

October 2022

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No School- Fall Break

October 28-31

John Wood Elementary School
6100 E. 73rd Ave.
Merrillville, Indiana 46410
(219) 650-5305
<https://www.mvsc.k12.in.us/>

The John Wood Parent Newsletter



From the Desk of Principal Igras

Hello Wood Family!

The month of September has come and gone and all the students are doing an amazing job. We honored our Citizens of the Month at the PTO meeting, had a successful fundraiser that will be used to meet the academic and social needs of your child, organized a spirit week, had our first Title 1 meeting and movie night combo, as well as a lot of other activities that teachers are doing in their classroom. Our PTO meetings are the first Thursday of the month at 6:00PM and we would love to see you there!

We also have a new Dean. I would like to introduce, Mrs. Swift. Mrs. Swift comes to us with a plethora of knowledge and has been spending her time building relationships with all the John Wood children. Welcome to John Wood Mrs. Swift!

During the month of October and November, there will be a focus on Red Ribbon Week and Anti Bullying Awareness. We strive to empower students to resist temptation and to make good decisions. During this time, students will participate in a spirit week and other fun activities as well as being educated on these topics. The 2022 theme for Anti-Bullying Awareness week is "Reach Out". For Anti-Bullying Week, it's important to discuss with children what bullying actually is. This way they can identify it if it happens in class and everyday life, and understand why it's wrong. It is important to know that:

"We're all a piece in the puzzle, and together, we're united against bullying"

I believe it is important to celebrate our students as much as possible. Therefore, the tradition of the Pirate Power Student Celebration will continue. In addition to students being recognized for being the Good Citizen of the Month by their teacher and the Beary Good Attendance Class award, I will recognize a student every month that I see going above and beyond. This award is called the IgraSPY!

Please note that November 11th is the last day of the trimester. Please make sure to log into Skyward regularly to keep updated on your child's progress. Also, Parent/Teacher Conferences are scheduled for November 17th. More information on this will be available as we get closer to the date.

TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE OUR STUDENTS SUCCESSFUL!

John Wood School Mission Statement

Together with parents and community, the John Wood team shall provide a safe learning environment and prepare students to be productive, tolerant, and respectful citizens by fostering individual development and striving for highest academic achievement.

Reminder

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call and let the school office know why a child is not in school. Make sure you call 650-5305 then press 2 before 9 a.m. if your child will not be in school.

Mrs. Swift Dean of Student

Hello families! I would like to take a few minutes of your time to introduce myself. My name is Abie Swift and I am the new Dean of Students here at John Wood Elementary. Before coming to John Wood,

I spent 10 years teaching special education and then the last 6 years as a Behavior Specialist providing support for various schools across Porter County. I am currently working towards my Educational Leadership graduate degree.

I have two middle school aged children who keep me very busy! We are very active in Scouts (both Cub Scouts and BSA troop level) and enjoy being outdoors.

I am so excited to work with all of my new friends here at John Wood! If you ever need anything please don't hesitate to reach out.

Happy Fall!

Lunchroom Concerns

When sending a lunch with your child, please avoid sending food in glass containers, if possible. We've already had a couple of mishaps this school year. Thank you for helping to keep our students safe.

Also, please refrain from sending any carbonated drinks in your child's lunch. These tend to get "shaken" on the way to lunch and then we have eruptions at the table.

Mrs. Hehr F.A.C.E.S.

Hello John Wood Families,
My name is Rebecca Hehr, your new F.A.C.E.S. (Family and Community Engagement Specialist) at John Wood Elementary. I wanted to better introduce myself and how I can be helpful to you this school year.

My most important job here at John Wood is supporting the parents, grandparents, families, and guardians of our students. If you ever need my assistance with anything, please do not hesitate to reach out. I am here to advocate for you, and I always strive to find a conflict-free resolution for any problem.

In my position, I will:

- act as a liaison between the school and the families;
- be the first line of communication with families when issues arise;
- offer community resources or connect families with our Social Worker;
- monitor attendance and assist with Truancy Court;
- assist the PTO with planning family engagement events and activities;
- plan and attend events in the community to represent and support the school.

