



Whittier World

Volume 1, Issue 1

Newsletter Date

Whittier World

Principal's Corner: Happy Holidays to All!

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Special points of interest:

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“New year, same goal,”

Dear Whittier Families,

It’s hard to believe we’re gearing up for the winter holidays! Time flies when you’re having fun...and learning! We have been very pleased with the start to our school year and have seen improvements in both teaching and learning.

Our goal this year is the same as it is each school year: continuous improvement! We are glad to be on that track and look forward to the new year. In the new year, we encourage you to continue your support in

making this school year meaningful for your child. The winter break is a great time to get reorganized and reinforce goals and expectations for success at home and at school. We look forward to continuing to challenge your child academically in the same year. We also look forward to working together in the next year as we make strides toward success for each student! Look for more school events and programs in the coming year.

On behalf of the entire Whittier staff, I extend the warmest wishes to your family



for a safe and enjoyable holiday season. Enjoy your time together!

Sincerely
Nicole Clifton, Ed.D.
Nicole Clifton, Ed.D.
Principal



From the Principal Heart Tis the Season of Joy & Thanksgiving

I continue to be most grateful for the caring and dedicated staff at Whittier, for each member chooses to be in this profession of educating and guiding children. I take joy in every student who attends Whittier, for each one is a wonderful expression of intelligence, creativity and life. I am grateful for the involvement and support of all parents, for they nurture and guide those precious children.

It is a joyful experience working with our PTA and our School Site Council, for those two groups work tirelessly to ensure high level of learning for all of our students in a rich and positive school environ-



ment. Also, I am thankful for the mem-

bers of our school board, our superintendent, and the district office staff, for they, too work to make a difference in the lives of children.



Math Lab News: Math is All around us

Encourage your children to help in the kitchen during winter break. As cold weather approaches, you and your child might enjoy preparing homemade hot chocolate.

Following directions and measuring in-



gredients build useful math

skills . Doubling or having the recipe is another good math task. Here is a simple recipe to try:

Homemade Hot Chocolate

INGREDIENTS

3 1/2 cups sugar

2 1/4 cups cocoa

1 Tablespoon table salt

Whole milk for serving

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine sugar, cocoa and salt. Store the mixture in an airtight container. For individual servings, pour 1 cup whole milk into a microwave-safe mug, and microwave on high just until hot. Add 2 tablespoons of cocoa mix and stir to dissolve.

Serve with a dollop of whipped cream, a pinch of cinnamon or a few marshmallows . A candy cane stirrer adds a taste of mint.



Winter Break
Monday, December 22, 2008
thru
Friday, January 2, 2009
-No School-

Make Time for Reading over the Winter Break!

Many children forget some of they've learned when they are out of school for an extended period of time. Helping your child keep skills sharp and even improve is easier than you think! Try some of these activities:

Encourage your child to take advantage of every opportunity to read. Find them throughout the day. In the morning read the newspaper, even just the weather of comics. During the day, read schedules, TV Guides, and use online resources. (For example, if your child like him or

her look for and read aloud to you from a book he or she is reading. Have your child rehearse a paragraph, a page, or a chapter before reading to you, so the reading "sounds right."

Keep reading to your child. Even older children exceptionally strong readers benefit from this. By reading aloud, you are sharing your interest in reading. Also, you are building comprehension skills with higher-level books. This will increase

knowledge and expand experience with text, which will help your child when her or she reads alone.

Let beginning readers read several books over the break, and let experienced readers read at least one chapter or long

book. Make sure the book is just right for your child not too hard. Your local library can help you find a just right book and so can teachers here at



Make School Attendance a Major Priority

With school vacation coming up, you may be planning to take your child out of school for an extra day or two. You'll just ask the teacher for advance homework. Missing a few days won't really matter will it? Actually, those few days of absence can matter a lot. Think about the things your child may be missing that can't be made up with homework. The class discussion about the book they are reading can't be captured in homework. Neither can the science demonstration or the group project for history. In some subjects, like math, missing even, a few days is a problem because learning builds on what students already know. Extra homework will not

make up for the things your child misses when he/she's out of school. So instead of taking your child out of school, make an extra effort to improve her attendance this month.

