

# Walnut Park Elementary School

P.O. Box 2649, Smithers, British Columbia V0J 2N0  
Telephone 250 847-4464 email: [wpsoffice@sd54.bc.ca](mailto:wpsoffice@sd54.bc.ca)  
<http://wpsweb.sd54.bc.ca>

Jaksun Grice, Principal

De-Anna Lea, Vice Principal

## Newsletter – October 8, 2025

Dear Walnut Park Families,

As we move into October, I want to take a moment to reflect on the strong start we've had to the school year. Our students have settled into routines with confidence, and there's a positive energy building throughout the school. Whether it's the way students are caring for our shared spaces, supporting one another, or engaging in learning, it's clear that we are off to a great start.

This year, we're placing a strong focus on two key goals at Walnut Park:

1. **Creating a calm, respectful, and structured school environment**, and
2. **Improving literacy outcomes for all students.**

### A New Approach to Literacy

I am excited to share that Walnut Park has launched a school-wide initiative to strengthen the literacy skills of our students.

In our **primary classrooms (K-3)**, all teachers are now using the **UFLI Foundations** program. UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Institute) is a structured literacy program that teaches students how to decode words by focusing on phonemic awareness (the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words), phonics (the relationship between letters and sounds), and spelling patterns. This approach helps students build strong foundational skills that are essential for fluent reading and writing.

Each week, students are introduced to new sounds and spelling patterns through engaging, hands-on lessons. They practice reading and writing words using these patterns, and they apply their learning in connected texts. UFLI is systematic, explicit, and designed to meet the needs of all learners—including those who may struggle with reading.

In our **intermediate grades (4-7)**, we're continuing a similar focus through **small-group reading instruction** three times per week. These groups allow teachers to target specific reading skills—such as vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension—based on student needs. Our intermediate teachers are also participating in ongoing professional development, including a bi-weekly course on the Science of Reading, to deepen their understanding of effective literacy instruction.

We believe that every child deserves to become a confident, capable reader, and we're excited about the progress we're already seeing. I encourage you to read with your children at home and supply them with reading materials to reinforce what they are learning at school. Less screen time and more book time is a great place to start!


### Looking Ahead

There's a lot to look forward to this month—from cross-country races, Halloween colouring contests, to parent-teacher interviews. I'm proud of the way our students are embracing new expectations and rising to the challenges of the year. Thank you for your continued support and partnership, it truly makes a difference.

Wishing you a wonderful October!


**Jaksun Grice**  
Principal, Walnut Park Elementary

**Safe Arrival** Parents and guardians are requested to use the Safe Arrival system which was introduced last year. Please see the revised attachment with the three ways to report your student's lateness or absence. We need to ensure that all children are safe and accounted for.




# REPORTING YOUR CHILD'S ABSENCE

Whether it's an illness, medical appointment or other important event, there are times when students may need to be away from school. SD54 (Bulkley Valley) is introducing a new method for parents to report their child(ren)'s absences. Using the SafeArrival system, parents will be able to report daily absences, and even schedule absences in one of three ways:




833-829-5808

Call toll-free before 9:20AM  
to report an absence



Log onto the web portal following the address below. Using this website, you can set up your account to report and schedule absences.

<https://home.schoolmessenger.ca/#/login>

SM Home App 

Using your smart phone or tablet. Simply download the SM Home - SchoolMessenger app. The app is compatible with both Apple and Android devices.

[IPHONE](#)     [ANDROID](#)

Please report all absences prior to 9:20AM for the current day. If your child has an upcoming appointment, you can also schedule future absences by using one of these three methods.

**Messages for Students** We understand that from time to time, unexpected situations arise that require you to contact the school to relay a message to your child or make a change to their after-school plans. We are always happy to help when emergencies occur.

However, we've seen a significant increase in the number of calls requesting messages to be delivered to students. This has become increasingly difficult to manage. Due to the busy nature of the school day and the fact that classes are often learning in various locations around the building, it is not always possible to ensure messages are delivered in a timely or accurate manner.

To help us minimize disruptions and ensure smooth communication, we kindly ask that you make every effort to finalize after-school plans with your child before the school day begins. This will help us avoid any potential mix-ups and ensure your child gets home safely.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support!

**Parking** Thank you for not parking in the Dairy Queen parking lot or in the staff parking lot. This is a safety concern, and we want to ensure that pick up and drop off occur safely and smoothly. Please continue to use the parent parking lot and be aware of pedestrians.

**Parent-Teacher Interviews** Parent/Teacher Interviews will be conducted **October 22nd and 23rd**. Please note the early dismissal times on these days: **October 22rd (2:00 p.m.) and October 23th (12:00 p.m.)**. We will also be using our online system to reserve interview spots. The link will be sent out the week before the interviews.

**Cross Country Run** Our district will be participating in the Cross-Country Run-on **Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at Riverside Park**. Permission forms will be sent home with participating students. Parent volunteers are still needed, please contact Jaksun Grice at the school if you would like to volunteer. Or indicate your willingness to volunteer on the parent permission form being sent home with the student runners.

**Walnut Park PAC** Parents and guardians are warmly invited to get involved with the Walnut Park Parent Advisory Council (PAC). The PAC plays a vital role in our school community by supporting student learning through fundraising, volunteering, and providing input on school initiatives.

The time commitment is small, but the impact is big! PAC meetings are held once a month and are a great way to stay connected, share ideas, and help make Walnut Park an even better place for students.