I will also be in charge of Red Ribbon Week this year (October 24th-October 27th). Keep an eye out for a Red Ribbon Spirit Week Flyer once it gets closer.

A little about me personally: I graduated from Purdue in 2016 with a Bachelor's Degree in Human Development and Family Studies. I am married to my incredible husband, Darren. We have no little ones, but we do have two dogs and two cats that are very, very spoiled. I love to spend my weekends reading mystery or thriller novels, cooking new dishes, baking delicious desserts, or taking mini trips traveling to new cities.

It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know the students, and I'm so grateful I've already had the opportunity to get to know some of you as well!

Halloween Reminder

We do not have Halloween parties at John Wood School. The state allows two one-hour celebrations per year for Indiana students. At John Wood School our celebrations will take place as follows:

Kindergarten through third grade:

- Winter Holiday
- Valentine's Day

Fourth grade:

- Winter Holiday
- End of the year celebration

Please do not send treats for the class or allow children to wear costumes to school.

Good Citizens September 2022

ECD

Adrian Cedillo –
Miss McCorkle (Miss Kati)
Jabari Edmond –
Ms. Headd (Miss Thea)

Kindergarten

Justyce Porter – Mrs. Anderson
Mia Bounds – Mrs. Scott
Gabiella Abel – Mrs. Shalla

1st Grade

Dylan Knight – Mrs. Pace
Riley Davidson – Miss Talian
Victoria Sanchez – Miss Welsh

2nd Grade

Allison Koval – Mrs. Carney
Koralynn Gerstner – Mrs. Foster
Valoria Wardlow – Mrs. Marshall

3rd Grade

Jacob Ling – Mrs. Cseke
Thaya Nunn – Miss Hull
Marleigh Pohl – Mrs. Mahy

4th Grade

Kayden Jefferies – Miss Jongsma
Kamarion Flakes – Miss Vlassopoulos

Multi-Grade

ED

John Searcy – Mrs. Hoke

LRE

Amber Brown – Mrs. Nikolov

Boost Your Child's Literacy Skills!

Teach Children Rhymes and Songs:

Nursery rhymes are not just cute songs children love to recite. They play a crucial role in language and literacy development. Rhymes help children develop an understanding of the patterns of language and understand the sounds and blends that are the building blocks of words. Teaching and practicing nursery rhymes will create an important foundation for literacy.

Coats for Kids (and Families)

Announcing the 20th annual coat collection and giveaway

The Merrillville Schools are once again participating in the annual **Coats for Kids (and families)**. This is a community-wide effort to provide coats for people facing economic hardship.

You can help the children (and families) of our community by donating new or gently-used coats. (No light jackets or hoodies, please!) Just drop your used coats in the bin at our school. Collection for the **Coats for Kids (and families)** drive will run until October 23rd.

Coats will be distributed:

Saturday, November 5th
9 a.m. - noon

River Forest Middle School
3300 Indiana Street
Hobart

Saturday, November 12th
9: a.m. - noon

Merrillville Intermediate School
1400 W. 61st Avenue
Merrillville

Saturday, November 19th
9 a.m. - noon

Impact Church
7071 Broadway
Merrillville

Attendance Rewards

Each year we have a committee who works to make a School Improvement Plan (SIP) for our school. This is a blueprint of ways that we can improve the achievements of our students throughout the school year.

One of our ongoing goals is to improve our attendance rate. To help encourage students to be at school every day, we have a fun monthly reward. Each month the class with the highest percentage rate for the previous month will receive "Beary", our attendance trophy. The class with the highest percentage and the winner of the "Beary" trophy is:

Mrs. Shalla's
Kindergarten class
99.75%

Book Rental

All book rental was due on the first day of school. Payments can be made online through your parent access, or in our office. We do not have a formal payment plan, but partial payments are acceptable until the obligation is met.

Any balance remaining after the end of the first trimester (November 11th) will be turned over for collection. Checks must be made out to "John Wood School" and must include your driver's license number on the check.