The parent of a Whittier Student has the following responsibilities:

- * Send your child to school (on-time) every day.
- * Call the school office if your child will be absent on that day.
- * Write a note to the teacher explaining the reason for your child's absence or tardiness
- * If a doctor sees your child, request a doctor's note and send it to your child's teacher or the

main office.

- * If your child suffers from a chronic illness (asthma, allergies, etc.) call the school nurse.
 - * If your child is tardy (anytime after 8:45 a.m.) you must sign in with security.
 - * When planning a family vacation or trip schedule it during a school break. *Absences due to trips are not excused.*
 - * Contact the principal, social worker or nurse if you need help to improve your child's attendance.
 - * Remember to **COMMUNICATE** with the staff at Whittier about your child's attendance
-

School Delays and Closings

Occasionally, schools need to open late to close early due to weather or other emergencies. Weather-related closings and schedule changes are announced starting at 6 a.m. on local radio and television stations. In case of other emergencies, information will be announced as soon possible. When schools close early or



for the entire day, all after-school activities and athletic events are canceled for the day. Parents should make arrangements for the car of their children.

If Schools:

Open one hour late- Students report to school one hour later that the regular opening time. Students will leave at their

regular time.

Open two hours late- Students report to school two hours later than the regular time.

Close one hours early- Student will be dismissed one hour earlier than the regular closing time.

No make-up classes are required.

Close two hours early- Students will be dismissed two hours earlier than the regular closing time. No make-up classes are required

Important Breakfast Note!

Please note that breakfast will be served when there is a Two-Hour delay due to weather. Please make alternate plans for breakfast on these days.

Thank You!



Dressing for Winter

Now that the cold weather is here, dressing your child appropriately for the weather is important. Students will be sent outdoors for recess, weather permitting. It is important for the students to go out in the fresh air and exercise. Please be sure your child has a winter coat, gloves or

mittens and hat. For your child's comfort please include boots, snow pants and in extra pair of dry socks when there is snow ground. that at stu-pretty end up



on the Remember lunch some dents eat fast and outside.

The light jackets and short pants we seeing students wearing show us they need some good old "parent intervention." Please lay down the law and get those summer clothes boxed up! We want our students healthy and here this winter.

December is Stress Relief Month

This time of year is particularly hectic, and along with all the hustle and bustle of getting ready for the holiday season, comes tension and stress. For this reason, December is nationally recognized as Stress Relief Month. There are several things we can do to minimize stress so that we can enjoy the holidays and our families.

STRESS-LESS TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- **Make a list all the things** you and your family like and dislike about the holidays. Build our own traditions around the highest-scoring “likes”.
- * **Take care of your body:**
 - *Get at least 30 minutes of brisk exercise every day even a brisk walk is great.
- *Stop eating when you are full, but don't skip meals either. *Allow yourself a few holiday treats, but don't overdo.
- *Get plenty of sleep.

*Limit alcoholic drinks to one or two a day.

*Of course, do not drink and drive, and fasten your seat belts.

- **Take care of your spirit.** Give yourself at least a couple of days to do what you want to do.
- **Realize that you are not solely responsible** for making the holidays special for everyone else.
- **Don't accept every invitation** you receive, or you'll run yourself ragged. It's OK to send your regrets.
- **If this is your first holiday after** ending a relationship, getting a divorce, or the death of a loved one, remove yourself from reminders of the past. Give yourself new memories by doing something you've never done before.
- **Give time and friendship** rather than presents, share

yourself with family, friends and the community by volunteering at a homeless shelter or driving a housebound friend/neighbor around the neighborhood to see the holiday decorations.

- **Keep your sense of humor.** If the soufflé looks like a pancake, it's not

the end of the world. Actually, you will probably laugh at it...next year.

