



Fernwood School Newsletter October 3rd, 2025

Whole School 'Read-In' and Orange Shirt Day

Orange Shirt Day at School was Monday, September 29th to commemorate National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. As a collaborative effort to promote a culture of reading within the school community, we met in groups for a whole school 'Read-In' where students chose the Indigenous book they would like to hear read aloud. Classes also did some developmentally- appropriate learning about Orange Shirt Day and the legacy of Residential Schools in Canada. It was wonderful to see so many Fernwood families and staff at the Penelakut event at Fernwood dock on Tuesday.





Fire Safety Talks & Pancake Breakfast this Monday!

Salt Spring Fire and Rescue firefighters will be at school Monday for a pancake breakfast prior to the bell at 8:20 am. Fire Safety Talks for each class will take place throughout the day. Fire Prevention Week in BC runs from October 5-11. Some topics discussed will be escape plans, cooking safety, burn prevention and smoke alarms. We will end the day with one of the six fire drills we will have this year as part of our emergency preparedness plan.

Field Trip to Cusheon Cove: Salt Spring Stewards in Training Educational Program



Students in Marissa Smith and Liis Graham's Grade 4/5 Class went on their SSI Conservancy Field Study Trip to Cusheon Cove as part of the **Salt Spring Stewards in Training Educational Program**. Students visit Cusheon Cove to study forest ecosystems. Learning centers include whittling, First Nations use of Stinging nettle for fibers and rope, Chinese, Japanese, and European presence at Bullman Sawmill in the early 1900s with an artifact museum, and travel through history with a compass treasure hunt. Mr. Reid and Ms Hingston's students will also be participating in this program next week.







ADEQUATE CLOTHING FOR THE COLD RAINY WEATHER

As we move further into the rainy and colder months, we've noticed that many students are arriving at school without adequate clothing for the weather. Students go outside for recesses and learning activities in all weather, except in the most extreme weather conditions. To ensure all children stay warm, dry, and comfortable throughout the day—especially during outdoor activities—it is essential that they come dressed appropriately.

Please make sure your child arrives in weather-appropriate attire, including a waterproof jacket, warm layers, and suitable footwear. We also ask that each student keep a spare set of clothes at school (including socks and pants) in case of unexpected weather-related changes.

If a student is not dressed suitably and does not have extra clothing available, we will need to contact home to request a clothing drop-off. We appreciate your support in helping us minimize these disruptions and keep all students safe and ready to learn.

Parent Volunteer Criminal Record Check

If you would like to be a parent volunteer in the school or on field trips, please make sure your criminal record check is on file and valid. Teachers are starting to organize field trips, so it is important that we have parent volunteers approved. Once the criminal record check is completed, it is valid for 5 years. If you need to submit a criminal record check, please do so by following the process outlined in this link: [Criminal Record Check](#).

Cross Country

We are looking for a few parents to help out at the Grade 4,5,6,7 Cross Country event on October 16 at Mouat's Park. If you can help, please email Shelly or Marie. mmullen@sd64.org sjohnson@sd64.org

PAJAMA DAY WHOLE SCHOOL SPIRIT DAY!



Spotlight64: Fernwood Elementary - A Vibrant Start to School Visits



This year, the Gulf Islands Board of Education is beginning a new practice: sharing reflections from each of our school visits. These visits are a cherished opportunity for trustees to spend time in our schools, to connect with staff and students, and to celebrate the unique learning cultures that thrive across our district.

We began this year's journey at Fernwood Elementary School on Salt Spring Island, where we were warmly welcomed by principals Marie Mullen and Shelley Johnson. Home to just under 200 students, Fernwood is building a reputation as a vibrant and collaborative learning community, and our visit made it easy to see why.

Highlights from the School Plan Presentation

From the start, we were invited into the heart of the school through a presentation in the school's library on Fernwood's 2025/26 school plan. Among the highlights was a focus on early learning literacy, with Principal Mullen leading this work both at Fernwood and across the district. Students are carefully supported through assessment and re-assessment, ensuring that every child has the tools they need for reading success.