ECD Fees - \$75
Kindergarten - \$127.07
1st Grade - \$123.22
2nd Grade - \$120.14
3rd Grade - \$118.95
4th Grade - \$129.51

Thank you to all of the parents who have already paid their child's book rental.

Red Ribbon Week

Red Ribbon Week is a week when millions of our American population wear a red ribbon to show that our young people and our adults are united for a drug-free society. The National Family Partnership organized the first Red Ribbon Campaign in 1988. Since that time, the campaign has reached millions of U.S. children. The Red Ribbon Campaign is now the oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation.

John Wood School will support this program by having a variety of activities planned for the week of October 26-29. Our students and staff will be showing their support in a number of ways:

- ✓ Some classes will make drug-free posters to be hung in the halls.
- ✓ Students will be invited to sign the "I Pledge to be Drug Free" pillar in the front lobby throughout the week.
- ✓ A drug-free collage will be displayed in the front hallway containing student artwork.
- ✓ There will be drug-free awareness activities in the Specials classes.
- ✓ Daily announcements with an anti-drug or healthy alternative theme will be made by members of the Student Council.
- ✓ There will be special "Spirit Days" throughout the week.

Monday

"Team up against drugs"
Wear a **team shirt**

Tuesday

"Don't get mixed up in drugs"
Wear **crazy, mixed up clothes**

Wednesday

"Wear red like Red Ribbon"
Wear **red**

Thursday

"Give drugs the slip"
Wear **slippers**

Friday

No School – Fall Break

Important Parent-Teacher Conference Information

As the Merrillville Community School Corporation continues to become more “paperless”, we no longer send home a paper copy of the report card. You will be able to see your child’s report card on their Skyward account.

During your child’s Parent-Teacher Conference, there will NOT be a paper copy of your child’s report card available. You will be asked if you have the Skyward app on your phone. If so, you will be asked to log into your account and bring up the report card so that you and the teacher can view it together and discuss it. If you do NOT have the app, you will be asked to log into your Skyward account on an iPad that will be available for this purpose. Either way, you will need to make sure you have your login information with you so that you can access your account.

If you need help with viewing your child’s Skyward information or logging in, please call the school office ASAP and they will assist you. Please do NOT wait until conferences!

Thank you for being patient as we continue to learn new ways to incorporate technology into our schools.

Follow our MCSC superintendent and our John Wood principal on Twitter!

Both Mr. Brown, our MCSC superintendent, and Mrs. Igras, our John Wood principal are on Twitter!

Follow Mr. Brown at @MerrillvilleSu3

Follow Mrs. Igras @WoodPrin

Getting the Most Out of Parent-Teacher Conferences

Everyone can win from a parent-teacher conference. Parents learn how their children are doing in school and how to help. Teachers can better meet each child’s needs. And most important, children receive a better and more personalized education. Below are some suggestions for getting the most out of the conference:

- Talk to your child before the conference. What does she or he like and not like about school?
- Make a list of questions to take with you to the conference. (See box at right.)
- Tell the teacher about the things that your child enjoys and does well.
- Ask to see the books and other materials that your child uses in school.
- If the teacher tells you about a problem with your child, ask for some specific examples and talk about what you and the teacher will do.
- Afterwards, tell your child about the conference. Stress the positive as well as the areas that need improvement.
- Keep in touch with the teacher through notes, phone calls, or meetings.

Questions you can ask

Here are some questions that you might ask your child’s teacher. Remember that conference time is limited, so select the ones of most concern to you.

What will my child be expected to master this year?

Is my child working at grade level?

Does my child participate in class?

How does my child get along with others?

How can I know what the homework is each day?

Has my child missed any assignments?

What strengths do you see in my child?

What does my child need help with most?

What help is available?

How do you keep parents informed about their child’s progress?

What can I do at home to support what you are doing?

**Our PTO has a Facebook page!
Friend us at:**

www.facebook.com/johnwood.pto

We try to use this page to pass along important reminders from the school and also to inform you of upcoming PTO activities.

PTO News

We have lots of ideas for things we'd like to do for our students and families, but we need your help! Join us at our next PTO meeting on Thursday, November 3rd at 6:00 p.m. in our school cafeteria and give us your input.

