

PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE

Welcome to the new year at Dr. Thomas A. Swift Elementary School. The information contained in this preface to the student planner serves as a student and parent handbook and is intended to provide you with useful information about the school and its organization. Please read and discuss the contents of this handbook with your child and sign the last page indicating that you have done so.

At Swift Elementary, we believe that the school, the family, and the community, all share the responsibility for the growth and development of our children. Research has shown that active parent involvement contributes to a child’s success at school. As such, you are encouraged to volunteer your time helping students in classrooms, supervising on field trips, or getting involved with our Parent Advisory Council. Please be sure to get your Volunteer Criminal Record Check and submit your forms to the school. We hope that you will take every opportunity to be part of our school. Together, we can strengthen our school community and consistently seek to improve the quality of our programs.

We encourage our students to become lifelong learners and to take responsibility for their own learning. If this planner is used consistently, it will help students become organized, effective learners.

In closing, the teachers, support staff and I are looking forward to working with you to provide the best education possible for your child(ren). I wish all students, parents, and staff a successful, productive, and enjoyable school year!

Ms. Shannon Kenney
Principal

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is your parent community at Dr. Thomas A. Swift Elementary School. All parents and guardians of students registered at this school are welcomed and encouraged to be involved with the PAC. PAC meetings are held once a month; dates and times will be posted on the PAC Facebook page and on the school website.

Our parent community works closely with the administration and staff to support, encourage, and provide assistance to enhance the quality of education and the well-being for all students in our school community. The purpose of the Parent Advisory Council is to promote and support education and to contribute to a sense of school community.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

At Dr. Thomas A. Swift Elementary School, all students will have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. Students will be encouraged and expected to achieve their personal best in school, to maintain a positive sense of self-worth, and to become socially responsible individuals. We believe that the school should foster in students a love of learning and that students should be active participants in the learning process.

The total education of a child is shared by the home and the school. Parents and teachers should work closely together in the interest of the child and in an atmosphere of open communication, mutual support, and respect.

SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE

8:00 a.m.	School office opens
8:25 a.m.	Welcoming bell
8:30 a.m.	Instruction begins
10:10 a.m.	Recess Break
10:25 a.m.	Instruction Begins
11:47 p.m.	Noon hour period begins
12:10 p.m.	Activity period ends
12:40 p.m.	Instruction begins
2:30 p.m.	Dismissal
3:30 p.m.	School office closes

SCHOOL CALENDAR 2024-2025 (subject to change – check the website calendar)

First Day of School (½ day).....	Sept 3, 2024
Non-Instructional Day	Sept 27, 2024
Day of Truth and Reconciliation.....	Sept 30, 2024
Thanksgiving	Oct 14, 2024
Early Dismissal/P-Teacher Conf.....	Oct 23, 2024
Early Dismissal/P-Teacher Conf.....	Oct 24, 2024
Non-Instruction Day	Oct 25, 2024
Non-Instructional Day	Nov 8, 2024
Remembrance Day.....	Nov 11, 2024
Winter Vacation.....	Dec 23-Jan 3, 2025
Schools Reopen.....	Jan 6, 2025
Non-Instructional Day	Feb 14, 2025
Family Day	Feb 17, 2025
Early Dismissal/P-Teacher Conf.....	Feb 19, 2025
Early Dismissal/P-Teacher Conf.....	Feb 20, 2025
Spring Vacation	March 17-28, 2025
Non-Instructional Day	April 17, 2025
Good Friday	April 18, 2025
Easter Monday	April 21, 2025
Non-Instructional Day	May 16, 2025
Victoria Day.....	May 19, 2025
Last Day for Students.....	June 26, 2025
Year-end Closing (Admin Day).....	June 27, 2025

COMMUNICATION

While many factors affect a child's education, there is one that can be of paramount importance - communication. Frequent and open communication between parents and teachers leads to a greater understanding and appreciation of the educational process, as well as each child's participation in it.

From time to time during the school year, individual parents may wish to raise questions of general concern regarding the education or safety of their child(ren). I am available for discussions with parents whenever necessary; please phone the office to book an appointment.

In cases related to specific classroom concerns, however, the first dialogue should take place between the parent and the teacher as most concerns can be successfully and appropriately resolved in this manner. We trust you will contact us if, and when, concerns or questions arise.

If Concerns Do Arise

- **First** - talk to the classroom teacher.

If you are not satisfied,

- **Then** - talk to the Principal (604-853-7730)

If you are not satisfied,

- **Phone** - Asst. Superintendent (604-859-4891)

If you are still not satisfied,

- **Phone** - Superintendent of Schools (604-859-4891)

School Information

School information will be published on the school website www.swift.abbysschools.ca and the PAC Facebook page as events come up. As information is subject to change, parents are responsible to check the website for updates. School-wide memos will be sent home by email or phone through our SchoolConnects program. Check to make sure these messages are not going to your Junk Mail.

