Tuesday, February 25, 2025

Dear REDFISH Parents/Guardians,

Nothing is more important than student safety and well-being. To ensure that every student arrives safely at school every day, School District 8 | Kootenay Lake (SD8) has now activated *a new, more effective* student absence reporting system called *SafeArrival*. Families at REDFISH Elementary are now invited to sign up.

SafeArrival **Is Part of** *SchoolMessenger*

SafeArrival is a student-absence-tracking tool that is part of *SchoolMessenger*, a system that enhances communication with families by allowing you to customize how SD8 communicates with you. *SchoolMessenger* is used successfully by school districts, parents, and guardians across BC. It has now been activated across SD8.

Customized Notifications and Opting In

In December 2024, you were sent an email inviting you to "opt in" to receive text notifications through *SchoolMessenger*. If you chose not to opt in to text messages, you will receive notifications by email or voice message. This was a precursory step that allowed us to activate the *SafeArrival* tool, and other *SchoolMessenger* tools, to improve communication with families. You can also customize how you are notified.

If you did not opt in to receive text message notifications, you can still do so by texting 'Y' to 978338 from your cell phone. You will get a text response from *SchoolMessenger*. Please note that your number will only receive texts if your cell number is associated with a student in our system and you have the legal rights to receive the information.

If texting 'Y' to 978338 does not work, please contact your child's school to update your contact information and ensure the province-wide *MyEd BC* system is set up correctly for you as parent/guardian, and your child.

Sign Up for *SafeArrival*

This new system will reduce the time it takes to verify student attendance, make it easy for you to report your child's absence, and make it easy for staff to respond to unexplained student absences.

With *SafeArrival*, you are asked to report your child's absence in advance using one of three methods:

1) Using your mobile device, download and install the *SchoolMessenger Home* app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store or from the links at go.schoolmessenger.ca. The first time you use the app, select '**Sign Up**' to create your account. Select '**Attendance**' then '**Report an Absence**'. (See attachment for further *SchoolMessenger Home* App instructions.)

2) Use the *SafeArrival* website go.schoolmessenger.ca. The first time you use the website, select '**Sign Up**' to create your account. Select '**Attendance**' then '**Report an Absence**'.

3) Call the toll-free number **1.833.309.1246** to report an absence using the automated phone system.

These options are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Future absences can be reported at any time.

Automated Absence Notifications and Staff Follow-Up

In addition, REDFISH Elementary will use an automated notification system to contact parents whose child is absent when the absence was not reported in advance. **The automated notification system will attempt to contact parents at multiple contact points until a reason is submitted for the absence.** If our system is unable to reach the designated contacts, office staff will follow up.

If you report your child's absence in advance using the *SafeArrival* toll-free number, website, or mobile app, you will NOT receive these notifications.

Starting on **Tuesday, March 4, 2025**, please report absences in advance using *SafeArrival* instead of sending in notes or calling or emailing the school.

Starting on **Tuesday, March 4, 2025**, staff will be using the *SafeArrival* notifications to let you know if your child is absent *when you haven't reported the absence in advance*.

If you have children attending other schools, please continue to report absences using the existing procedures for those schools.

What to Do Now

In summary, please do **one** of the following...

1) Download the *SchoolMessenger Home* app.

2) Create an account at the website *go.schoolmessenger.ca*.

If you have Texted 'Y' to 978338, you have set your default in the system to receive communication by text.

If you do not create an account, the default will be an automated phone call.

Privacy is Paramount

SchoolMessenger Home and other *SchoolMessenger* features are configured to meet privacy requirements of the *BC Freedom of Information and Privacy Act (FIPPA)* and *SD8's Privacy Management Program*. If you have any questions about privacy, please contact our *SD8 Privacy Officer*.

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we implement this new system!

Mark Bonikowsky | Principal   X   SD8 | Kootenay Lake   X   *SchoolMessenger*
REDFISH Elementary School (SD8)