Fundraiser Update

We recently finished our Fall Fundraiser. We have not gotten the final numbers yet, but it looks like we may have done a great job! We will announce the top selling winners in a future newsletter.

Box Tops for Education

We are continuing to participate in this program, however, there is no longer anything for you to send in. In order for our school to get any funds from this program, it is necessary for YOU to download the BTFE app and scan your receipts. Our school will get the credit immediately on any qualifying purchases it finds. Just a reminder, receipts need to be scanned within 14 days of the purchase. This is a great way for relatives who live out of town to help raise money for our school!

Coca-Cola Codes

While BTFE no longer has anything for you to send in, Coca-Cola still has codes that will earn us cash. Just look for the 14-digit code on participating Coca-Cola products. Codes can be found under the caps on bottles, inside the flap on cases, and inside the shrink-wrap on Dasani Water cases. The amount we get varies. We now make more from this program than we do from the BTFE!

Apples for the Students/ Strack & Van Til

Once again we are collecting all Strack & Van Til receipts! All you have to do is send in your receipts, we'll do the rest! We will accept all receipts. It doesn't matter if it is only for \$1, the receipts add up! Last year we were able to purchase several items to be used on our playground and games for when we have indoor recess. Receipts must be dated between September 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023.

VIP Event/Book Fair

Next week is Book Fair Week! We would like to celebrate the VIPs in our lives with a special event. We understand that not all students have a "grandparent" who can come visit the school, so we are asking the students to invite the VIP in their life. This can be mom and/or dad, a favorite relative, or even a special friend of the family.

The PTO will provide light refreshments during the event. There will be a selfie station and a small craft that can be done together. The book fair will also be open for shopping.

PTO Officers

Our PTO is currently being run by a small committee of parents. We would really like to become a more formal unit. We currently have a treasurer, but have openings for a President, Vice-President, and Secretary. If you are interested in finding out more about the responsibilities involved or have an interest in holding one of these positions, please contact Mrs. Hehr at 219-650-5305 ext. 6551 or email her at rhehr@mvschool.k12.in.us.

Pop Tab Collection

We are continuing to collect pop tops for the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana. Collected pop tabs are recycled, generating much-needed funds to support the Ronald McDonald House and the nearly 1,500 families they serve each year.

Funds received by the Ronald McDonald House of Indiana from the recycling of tabs usually add up to between \$30,000 and \$50,000 annually. All this money goes to the operating expenses and can cover the cost of operating three rooms in the House for an entire year.

Simply remove the pop tab from aluminum cans and put them in your favorite collection container. When you are ready to send them to school, just put them in a Ziploc-type bag and send them with your child. There's no competition, no goal, no prizes...just the reward of doing a good deed.

Upcoming Events

Every Thursday **Buddy Blue Day**

Wear blue on this day to remind you to be a buddy! Everyone needs a buddy!

Every Friday **Pirate Pride Day**

Wear John Wood spirit wear, Merrillville spirit wear, or even just purple to show support for our school community! Everyone who wears purple will have their name in a weekly drawing. One winner will be pulled from each grade level to win a small prize.

October 17-21 **Scholastic Book Fair**

This week the book fair will be available in the library. Students who bring money will have the opportunity to make a purchase. See the article on page 6.

October 20 **VIP Event** **5-7 p.m.**

Students will have the opportunity to spend some time with the VIP in their life. The book fair will be open for shopping during this event. Watch for info to come home.

October 24-27 **Red Ribbon Week**

Several activities are planned at John Wood and around the community to create awareness of drug abuse. See the Monthly Activity Calendar or the article on page 3 to find out about Spirit Wear Days throughout the week with themes that reinforce this focus.

October 28-31 **No School – Fall Break** No school for all students.

November 3 **PTO Meeting** **6:00 p.m.**

Join us as we plan events for the upcoming months. We will be honoring the October Good Citizens of the Month at this meeting.

November 6 **Daylight Savings Time ends** Don't forget to set your clocks back one hour!