Reporting Student Progress

The Ministry of Education requires us to report five times a year to parents on their child(ren)'s progress. These consist of three formal reports and two interim reports. The formal reports are the traditional report cards, while the interim reports will be in the form of Parent/Teacher Conferences in October and February. We encourage all parents to make an extra effort to attend.

SCHOOLCASH ONLINE

Every student has a SchoolCash account that parents' access through our **SchoolCash Online** program. All Student Fees (planners), Field Trips and Library Book Fees are processed through this account. Please be sure to sign up and enable notifications for fees that have been posted on your child's account. We prefer this method of paying for items (credit or e-cheque) rather than cash. This account will follow your child throughout their time in the Abbotsford School District. SchoolCash will also be used to process permission and consent forms for students. Please be sure to sign up and activate notifications immediately.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

School Code of Conduct

Purpose

At Swift Elementary we want students to feel safe and secure both physically and emotionally. Through shared responsibility involving the home, the school and the community, we strive to provide a safe, orderly and positive environment where all students can learn. Students are responsible for respecting the rights and dignity of others in learning environments free from discrimination as set out in the B.C. Human Rights' Code, and for becoming actively and productively involved in their own academic learning and social growth.

It is expected that students will conform to high standards of behaviour when at school, on their way to and from school, and while attending any school function or field trip. Students are also expected to demonstrate high standards of work habits, arriving to school and class on time, with the necessary supplies and materials, as well as completing all in-school and homework assignments. Each student has the right to learn; each teacher has the right to teach without interruption.

Unacceptable behaviours include behaviours that interfere with the learning of others, acts of bullying, harassment or intimidation, and illegal acts such as possession or use of illegal substances, possession or use of weapons, and theft of or damage to school property.

In summary, students are expected to be co-operative, responsible, and do the best that they can, at all times. They are to treat others the way that they would like to be treated. To this end, the following code of conduct has been developed to guide student behaviour and articulate expectations in a concise format.

Swift students are expected to demonstrate the following traits:

- **Respectful**
- **Organized**
- **Cooperative**
- **Kind**
- **Safe**

These traits are known as our Swift Rocks, and are referred to often throughout the year.

Consequences

The development of self-discipline is a very important goal at our school. The aim of a consequence for misbehaviour is for students to learn something from their experience. Consequences will be logical, realistic, and consistent, with each case of misbehaviour being dealt with on an individual basis. These progressive consequences may range from a discussion, or an office referral, to a suspension from school. Minor discipline issues will be handled on the spot in the classrooms, hallways, or playground by the supervising adult. Students will always be given the benefit of the doubt in making good decisions for themselves. As students mature and become more independent learners, these expectations progress and rise to match their development.

School staff have a responsibility to inform other parties of a serious or reoccurring breach of conduct. For example:

- parents of the student who violates the code of conduct,
- parents of the victim student,
- school district officials as required by board policy,
- police and other agencies as required by law,
- all parents in a situation deemed by the Principal to be important to reassure members of the school community that school officials are aware of the seriousness of the situation and are taking appropriate action to address it.

LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES

Learning Assistance

Learning Assistance is a service that supports students in the regular classroom. Students learn in a variety of ways and at different rates, and some students require more teacher assistance than others. Referrals are made by the classroom teacher, with caseloads being determined by the School Based Team for long and/ or short term assistance.

Counselling

Our school counsellor works with students, staff and parents addressing preventative, developmental and crisis issues. Our counsellor works with students as individuals, in small groups, or with classrooms, and is also available to parents.

English Language Learners

ELL is a service that supports students whose first language is not English. As per the Ministry of Education policy, students are eligible for a maximum of five years of ELL support, which may be provided within the regular classroom setting, or on a pull-out basis.

Regional Team

A regional team consisting of a psychologist, speech therapist, and hearing-impaired teacher, among others is available to serve our students. If you feel that your child has a need for any of these services, please discuss a referral with the classroom teacher or the learning assistance teacher.

STUDENT SAFETY

Reporting Absences

Please use the “Safe Arrival” program to let us know if your child will be late or absent. You may also call the office (press “1”) or you may email (swift@abbyschools.ca). Every morning and afternoon, attendance is taken in the classroom by teachers. It is confirmed at the office. In the interest of your child(ren)’s safety, we will contact all homes that neglect to notify the school. If students are late, they need to report to the office to sign in prior to entering the classroom. Your cooperation in reporting any student late or absence would be appreciated.

