

From the Principal's Pen  
October 2022



The key question to keep asking is, "Are you spending your time on the right things? Because time is all you have." -Randy Pausch

Time is such a strange creature. The way we experience time shifts and contorts depending on what we are doing. For example, if you are trying to find a restroom to turn off the highway when someone has to go to the bathroom, ten minutes can feel like ten hours, but if you are trying to steal ten more minutes of sleep, ten minutes can feel like ten seconds.

Time with children is particularly gnarly and strange. My son and daughter-in-law just had a newborn baby. Remember those sleepless nights, where one day hazily just merges into the next and over time, day and night stop seeming like such definite and distinct entities...it all just morphs into a lump of exhaustion. And although, these sleepless days seem soooooo long at the time, when you look back at it, it seems like it went by in a blink.

Now that my children are all adults, I have earned the wisdom (and the wrinkles and gray hair) of knowing I should have remained present and enjoyed all of those wonderful days of their childhoods...because time has just continued to move at warp speed.

One thing I believe we can all agree upon: TIME IS PRECIOUS.

In the last three years, we have sort of lost our grip on time with your children. Our chronic absenteeism and attendance statistics have really escalated through the weeks of Covid 19, so we are working to place a focus back on attendance.

Here's the hard part still...if your child has symptoms of Covid 19, we still ask you to keep your child home if your child is sick. We want to keep our children and our staff healthy and free of illnesses; however, if your child is healthy, we want your child here, on time, and learning! We only have your little ones for 180 days and 6.25 hours/day. We want to make the biggest impact we can in the time that we have them.

Our schoolwide goal this year is as follows:

***Education can only fulfill its promise as the great equalizer when we work to ensure that students are in school every day and receive the support they need***

*to learn and thrive. Students who are chronically absent, meaning they miss 10% or more of their school year, are at serious risk of falling behind in school. In the year 2021-22, 39.73% of Atwood students were chronically absent from school. Our goal is to reduce the chronically absentee rate by 50%, from 39.73% to 19.85%.*

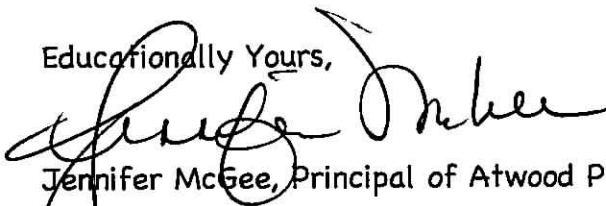
We realize that Covid 19 is still a factor, so we do want to reiterate the fact that children who have symptoms of respiratory or gastrointestinal infections such as: **cough, fever, sore throat, vomiting, or diarrhea should stay home.** However, if your child is in good health, we want them here and on time! We have a lot of work to do and we want to make up for time we had to miss in the last few years!

Being on time for school is a big deal to children. When a child arrives late, they miss those important few minutes at the beginning of the day when teachers and students get reacquainted, share important routines to settle in for the day, and get organized for learning. Children who arrive late often feel upset and discombobulated all day long! Also, if you plan for your child to have breakfast, it's important to arrive at least 20 minutes early so they can enjoy breakfast with friends instead of hurrying!

I envy you. Although parenting is the hardest job on earth, you are in the sweet spot of your journey! Your children are just becoming independent enough to be able to hop into the car, buckle up, and go on big adventures with you! They are becoming little readers, writers, artists, helpers, athletes, comedians, and honestly, your children are already better at using the ipads than I am! And...the best part of elementary school children...they still think YOU ARE AWESOME!! Report back to me when they are in junior high☺

Thank you for trusting us with your beautiful children. We appreciate you working with us to ensure they are here each day, ready to learn! Time matters and we want all of the time we can get with your little superheroes!

Educationally Yours,



Jennifer McGee, Principal of Atwood Primary School

Dates to Note:

Tuesday, September 20, 2022: Early Release Day/ noon release

Thursday, September 21, 2022: Flu Shot Clinic if you have signed your child up

Monday, October 10, 2022: Indigenous People's Day/ NO SCHOOL

Tuesday, October 11, 2022: School Photo Day, smile!!