



ERIC J. DUNN Elementary SCHOOL

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3500 Argyle Street, Port Alberni, BC, V9Y 3A8

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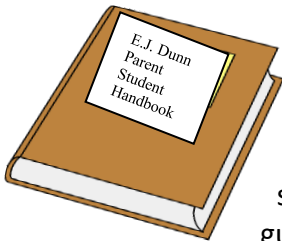
Website: <http://ejdes.sd70.bc.ca>



September 2025

Principal's Message

I would like to welcome everyone back to the new school year! I hope each of you had a wonderful and relaxing summer. We are gearing up for another fantastic school year! Our teachers are rested, energized, and focused on providing an excellent educational experience for your children.



Parent Handbook, Verification Sheets, and other information

Will be sent home in the following few weeks. Please make a point of reading and sharing with your child(ren) the information from the parent handbook. Please carefully read verification sheets and any other information that is sent home as the school will be asking for information or updated information regarding emergency and guardian contact information that will help us better communicate with you. If you have any questions, please contact the school @ 250-723-7522.

MESSAGE FROM E.J. DUNN PAC

Welcome back! We hope you had a wonderful summer. We also encourage you to come, join or help out

occasionally with the Parent Auxiliary Committee we always welcome new parents who want to be involved in helping our school community thrive. Next meeting September 23, 2025 – 6:15 pm



Throughout this school year PAC will be fundraising for a new playground piece! Stay tuned for details.

Our monthly meetings & hot lunch fundraisers are usually the last week of each month, so follow our parent-run Facebook page if you aren't already ("EJ Dunn Parents' Page"). Posts about all of our happenings will be on the Facebook page and details will also be in the school's newsletters as well.

Please feel free to email the PAC at ejdpac@sd70.bc.ca with any questions or ideas for fundraising or if you want to join us or just come out & help!

Open House – September

We are having an Open House on September 25, Thursday from 4:00-5:00pm. All families and students are welcome to come and visit their classroom and other areas of the school. Afterwards, everyone is invited to join us in the courtyard for a BBQ.





PARKING LOT SAFETY

To ensure that our students are as safe as possible, we ask that parents respect all signage. The bus loop at the front of the school is for SD 70 buses only. ***U-turns are prohibited in all school zones!!*** Thank you for supporting child safety!

If your child has an appointment or will be leaving school, please call the office, and pick up your child at the front of the school. This area will be used for short-term parking (picking up or dropping off students for an appointment, meetings or lunch drop-offs). Please report to the office upon arrival to check in.

REMINDER TO PARENTS

Supervision of children begins at the school at 8:35 a.m. The students are expected to be outside when they arrive at school. Teachers are not in their classes until 8:55 a.m. as they are involved in meetings or class preparation. Students are expected to be outside before school, at recess and lunch, so please send appropriate clothing for rainy days.

BREAKFAST CLUB

We are looking for volunteers to assist with our Breakfast Club program, which we are happy to have back in action this year. Please contact the office if you are interested in helping with this program!



PICTURE DAY

Will be early this year. September 18, 2025, Thursday. Mark your calendars.

Terry Fox Run

Terry Fox will take place on September 15, 2025, at 11:00 AM. Donations are welcome bring a donation of a Toonie for Terry. Parents are welcome to join in on the school wide run.

Backpack information

Attached is the form for this program. Please send them back to the school asap if you are interested as space is limited.

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

September 18, 2025 – Thursday – Picture Day

September 23, 2025 – Tuesday – 6:15 pm Foods room beside the library.

September 25, 2025- Thursday – 4:00 to 5:00 -Open House

September 29, 2025 – Monday - Non- instructional day – No school for students

September 30, 2025 – Tuesday – Truth and Reconciliation Day – NO School

October 13, 2025- Monday – Thanksgiving holiday – NO School

October 24, 2025 – Friday – Non-instructional day – No school for students

October 28 and 29, 2025 – Tuesday, Wednesday – Learning Conferences – Early dismissal

Attendance

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school – and themselves. You can help your children start building this habit early, so they learn that going to school on time, **every day**, is important. Good attendance will help your children do well in school, post-secondary, and at work.