Closed Campus

The school is a closed campus. Only students, staff and approved visitors are allowed to be on the school grounds during instructional time. **All visitors (including parents) must report to the school office immediately upon entering the school.** Visitors and Guests will wear a name tag. Thank-you for respecting the safety of our students.

When Children Are Ill

Children who are ill, have had a fever, runny nose, cough or have vomited the night before, are not to come to school. Children who arrive to school sick will be sent back home. We have neither the facilities nor the personnel to care for sick children. For students who become ill during the day, our policy is to call parents and ask for the student to be picked up. For this reason, it is important that parents keep work and emergency contact phone numbers current.

Medication for Students

On occasion we have been asked by a parent to ensure their child receives prescribed medication. If your child requires school personnel to administer medication on a regular or emergency basis, please be aware that to do so, we require the completion of the form, **Request for Administration of Medication at School** which requires a Dr. signature and is available at the school office. This is a parent responsibility to complete.

Entrance/Exit Doors

Each classroom has an assigned entrance/exit door to be used before school, recess, lunch and after school. If a sibling needs to meet their brother or sister after school, they should meet him/her at their entrance door. To help maintain cleanliness inside, outdoor footwear shall be removed when inside the classroom. Each student is expected to have a pair of indoor shoes.

Washrooms

Each classroom has assigned washrooms. At recess and lunch, students should only be using the washrooms closest to the Adventure Playground. If your child has specific washroom concerns, please discuss this with your teacher.

Indoor/Outdoor Days

On outdoor days, students should be outside for the entire recess and lunch unless they are involved in a supervised indoor activity. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the colder, wet weather. **Students well enough to attend school will go outside on 'Out Days.'** On indoor days, students should find a quiet activity to do in their classroom.

Playground Supervision

Ensuring student safety is of utmost importance. Students may enter the building at their assigned entrance door when they hear the bell (8:25 a.m.). Supervision of students is provided before school, beginning at 8:15 a.m. **As such, students should not be arriving at school before teacher supervision begins at 8:15 a.m.**

After the 2:30 p.m. dismissal, students are expected to go straight home, unless they are involved in a school sponsored extra-curricular activity. Although staff may

be present in the building, no supervision is provided after 2:41 p.m. If parents are going to be late picking up their children, a call to the school secretary is required. Children who have not been picked up by 2:40 pm must come to the office to wait for their ride.

West Coast Recess & Lunch

We believe that children need to get outside in the fresh air at recess and lunch. They need an opportunity to exercise and play with their friends so that when they return to the classroom, they are ready to focus on their learning. With the West Coast being a temperate rain forest, we know that there will be many rainy days. We ask parents to be sure that their children are dressed appropriately for the weather. We will be sending children out to play rain, snow, or shine.

Lunch Time

Lunch commences at 11:45 a.m. Students may not leave the grounds without a **signed** note from a parent or guardian. During the noon hour, the school offers paid supervisory care for all students. We have tried to instill in the students that those who enjoy this privilege, must follow some simple guidelines. When students are eating their lunch in the classroom, we expect them to talk quietly, treat each other and the school with respect, and to clean up after themselves. We expect the same manners and behaviour that would be expected of students while eating at home, at a friend's house, or in a restaurant. Please note that it is a privilege, not a right, to eat lunch at school. Students who abuse this privilege may be sent home at lunch for a period of time.

Leaving the School Grounds

Unless students regularly go home for lunch, we expect all students to remain on the school grounds, unless they have written permission from their parents. If you are sending someone to pick up your child(ren), please inform the office of this intent.

Bicycle/Scooter Safety

Parents are asked to review bicycle/scooter safety with their children. Bicycle helmets are mandatory. Bikes/scooters must be walked upon arrival at the school, and then secured with a lock in the bike racks.

Traffic Safety

There is very limited visitor parking and parents are therefore asked to park on the street and walk their children to the school. We appreciate your patience and understanding of our parking limitations.

Student Drop-off and Pick-up

The **'Drop Off/Pick Up lane'** is for parents to drop off or pick up their children only. It is not a 'sit and wait' zone. It is designed for parents who need to quickly drop off their child(ren) in the morning on their way to work. If you do not see your child(ren) waiting for you by the pick-up zone after school, please drive through and either park in the cul-de-sac or go around the block.

The **'Drive Through Lane'** is used to keep traffic moving through the parking lot. Students are not to cross the lanes to be picked up or dropped off.

Please do not stop or park in the Fire Lane.

The **'No Stopping/Parking Zones'** are at the entrance and exit ends of the parking lot. These areas are to be open for our school bus to enter and leave the school and to allow traffic to flow efficiently through the parking lot.