Our next PAC meeting will take place on **Monday, October 27 at 7:00 p.m.** in the **Walnut Park multipurpose room**. We'd love to see you there!

**Salad Bar** Will be on Mondays again this year. Our Salad Bar coordinator is Noelle Bulloch. The program will begin on **Monday, October 20th**. We would like to thank those who have signed up to volunteer and would like to note that a few more parent (or grandparent) volunteers are needed! Please email Noelle if you have questions or would like to help. Her email is [noelle.bulloch@hotmail.com](mailto:noelle.bulloch@hotmail.com). The salad bar program helps bring healthy lunches to students for a very affordable price. Order forms will be sent home with student in early October. Please return completed order forms with payment if you would like your child(ren) to participate. **Tickets are \$5 each or 10 for \$45.** Tickets will be tracked on a checklist rather than issuing paper tickets to students. Tickets do not expire if your child is absent on Salad Bar Day. Credits will be available on future dates. Credits from last year have been carried over to this year and have been noted on individual students' order forms where applicable. Questions about carry-over? Email us at [wpsoffice@sd54.bc.ca](mailto:wpsoffice@sd54.bc.ca). **When there is no school on a Monday (i.e., statutory holidays) salad bar will be cancelled rather than re-scheduling to a different day of the week.**



**Pizza Wednesdays** will begin on **October 15th** and will continue every Wednesday students are in school. Stephanie Grice or Jessica Hunt are the contacts at the school office. If you are willing to help with distributing pizza on Wednesdays, please email Stephanie or Jessica at [wpsoffice@sd54.bc.ca](mailto:wpsoffice@sd54.bc.ca) or call the school. This volunteer duty requires about 30 minutes of your time. Students may order and pay in their classrooms at attendance time on Wednesdays; or for convenience, you may pre-pay at the office using cash, debit, or cheque. Same day student orders must be completed and paid **before 9:30 a.m.** as orders are submitted prior to 10:00 a.m. The school year will be divided into three pre-payment periods: **October - December; January - March; and April - June**. If you have any questions about pre-paying for pizza, please email [wpsoffice@sd54.bc.ca](mailto:wpsoffice@sd54.bc.ca).

**Prices: Pizza \$3.00 per slice, Beverage \$1.50 (choices: milk, chocolate milk, apple juice, orange juice)**

Pre-payment examples for October 15 to December 17th (10 weeks)  
1 slice + 1 drink = \$45.00      2 slice + 1 drinks = \$75.00      3 slices + 1 drinks = \$105.00

**PANAGO PIZZA**

October	November	December
15th - Cheese	5th - Cheese	3rd - Cheese
29th - Pepperoni and Cheese	12 <sup>th</sup> - Pepperoni and Cheese	10 <sup>th</sup> - Pepperoni and Cheese
	19th - Cheese	17 <sup>th</sup> - Cheese
	26th - Pepperoni and Cheese	

**Terry Fox Run** Students participated in the annual Terry Fox Run here at Walnut Park. Donations totaled **\$300**. This amount will be forwarded to the Terry Fox Foundation. Thank-you to Walnut Park families for your generous support!



**Kelly Bergen Photographer**

All Students had the opportunity to have their picture taken on **Wednesday, September 17, 2025**. Students were proved a code on picture day, if you have misplaced the code, please call the office at (250) 847 4464. **Retake day will be October 22<sup>nd</sup>.**

**Halloween** Students are able to come in their Halloween costumes on **Friday, October 31**; however, we ask that students do not wear masks or make-up and do not bring weapons of any kind to school. Individual classes may be organizing events and will communicate these to parents.



**Volleyball** Grade 5, 6 and 7 Volleyball will be starting soon, more information to come. Please check our Facebook page for upcoming announcement:  
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61552231005105>

**Strong Start** Strong Start is in session at Walnut Park this year from 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Monday to Friday. The program is on a drop-in basis for children aged 5 or younger along with their caregiver. Please dress for the outdoors and be prepared to play outside daily. If you have any questions, please have a look on Facebook at the "Welcome to Walnut Park Strong Start" page. The Strong Start program uses the side entrance of the school next to the parent parking lot.

Calendar

Oct		
	13	Thanksgiving Monday - No School
	15	Pizza Day Starts
	16	Cross Country Run at Riverside Park
	20	Salad Bar Starts
	22	Early dismissal for Parent-Teacher Conferences - <b>students will be dismissed at 2:00 p.m.</b> Picture Retake Day
	23	Early dismissal for Parent-Teacher Conferences - <b>students will be dismissed at 12:00 p.m.</b>
	24	Non - Instructional Day - No School
	27	PAC Meeting - 7pm Walnut Park multi-purpose room
	31	Halloween
Nov	7	Walnut Park Remembrance Day Ceremonies
	10	Non - Instructional Day - No School
	11	Remembrance Day - School Closed
	27	Grade 6 Immunization



# Fall/Winter Kids Classes 2025

**Mixed Media Mayhem**  
with Jen Mio

XOXO



Ages 9-12    Sept. 18, 25 and Oct. 2  
2:30 - 4 pm


for  
ages 3-5



caregiver & me sessions

**ART EXPLORATIONS**  
with jen mio

October 17, 24, 31  
10-11am



**MANGA &  
COMIC  
CHARACTERS**

Art Workshops  
for Kids & Teens!

Sonya Kinsey

Oct. 25, Nov 1, 8,  
1 - 3:30 pm

**CREATE-A-PALOOZA**  
WITH JEN MIO    AGES 7-9



NOV. 4, 18, AND 25  
3:30 - 4:30 PM