Did you know?

- ▶ By encouraging good attendance, you will make an important difference to the education of your children. Regular attendance is key to educational success.
- ▶ It's understandable that challenges to daily attendance are unavoidable – like illness and urgent appointments. But try not to let absences add up! Studies show that students who miss **18 (that's 1.5 days per month)** or more school days each year usually suffer academically!
- ▶ **It doesn't matter if absences are excused or unexcused.** They all mean lost time in the classroom, and that means a lost opportunity to learn.
- ▶ Attendance matters as early as kindergarten! Studies show that students who attend more in Kindergarten and Grade 1 are less likely to struggle with reading by third grade.
- ▶ Students with good attendance are more likely to graduate from high school.
- ▶ Children who have good attendance rates are less likely to be involved in behaviours that will get them in trouble. Studies show that students who attend school regularly are less likely to break the law and go to jail later in life.
- ▶ Children are safer in school than out on the street

What families do is key!

- ▶ A regular bedtime and morning routine can help your children make it to school on time and get ready for the day ahead. Limiting screen time/ gaming is crucial to establishing good routines.
- ▶ Get to know your children's teachers! Learn about the school's attendance policies. Keep in touch regularly so you know how your children are doing.
- ▶ Let your children know that attendance matters to you. By learning how to show up for school every day, your children are learning how to show up for work every day later in their lives.
- ▶ Encourage your children to go to school unless they are sick.
- ▶ Try to avoid having older children stay home from school to care for their younger siblings.
- ▶ Try to avoid booking medical appointments during school hours if you can and try not to schedule any family trips on school days unless you must.

► Ask for help if you need it. What services are available in your community? Can the school help you access the resources you might need?

► Join with other parents to make an attendance commitment. Agree to help one another if something comes up that will make getting to school difficult.

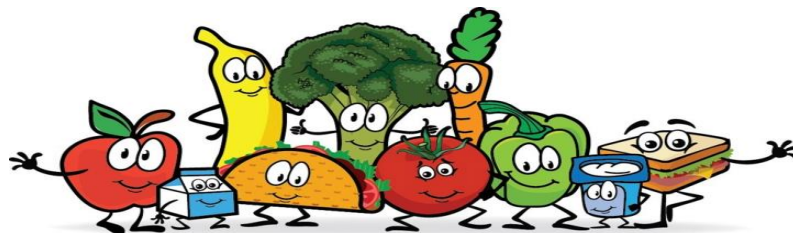
► Contribute to your school's efforts to address absenteeism. Help if you can. Help improve attendance for all the children in our community.

LUNCH PROGRAM INFORMATION

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome back to another year of learning, growth, and connection. School food

continues to be a pillar of support for our students, and the 2024–2025 school year marked several meaningful milestones both locally and nationally. We're proud to share a few highlights:



- The launch of the **National School Food Program**, supporting school meal initiatives across Canada.
- Continued funding through B.C.'s **Feeding Futures** program, delivered by the Ministry of Education and Child Care.
- A successful first year of partnership with **Nourish Cowichan**, which provided daily meals to students in Port Alberni and Ucluelet through local staff.
- A 10% increase in participation: approximately 21% of all students in our district accessed the School Meal Program.
- Major renovations to the **central kitchen at EJ Dunn Elementary**, increasing our capacity to serve a greater variety and volume of meals to Alberni Valley schools.
- Ongoing **community support** from school staff, volunteers, and donors—thank you. Your generosity remains the heart of this work.

We are especially grateful to continue working with **Nourish Cowichan**, whose guiding belief is that when communities come together with love and compassion, incredible things can happen. Their mission ensures every child has the opportunity to learn and thrive with access to nutritious food.

Everyone Belongs at the Table

Pacific Rim School District is committed to ensuring that every student has access to nourishing meals. With support from Feeding Futures and the National School Food Program, we're helping students feel well, learn better, and reduce food insecurity in our communities.

While government funding provides a strong foundation, community donations are essential to bridging the gap and keeping the program running sustainably.

What is the School Meal Program (SMP)?

The SMP ensures students receive a nutritious lunch and snack each school day, starting **September 3, 2025**, and continuing throughout the school year.