- **Count your blessings.** Look around and really appreciate

the things you take for granted on a daily basis. “I murmured that I had no shoes, until I met a man who had not feet.”



This and That

-Once again, the office staff would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to those parents who stop by with a kind word and a smile, and to

everyone for their generosity throughout the year. We appreciate everyone one of you.

Best Wishes for a holiday season filled with good health, happiness and peace.

From your Office Staff!

Teach Compassion through experience

Telling your child to “be Kind” is one thing. *Practicing kindness is another.* It shows your child, “Here’s how to be nice, and it feels great!”

Fox example:

- **Include your child in adult projects.** If you serve meals at homeless



shelter, ask what you child can do, such as make sandwiches

- **Consider your child’s ideas.** How would he/she like to help other? Talk about his/her

interests, such as caring for animals. Brainstorm together.

- **Give your child a fun responsibility.** Give him/her a title, too, such as “Chief illustrator” if you’ve making cards for others. Compliment her kindness!

Homework

Dear Whittier Families,

Kids aren't the only ones with homework. Parents have homework too especially right before parent-teacher conferences. Preparation on your part can help you get the answers you need. How are you doing? Find Suggestions below:

1. I have signed up for a conference with my child’s

teacher. I have written the date on my calendar and will attend.

2. I am writing down thing I want the teacher to know about my child-likes a dislikes, strengths and weaknesses...
3. I am making a list of questions I’d like to ask the teacher-how children are graded, what they need to

know and be able to do.

4. I have talked with my child about what he/she expects the teacher to any.
5. I plan to ask about ways I can help my child better master the skills he/she need in this grade.

To the students, parents and the teaches:

Raise a 'stick-to-it' kid



If your child gets overly frustrated when he/she fails short at something teach him/

her to persevere!

To build a can-do attitude in your child:

- **Help him/her set goals** that are reachable. Whether her goals revolve around grades or scoring goals, encourage her scoring goals, encourage him/her start small.
- **Celebrate her effort** on the science test? Applaud how hard he/she studied

anyway!

- Set a good example He/She’s watching, so don’t let setbacks details you m either.



Notes from the Nurse



Cold and flu season is here and that means lots of runny noses, coughs and sore throats. Many of us will get sick during this time of year. However, there are some steps we can take to prevent spreading illnesses to other students and staff at school. Here are a few tips to help you, your child and the school through this season. First, a balanced diet and plenty of rest will go a long way in helping your child's body fight illnesses. Second, remind your child to teach to wash his/her hands frequently.. This really

helps in preventing the spread of illness and is preventing the spread of illness and is especially important after using the bathroom, before eating and after coughing or sneezing. Let your child see you using good hand washing practices and they will too. If your child gets sick, he or she should stay at home, rest, and drink plenty of sugar-free liquids. If you work outside the home, have a back up plan for someone to pick up your child if he or she becomes ill during school hours. Please make sure the office has your updated contact information in case we need to get in touch with you. **Keep your child at home when:**

- He or she has a temperature 100 degrees or above.
- He or she is vomiting.
- He or she has thick green or yellow discharge from the nose.
- He or she complains of a severe sore throat or earache, especially when accompanied by a temperature.

For the health of your child and others. If your child has any of the above symptoms during school hours, you will be asked to take him/her home. Thanks for helping keep our school happy and healthy.

Monthly Health challenge-Have a Healthy Holiday Season

Of course the challenge for December is to keep eating healthy in the midst of all the holiday festivities. It seems that, during this delicious season, our nutrition cares go out the window. While the holiday season may seem like an endless smorgasbord of high-fat, high-sugar goodies, we don't have to fall prey to this kind of sabotage. Let me arm you with some pointers I picked up doing some research on the internet.

Here are a few tips from weight management experts that can help make your holiday season a healthy one.