Alongside literacy, the school's focus on well-being and involvement in the Feeding Futures program stood out. Meals for students are prepared by the GISS culinary team and students, turning a district investment in kitchen upgrades into both nourishment for elementary learners and valuable experience for our high school students. It's a beautiful example of schools supporting one another.

Touring the Classrooms and School Spaces



After our time in the library, we set off to tour the school and what a welcome we received! From kindergarten to grade 7, classrooms opened their doors with cheerful waves, curious smiles, and students eager to show us what they were working on. We peeked in on intermediate students puzzling through math problems, younger learners enjoying a story during snack time, and classrooms alive with energy, focus, and joy.

Fernwood's physical spaces are just as inspiring as the learning inside them. Every classroom connects directly to its own outdoor learning space, a unique design feature that brings fresh air and natural beauty into the rhythm of the school day. Beyond the

classrooms, we admired the gymnasium, spacious fields, and a recently built playground, a dynamic space where students can climb, create, and connect in countless ways.

Gratitude and Closing Reflections

Our visit left us deeply grateful. To be welcomed so openly into classrooms and to witness the dedication of teachers, educational assistants, and support staff was truly a privilege. Fernwood Elementary is a shining example of what makes our schools special: a community rooted in care, collaboration, and a shared commitment to student success.

Thank you to everyone at Fernwood for inviting us in. We look forward to sharing more stories as we continue our visits across the district this year.

LOOKING AHEAD DATES:

Monday, October 6 – Salt Spring Fire & Rescue here for Pancake Breakfast & Fire Prevention and Safety Talks; Fire Drill scheduled too; Hingston Class to Cusheon Cove for SSI Conservancy Field Trip

Tuesday, October 7 – Reid Class to Cusheon Cove for SSI Conservancy Field Trip

Thursday, October 9 – Currie and Smith/Graham class to Ganges for Field Trip to Public Library Exhibit, Rainbow Pool and Mouat's Park; Curtis Class to the Bond Farm Pumpkin Patch

Monday, October 13 – Deadline to order MunchaLunch Pizza Day orders please; Thanksgiving Monday (no school).

Tuesday, October 14 – Quentin Harris, SD64 Artist & Educator at Fernwood today

Thursday, October 16 – Cross Country students bus to Mouat's Park departs at 9:10 am; ShakeOut Earthquake Drill

Friday, October 17 – Friday School Day (due to the Holiday Monday, Oct 13); Shayce Johnston, Indigenous Support Worker at Fernwood today

Friday, October 24 – staff Professional Development Day

Monday, October 27 – Early Dismissal Day (12:00 dismissal)

Thursday, November 6 – Photo Retake Day (for any individuals who missed photo day October 2)

Pizza Day will be Friday, October 17th –Orders must be entered onto the Muncha Lunch webpage by

Monday, October 13th – see below for details

Dear Families,

Hot Lunch is returning!! **Pizza Day will be Friday October 17th**. The choices include cheese, pepperoni, or Hawaiian pizza, an applesauce cup, and a Smartie cookie. There is also a gluten free dairy free pizza option.

We have also included the option to donate \$5 towards the PAC, which will support various initiatives, including teacher appreciation and sports equipment.

To order Hot Lunch, you will need to log in or create a new account on Munch a Lunch:

<https://munchalunch.com/login>. Preferably, you can pay with a credit card through the site. If you do not have a credit card, you may send cash or a cheque made out to the Fernwood PAC to your child's teacher, or send an e-transfer to fernwoodpac@sd64.bc.ca with your child's name, their teacher, and what you would like to order in the notes. Please label any money sent to school clearly with your child's name and teacher, their order, and make sure the money is sealed in a ziplock or envelope. We cannot provide change.

Orders need to be completed and paid for by Monday October 13th so we have time to communicate with vendors.

Thank you for your support!
Fernwood PAC