Our parking lot is a busy and congested area before and after school. The 'School Traffic Rules' have been developed to ensure the safety of all people entering and leaving the school property. Please observe the protocols above and think "*Safety over Convenience.*"

Emergency Response Drills

A variety of drills will be held on a regular basis throughout the year to practice student safety procedures.

Use of Office Telephone

A telephone is available in the school office. Students are permitted to use this telephone only in 'emergency' situations. While students are expected to notify their parents whenever they are delayed or expect to be late in arriving home, phoning home to make after school arrangements to play with a friend is **not** considered an emergency.

Cell Phones

Occasionally, students have the use of a cell phone. Often, they are brought to school for safety purposes or emergencies. While we do not discourage children from having cell phones at school, we ask that their use be restricted to after school hours or with permission from the teacher or principal. Phones are to be turned off and left in student backpacks during the school day.

Student Cleanliness and Dress

The Abbotsford School District expects all students to adhere to standards of cleanliness and dress that allows for a clean and tasteful school environment. Students are expected to wear clothing appropriate to the school setting. Clothing is to be free of inappropriate language, references or symbols and may not advertise drugs or alcohol. Undergarments must be covered up by regular clothing. Inappropriately revealing clothing is not acceptable. Students who come to school inappropriately dressed will be asked to put on their gym shirt by either the classroom teacher, the counsellor, or the administrator.

We ask our school community to use good judgment, take responsibility and show respect for themselves and others. Hats/hoods are not permitted indoors as a sign of respect. Thank-you for your co-operation.

Textbooks and Library Books

Any textbooks or library books that are issued to students are the responsibility of that student. Any lost or damaged textbooks, or library books will be billed to the Parent's SchoolCash Account. Please encourage your child(ren) to take good care of both school and personal property.

Lost and Found

Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their belongings. Students should clearly label all personal possessions including clothing, footwear, stationary, and books. A lost and found box is kept in the hallway by the change rooms for mislaid items and we encourage students and parents to check this box if something has been misplaced. Lost and Found is taken to charity at various times throughout the year.

The school will **not** be responsible for lost money, jewelry, electronics, or personal possessions of any kind. Students should not bring any electronic items to school.

Classroom Expectations

The teachers in our school community believe that every student wishes to be a successful learner. To bring about this success, each teacher develops an appropriate learning climate according to the age of the students and teacher practices. The teacher's expectations and procedures will be explained to the students in the first few days of class and sent home in a newsletter for parents to review with their child. Students are then required to follow the rules set out in their class.

Homework/Home study

At Dr. Thomas A. Swift Elementary School, we feel that having students engage in an evening homework activity is a worthwhile and necessary function of elementary education as it gives students an opportunity to practice and internalize their daily learning. We believe it also serves to instill in students good study habits and prepares them for education beyond our elementary schools. School district policy recommends the following average homework time:

- Kindergarten and Grade 1: 15 minutes /day for 4 days (reading)
- Grades 2 & 3: 15-30 minutes/day for 4 days
- Grades 4 -5: 30-60 minutes/day for 4 days

How Can Parents Help?

Learning is not confined to the classroom. Parents are vital partners in the educational process. Some ways in which parents might help are:

- Take an interest in what your child has learned and ask what was the best part of his/her day.
- Ask your child about homework each day.
- Help set aside a particular time and place for your child to study.
- Listen to your child read.
- Read aloud to your child and ask your child questions about the story to help with comprehension.
- Promote a positive attitude towards homework.
- Limit TV watching and promote physical activity.
- Be supportive by offering lots of praise and encouragement.

Keep in touch with the classroom teacher as to the classroom routines, expectations, projects, etc.

RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES of Students

I have the **RIGHT** to learn and grow.

It is my **RESPONSIBILITY** to listen to instructions, work quietly, complete assignments, and to raise my hand if I have a question or concern. I will cooperate, participate and do the best that I can do.

I have the **RIGHT** to hear and be heard.

It is my **RESPONSIBILITY** not to talk, shout or make loud noises when others are speaking.

I have the **RIGHT** to be respected as an individual.

It is my **RESPONSIBILITY** not to tease or bother other people, or to hurt their feelings but to show respect and consideration for others and their ideas.

I have the **RIGHT** to be safe.

It is my **RESPONSIBILITY** not to threaten, kick, punch or physically harm anyone else, and to adhere to the rules of this school.

I have the **RIGHT** to privacy and to my own personal space.

I have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to respect the personal property of others, and to accept their right to privacy.

I have the **RIGHT** to enjoy school.

I have the **RESPONSIBILITY** to have a good attitude and to participate in a way that helps make our school a place where others can enjoy school too.

To indicate that you have read through this handbook, and have discussed its contents with your child, please sign the space below.

(Parent or Guardian)

(Date)