1. Don't try to diet during the holidays.
2. Eat slowly-enjoy these goodies because you may not get some until next year!
3. Offer to bring a favorite low-calorie dish to holiday parties so you know that will be at least one "safe" item available.
4. Make the effort to continue a regular exercise program. There are so many VERY good reasons not to exercise as often during this season but for your stress management as well as your weight management, DO IT
5. Don't go to a party or event on an empty stomach. Before going out, snack on protein, like chicken or cottage cheese. Protein satisfies and helps you eat less.
6. Keep an eye on your portion sizes. Remember that endless smorgasbord? Just take a spoonful of everything and go back for more veggies.
7. Make wise decisions about what you're going to eat. Just because it's there doesn't mean you have to eat it!
8. If you can't resist a favorite holiday dish, go ahead and eat it. Just try to show a little self-restraint.
9. Keep drinking a lot of water! You should be drinking half of your weight in ounces of water (e.g. If weigh 130 you should be drinking 6.5 ounces of water a day.) Your body needs at least 64 ounces of water to function properly each day.

Counselor News: Building Better Bonds Between All Family Members

Why do some families enjoy one another's company more



than others do? What are the ingredients for a happy family? What things work? Well,

there are several things that contribute to a more successful home life.

1. Creating quality time, family fun time, playtime together within the family builds stronger bonds, lasting memories, and greater happiness. Examples could be card or board games, family meetings, and family trips.
2. 'Good morning' hugs, 'good night' hugs, "happy to see you" hugs, "I appreciate you" hugs-physical affection can be warm and nurturing communication and connections between parents and children. Examples: pats on the back, loving embraces, back massages, comforting butterfly kisses.
3. Have fun. Learn to laugh (at yourself and others). Take yourself less seriously and appreciate the things you have. Create a "it's a wonderful life" attitude. Examples: tell jokes, share cherished stories, find family funny family experiences, make a choice to laugh and be happy.
4. Scheduled family dinners to share experiences of the day, respectful concerns, and quality time. It is very important to not rush (when possible) and to spend mealtime as a family. Examples of key components of these family table times: respectful talk, active and reflective listening, limited complaints-keeping a positive focus.
5. Family traditions. Find unique and special family rituals to strengthen family ties that lend themselves to a sense of family identity and belonging as well as significance to each family member. Examples: Friday pizza night, celebrating family member's birthdays in a particular way, movie nights, etc.
6. Family chores. Working together to accomplish family goals can lessen the blow of the work behind it because it allows for talking and listening tone another, working together, a sense of team achievement with a bonding connection between family members. Examples: raking the lawn, planting flowers, cleaning the garage, or shoveling TOGETHER.
7. Create an environment of group encouragement. Model for your children and teach them to notice efforts, appreciate contributions, love and accept one another, find one another successful and build on those successes, have faith and trust in one another. Examples: At sporting events, at musical recitals or talent shows, with family chores, with daily routines, etc.

Arrive on Time

Parents: Please take an active role in helping your child arrive to school on time by modeling the character trait of **Responsibility**. Achievement has been directly linked to school atten-

dance. It is very important your child be in school on a regular basis, this includes arriving **on time!** We are averaging 25 tardies per day. Excessive tardies and absences may warrant a personal

phone call or letter home requesting you to meet with our counselor. Please make every effort to have your child in school by 8:45 a.m.



Notes

When sending notes to teachers for students being absent or parent pick-up, etc. please make sure that the paper you write the note on is large enough to be found by the teacher. Tiny scrapes of paper are often overlooked or get lost.

When you Miss School

You Miss out

We speak so often about ways that we can collaborate to ensure your child's success at school. One very important

ingredient to school success is regular school attendance. Being in school on time each day is absolutely crucial to steady academic progress. Regular attendance also adds to the daily enrichment of all students as group work and group discussions are a major part of our school attendance average. Attendance plays a role in making AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress) under the federal



No child Left Behind Act. We understand the need for "family time off," but we ask that families plan such trips around our school holidays to avoid interruptions in learning. Please note that such time away from school is considered unexcused, through meaningful for your family. If you have any questions about attendance (absences or tardies) feel free to contact our office at (202) 576-6156.

