



It is hard to believe that we are already at the start of December! Learning Updates (report cards) are being written, temperatures are dropping, and holiday songs are already being heard in shopping malls.

It's been a busy and exciting last month at Cliff Drive. Our students continue to grow, both intellectually and in maturity, our student-leadership initiatives are gaining momentum, hundreds of hot-lunches have been served (thank you, PAC!) grade 4 and 7 FSA tests have been written, Spookfest was a resounding success(thank you, PAC!), and our grade 6 and 7 volleyball teams performed admirably in league play!

As we look ahead, we are excited for the Cliff Drive Winter Concert, to continuing to build our community around the concepts of *Safe, Kind, Responsible* and *Respectful* to look towards 2025 with a sense of hope and positivity!

We are grateful to be on this journey with you, the greater Cliff Drive community. We thank you for your open communication, your support of our ongoing initiatives, and for being involved in your child's learning through active participation and encouragement.



## IMPORTANT DATES

Friday, December 13	Term 1 Learning Updates (report cards)
Wednesday, December, 18	Cliff Drive Winter Concert (matinee)
Wednesday, December 18	Cliff Drive Winter Concert (evening)
Friday, December 20	Last Day of School Before Winter Vacation
Monday, January 6	School re-opens after the Winter Break
Friday, January 24	Non-Instructional Day (school is closed)

## Cliff Drive Winter Concert



**DECEMBER 18**

Matinee at 130pm Evening at 6pm

Cliff Drive Radio hits the air with holiday favourites for one day only! Ticket request information is being reviewed. Watch your inbox for more information in coming days.





While students are expected to be lined up with their classes by 8:55am at their assigned doors, sometimes, they arrive late and enter through our front doors.

Starting in January, our front door will be *unlocked* from 830am until 930am so there will be no need to ring the doorbell.

THINGS  
TO KNOW



We are well into our colder weather (with atmospheric rivers and bomb cyclones mixed in with some beautiful sunny days. This is such a beautiful part of the world that we live in, and we love being out in it!

At Cliff Drive, we believe that children function and learn best when they have spent some time out in nature breathing fresh air and burning off some energy. Please ensure that you child is dressed for the weather EVERY DAY with the expectation that they will be outside for morning and afternoon recess.



We are pleased to welcome Ms. Cheryl Crawford as our new Admin Assistant at Cliff Drive!

Ms. Crawford works from 8:15 until 3:45 each day at the front desk in the office. Please help in making her feel welcomed and appreciated as she gets to know the Cliff Drive school community!

## Leaving School at Lunch

From time to time, we have students, especially in the older grades who leave the school grounds for lunch (typically to go to a nearby home ). At this time, we are not encouraging students going attend local businesses at lunch without parents present.

If students are planning to leave the school grounds at lunch without a parent, we need to have clear, written permission from parents/guardians indicating where they are going, and when (days/dates).

If you have any questions about this, please call Mr. McGrory or Mr. Campbell.



October's newsletter expanded on the importance of **Reading Routines** with some excellent ideas from our Teacher-Librarian, Ms. Sadler.

This month, we're diving into the **Power of Play**, especially *independent play* in children. The article below outlines some of the current research regarding play, and some practical strategies as we consider just how important play is for young developing minds.

### **Children Who Thrive: The Importance of Play for Development**

Besides a child's relationship with a caring adult, what (according to current research) is the most important factor for brain development and good mental health? Surprisingly, it's not adequate sleep, good nutrition, or a great education—it's PLAY.

Play is nature's design for brain growth and emotional health. Often seen as a luxury, play is crucial for development. It is a primal, biological drive in mammals, pre-wired into our brains. Through play, children build brains that solve problems, take risks, feel and express emotions, and practice essential soft skills for life success.

In our busy, screen-dominated age, play needs protection more than ever. The decline in independent, free play is linked to reduced confidence and resilience in children, contributing to stress, anxiety, and depression.

To address this, we must understand and prioritize play in our children's daily lives. We need to examine family schedules to ensure space for it.

True play is:

- Spontaneous: It emerges from the child's ideas or emotions
- Unstructured and unmediated by adults
- Not outcome-based: No requirement for task mastery or learning
- Imaginative: Children can create beyond "real life"
- Expressive: It comes from within the child, not consumed like entertainment
- Often a byproduct of boredom!

Examples of true play include invented games, make-believe, creative building, drawing from imagination, storytelling, exploring nature, and unstructured movement.

Reflect on your child's schedule and ensure there are "void moments"—times free from structured activities or technology. These unstructured times allow play to emerge naturally. Play is a vital developmental need, and we must protect the time and create environments that nurture it.