Who pays for the School Meal Program?

The School Meal Program is funded by:

1. The Ministry of Education and Childcare's Feeding Futures initiative.
2. The National School Food Program.

3. Donations made to Nourish, which stay local to our district

What kind of food is served?

Meals are prepared fresh by our team at EJ Dunn Elementary School's kitchen and planned to be nourishing, culturally appropriate, and made with care. We focus on whole foods and minimally processed ingredients and aim to source locally whenever possible.

As the program grows and evolves, so too will our offerings. With expanded kitchen capacity and input from students, families, and schools, we're working toward more diverse menus.

Snacks Are Always Available

We want every student to feel supported throughout the day. **That's why we make snacks available for anyone who's feeling hungry.** Whether your child is enrolled in the program or not, they are welcome to access snacks—everyone belongs at the table.

How do I enroll my student(s) and contribute to the School Meal Program?

Our School Meal Program operates on the principle that everyone is welcome, and nobody will be turned away, even if they can't contribute. Enrollment helps us plan and order food effectively (continued...).

1. **To enroll**, complete the form at the bottom of this letter and return it to your school. This enrolls your student(s) for the full school year.
There is no obligation to participate, and the program is offered at no cost and without pressure to contribute. If you'd like to opt out, please contact your school secretary.
2. **To contribute**, donations made to Nourish are used to feed students right here in our district. While the suggested donation is \$100/month per student (about \$5 per school day), any amount helps – especially as food prices continue to rise. Contributions are voluntary and help us serve more students. Your support helps us keep the program running strong, reduce food insecurity, and ensure that no student goes without a meal.

How Can You Help?

The success of our School Meal Program depends on the support of our community. Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- **Volunteer:** Find out what's needed to volunteer your time to help with meal preparation or distribution. Commitment is flexible, and we are happy to accommodate your schedule.
- **Spread the Word:** Share this vital program with others.
- **Donate:** Every \$1,000 donated feeds one student for a full school year. Tax receipts are available, and 100% of donations go directly toward food for students in our district—helping us offer more meals, more variety, and reduce reliance on public funding.

For more information about Nourish, including how to volunteer or donate, please visit their website at www.nourishcowichan.ca or call 250-735-2399.



Thank you for your continued support and commitment to student well-being

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Knesbitt".

Kirsten Nesbitt
Healthy Schools Manager | Pacific Rim School District
Email: knesbitt@sd70.bc.ca | Phone: 250-735-2399

PORT ALBERNI BACKPACK PROGRAM

Our Backpack Program provides **weekend groceries** to elementary students and their families who could benefit from **weekly food support**. These groceries are available to all of our elementary school families throughout our valley as well as to some families at Hummingbird Daycare. Each week we provide our families with **the makings of a good healthy meal along with extras to help their escalating food expenses**.

It is well known, that a child can focus more on their learning and achieve their best in their studies, if they have enough to eat. School breakfast and lunch programs support learning with meals during the week. Our children's program is meant to supplement these programs by supplying our students and their families with food on weekends.

We are very fortunate to receive wonderful community participation. As a result, we are often able to help by providing extra food, such as fresh fruit, vegetables and more. Our goal is to always provide our school families with the best support possible.

Each week a group of volunteers shop for groceries, put them in bins, add recipes and deliver to the schools on Thursdays. Parents/Students **bring a bag to pick up the food** at their child's school. Some children bring the groceries home by bus. **If you are unable to pick up your food, it is very important to let the volunteer at your school know so that the food can be handed out to other needy families.**

If you are interested in your family becoming a part of our Backpack Program, **please ask the secretary at your school for an application form. Please fill it out and return it to the school office by September 11, 2025. All returning families MUST fill out a new application form. The program will begin on Thursday, September 25, 2025.**

Thank you,

The Backpack Program Volunteers

*The backpack program is in need of cloth bags. If you have any to donate please bring them when you pick up your groceries.

BackPack Food Program. We look forward to meeting you.

SCHOOL_____

First and Last Name_____

Number of people living in your home_____

Children's Names, Grades and Age_____

ADDRESS_____

PHONE NUMBER_____

EMAIL ADDRESS_____