Compute Lab News: Search Engines Are Amazing Tools!

Need help find an answer to a science or history questions? Can't remember how to add fractions? Want to help choosing a Science Fair project? Just Google it? The phrase "Google it" didn't exist when I was in school, but it has become a regular part of our world today. Google is a very powerful Search Engine found on the internet. You can do searches for just about anything.

You can find pictures, websites, and so much more. It can also be a wonderful tool for helping your child with homework questions. However, Google is not a filtered Search Engine. This means that it can send your child to websites that are too difficult for your child to understand, or send your child to inappropriate websites. How can you protect your child from

those inappropriate websites? The best answer is to use "child-friendly" Search Engines. There are many Search Engine available and several of them are designed to be safe for children to use. They check out the websites to make sure they are easy to read and understand and that the content is appropriate for children. Even Google has a "child-friendly" Search Engines you may want to try:

An Apple A Day

By all means take an apple to your teacher, but pack one in your own lunch too! A 2006 study at the University of California showed that apples help protect cells from damage, which means our cells and our



bodies stay healthier when we eat apples and drink apple juice. Apples are jam packed with phytonutrients (phyto means "plant") and are powerful disease fighters. Apples have been linked to heart health, lower risk of developing certain cancers, diabetes and asthma, and even to improving

memory. Studies show kids who eat nutrient dense foods, such as apples, perform better at school and better on tests. **Nutrition note:** Apple peels contain lots of phytonutrients, but they also have high levels of pesticides. So choose organic when available.



Season's Greetings

Dear Parent or Guardian:

It's that time of year again! Coats on in the morning and off left behind in the afternoon! In an effort to help you r students keep up with his/her coat we are asking that you put your student's name in the coat either on the label or in the pocket. Please use some form of permanent marker that will not wash out. Lots of coats look alike and a wrong one can be accidentally taken in haste to get to the bus or to the ride waiting out front. When coats are left on the bus or in the school somewhere and brought to the office, we can look at the name and get the garment back to the student right away. Help us keep your child warm and your coat cost down

Kids and Sleep

School-Aged children need 9-12 hours of sleep each night. It is very important that your child gets the recommended amount of sleep each night so that he/she can function during the school day and be ready to learn. If your child is overtired or sleepy during the day, it can certainly play a role in his/her ability to learn, it can cause behavior issues, and it can even hurt your child's relationships at school.

Establishing a Bedtime Routine

Here a summary of a few ways that may help your child into a good night's sleep:

- Include a winding-down period in the routine. Time with a book, or a quiet activity. Watching TV in the bedroom before bed and interfere with a child's sleep.
- Stick to a bedtime, alerting your child both half an hour

and 10 minutes beforehand.

- Allow your child to choose which pajamas to wear stuffed animal to take to bed, etc.
- Consider playing soft, soothing music or using a fan to block out unwanted noise.
- Tuck your child into bed snuggle for a feeling of security. Try to have them sleep in their own bed..
- Have your child keep the same sleep schedule on weekends and days off.

There isn't one sure way to raise a good sleeper, but every parent should be encouraged to know that most kids have the ability to sleep well. The key is to try, from early on, to establish healthy sleep habits. When a child does not get enough sleep, it lead to:

- Daytime sleepiness and inability to concentrate at school

- Lowered immune system and children are then more susceptible to infection (cold, flu, etc)
- Behavioral issues due to irritability, losing focus, being asked to do things but having no energy.
- One night's poor sleep can throw off the child's sleeping schedule completely. Your child cannot "catch up" on missed sleep.
- Obesity in children

*******Children may not be getting a good night's sleep due to some underlying issue such as talking in his sleep, snoring, bedwetting, frequent walking, anxiety, separation issues, etc. It is best to monitor their sleeping patterns and see a pediatrician with any concerns.**