November 8 **Virtual Learning Day**

This is the first of two pre-scheduled full-day virtual learning days this year. Your child's teacher will send you more information about this day.

continued on page 6

Upcoming Events

continued from page 3

November 11

Veteran's Day

Make sure you remember to thank a vet today!

November 11

End of the first trimester

Today is the end of the first trimester.

REMINDER: ALL BOOK RENTAL BALANCES AFTER THIS DATE WILL BE TURNED OVER FOR COLLECTION.

November 14

Teacher Work Day

No school for all students. Teachers will use this day to prepare for conferences.

November 17

Parent-Teacher Conferences

12:30-7:30 p.m.

No school for all students. Conferences are scheduled to be held on this day.

Watch for an important note to be coming home with your child with more information as we approach this date.

November 22

Picture Retake Day

Picture retakes will be taken today for students who did NOT have their photo taken because they were either absent or enrolled after Picture Day. If you are having retakes because of a problem with your first picture, you **must return the entire original package** at the time of the retakes!

November 23-25

No School, Thanksgiving Break

Enjoy time with family and friends and remember all the things you have to be thankful for this year. School will resume on Monday, November 28th.

A Message from the Food Service Department

Remember that breakfast and lunch is no longer free to all students. The USDA universal waivers that were granted during the pandemic have expired. If you qualified for free and reduced lunch and textbook assistance last year, that has also expired.

Please make sure you are keeping a balance in your child's lunch account. Money can be deposited through your Skyward Family Access.

If you are in need, please fill out and turn in an application for assistance as soon as possible. Applications are available on the MCSC website. Paper copies are also available in our school office.

Book Fair

The Scholastic Book Fair is coming to the John Wood School library! Students will have the opportunity to visit the book fair and make purchases starting Monday, October 17th and through Friday, October 21st.

Our students love the feeling they receive as they experience shopping and handling money. A flyer should have come home with your child with more information.

The extra funds generated by the book fair goes right back into our library. This event allows our library to purchase more books for our students to read.

Purchases will also be able to be made online, so this is a great way for parents, grandparents, friends, and neighbors to buy books, posters, and small treats from our annual fall book fair!

School Transportation

We begin by extending our deep gratitude to parents, guardians, and students for your patience, understanding and support during the adjustments being made this year due to the shortage of bus drivers. This shortage is not only in our school corporation, but across the nation. This is not something that will be resolved in a short period of time; therefore, we must soften the effects as much as we possibly can as a school corporation.

Interested in applying??

Competitive Wages

10 years of experience starting at a higher wage

Full-time benefits package available with part-time hours

Paid Training

Paid CDL Skills Test & DOT physicals

To apply online or for more information, visit

www.mvsc.k12.in.us/transportation

Gold Note Reminder

You need to send a gold note if:

- When registering, you chose "every day", and your child will NOT be picked up.
- When registering, you chose "occasional" and you WILL be picking up.

Please don't depend on your child remembering verbal changes or sending an email to the teacher. The teachers are busy during the day and may not see the email. The gold notes are the very best way to communicate your daily changes.

Purple Pirate Pride

In an effort to promote pride in our school community, we encourage students to wear purple on Fridays. Students who wear purple on Fridays will be included in a drawing each week for a small prize.

Students who are wearing ANYTHING "John Wood" (old Spirit Wear, Math Fact Shirts, etc) or "Merrillville" (Athletic Department Spirit Wear, Pop Warner shirts, etc) will also count for the drawing...even if it is not purple (sometimes spirit wear is on gray or black).



TRICK OR TREAT

**Thursday, October 27
5:30 - 7:00 PM**

Merrillville High School

(Outside At The Track Stadium)

Youngsters to 6th Grade
(Merrillville Students ONLY)

\$5 Admission Per Child
(All Proceeds Donated to Special Olympics)

**All Trick or Treaters MUST Be
In Some Kind Of A Costume And
Accompanied By An Adult**

Concession Stand Open

Hot Dogs	\$3.00
Nachos	\$3.00
Popcorn	\$2.00
Cold Beverages	\$2.00
Hot Chocolate	\$1.00
(Come and Have Dinner)	

MUSIC AND FUN

Sponsored By: Merrillville Student Athletes