy. If your little one is too young to swim in the pool, look for child-minding or parent and tot programs.

Plan outdoor activities

Set aside one day every weekend to do something active as a family such as sledding, skating, or hiking. Making physical activity part of your routine will set your family up for healthy habits now and in the future. Don't forget to splurge on some healthy snacks after a good workout!

Surround your family with active people

Healthy habits can be contagious! Surround your family with active people who enjoy healthy lifestyles and you'll be more likely to make those same choices. Group classes or drop-in programs are a great way to meet new people that share your passion for fitness.

Spend quality time together this Family Day weekend

The YMCA is a great place to have fun with the whole family while building healthy habits of physical fitness and well-being. With activities like open family gym and open family swim, family members of all ages can be healthy and active together. To find your local YMCA and view Family Day weekend activities, visit www.ymcaofsimcoemuskoka.ca/schedules.

Information provided by the YMCA of Simcoe/Muskoka

Your FEBRUARY Wellness Article from School Council

February is the host of many events including Valentines Day, Groundhog Day and Family Day.

February is Heart Month. This is a time to bring attention to the importance of cardiovascular health, and what we can do to reduce our risk of cardiovascular disease. Heart disease affects approximately 2.4 million Canadian adults and is the second leading cause of death in Canada.

The Week of February 6-12 is Children's mental health week. This year's theme is Let's Connect. Let's Connect is about making meaningful connections. Human beings thrive in communities, and this connection is vital for our wellbeing. Children's Mental Health Week shines a spotlight on the importance of children's and young people's mental health, raises awareness, and campaigns for all children to have mental health support.

There are other fun events and special days to celebrate or enjoy in February so for this month's wellness article I have created a calendar bringing families together in lieu of Family Day, while incorporating Heart month, children's mental health week and other enjoyable events.

Enjoy doing one a week, pick your favourite out of the month or enjoy doing them all!

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
			<p><i>1 Go on a walk together.</i></p> <p><i>Heart Healthy</i></p>	<p><i>2 Colour together</i></p>	<p><i>3 Play a board game together</i></p>	<p><i>4 FaceTime or call another family member.</i></p>
<p><i>5 Bake Together</i></p> <p><i>Try a Heart Healthy recipe or try baking with nutella as this day is</i></p> <p><i>World Nutella Day</i></p>	<p><i>6 Each person says something positive about each family member including themselves around the dinner table</i></p> <p><i>Children's Mental Health Week</i></p>	<p><i>7 Have a Dance Party to each family members favourite song</i></p> <p><i>Heart Healthy</i></p> <p><i>Children's Mental Health Week</i></p>	<p><i>8 Cook dinner together. Make it fun and Heart Healthy including lots of healthy veggies and lean proteins</i></p> <p><i>Children's Mental Health Week</i></p>	<p><i>9 Tell funny jokes and make funny faces today. Laughing is a great way to relieve stress and help with mental health</i></p> <p><i>Children's Mental Health Week</i></p>	<p><i>10 Go public skating at the Stayner Arena in light of this years theme "Lets Connect: Children's Mental Health Week"</i></p> <p><i>4:30-5:50p m</i></p> <p><i>Heart Healthy</i></p>	<p><i>11 Wear your PJ's all day and make breakfast for dinner.</i></p> <p><i>Children's Mental Health Week</i></p>

<p>12 Go on a Nature Scavenger Hunt.</p> <p>Heart Healthy</p> <p>Children's Mental Health Week</p>	<p>13 Everyone can make a card for their friend(s) in celebration of</p> <p>Palentines Day</p>	<p>14 Make Valentine's Day cookies together and have them for dessert.</p> <p>Valentines Day</p>	<p>15 Make paper snowflakes and hang them in your window.</p>	<p>16 Go tobogganing together</p> <p>Heart Healthy</p>	<p>17 Do something kind for each member of your family.</p> <p>Random Acts of Kindness Day</p>	<p>18 Screen Free Day. Celebrate and spend time together without screens</p>
<p>19 Go on a hike together</p> <p>Heart Healthy</p>	<p>20</p> <p>There are a bunch of family day activities.</p> <p>Collingwood aquatic center free family swim 10-11:30am</p>	<p>21 Make Pancakes for dinner and everyone can decorate them with a bunch of different toppings.</p> <p>Pancake Day</p>	<p>22 Shovel a neighbours driveway together</p> <p>Heart Healthy</p>	<p>23 Family Movie Night</p>	<p>24 Go public skating at the Stayner Arena from 4:30-5:50pm</p> <p>Heart Healthy</p>	<p>25 Build a snowman together or try building a whole snow family.</p>

<p><i>26 Do your favourite winter family sport together whether it be skating, skiing, snowshoeing or whichever you like.</i></p> <p><i>Heart Healthy</i></p>	<p><i>27 Read all about polar bears, watch some videos and learn about them together as a family for International Polar Bear Day</i></p>	<p><i>28 Paint the snow using food colouring and water in spray bottles.</i></p>				
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