

Howitt News

2025-2026 Newsletter #5

December 11th, 2025



December Update:

As we move into December, we want to acknowledge the hard work and positive energy our students and staff have shown throughout the fall. This time of year, we can feel busy, and with the wet West Coast weather settling in, we appreciate everyone's efforts to come prepared each day and stay focused on learning.

We are also looking forward to one of the highlights of the season—our Winter Concert! Our students have been practicing with enthusiasm, and we can't wait to share their performances with families.



As we approach the final week before the break, we hope everyone enjoys the upcoming celebrations and finds time to rest and recharge. Reading over the winter break is a great activity! Wishing all our families a warm, safe, and restful Winter Break when it arrives.

HOWITT CHOIR NEWS:

This **Thursday, December 11th**, the Howitt Choir will be performing alongside the ADSS Choir and the Maquinna Choir. They are performing at the ADSS Theatre, and the event starts at **6:30 pm** and is free to enter. Any questions please contact the school at (250)723-7521



HOWITT WINTER CONCERT 2025:



"Lost: A Tale of Music and Friendship"

Tuesday December 16th please save the date
1pm (no tickets required) 6 pm (tickets required)
(Tickets have been sent home with students participating in the show.)

Students who are performing can be dropped off at their classes outside classroom door at 5:45 pm. Doors to the gym will open at that time as well.

We will be collecting non-perishable food items as part of our Leadership Students food drive.

Students in the following classes will be performing in the Winter Concert:

Mrs. Koszegi	(K&1):	Mighty mice, wear grey clothing
Mrs. Organ	(K&1):	Sassy Squirrels, wear brown clothing
Mrs. Fedirchuk	(Grade 1&2):	Blissful Bears wear brown or black clothing
Ms. Lenormand	(Grade 2&3):	Rockin' Rabbits, wear white clothing
Mrs. Freigang	(Grade 2&3):	Funky Fish, wear bright colors or sequins
Mrs. Davidson	(Grade 3):	Peaceful porcupines, wear brown.
Howitt Choir:		Townfolk, wear all black and choir sweaters.
Intermediate actors and stage crew (volunteers):		
- Stage crew:		wear black
- Actors:		wear colours based on your animal character.

Tickets have been sent home with students participating in the show We are limited in terms of tickets for the evening concert. We will take names on a waiting list for extra tickets but cannot make any guarantees of having extra tickets.

***There are no tickets required for the 1 pm show**



GIFTS AND GIVING: Thanks PAC!

Our PAC Gifts and Giving Event was a huge success. Thank you to all our volunteers who set up, wrapped, and packed up all the wonderful items that were donated! Thank you to the Howitt community for your donations! Thanks to the Howitt PAC for again taking on this important event this year.



GRADE 4&5 BASKETBALL AT HOWITT

Thanks to Mrs. Davidson and Ms. Dyer for coaching our Grade 4&5 basketball team.

Upcoming schedule:

Thursday Dec 11th Practice at lunch

Friday Dec 12th Wrap up Jamboree at ADSS and the Athletic Hall: please see letter that was sent home with details on games, times, and location.



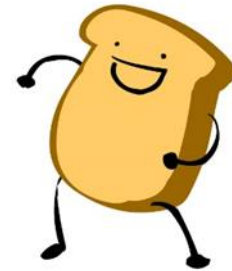
Basketball for Grade 6&7 students start in January 2026. Watch for details in our future newsletters.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES FOR FAMILIES:

Tuesday December 16 th	Howitt Winter Concert (1 pm and 6 pm shows)
Thursday December 18 th	Student Learning Updates sent home
Friday December 19 th	Winter Wonderland Skating and last day before Winter Break
Monday January 5 th , 2026	Schools re-open after Winter Break
Monday January 19 th , 2026	School Based Pro-D Day
Friday January 23rd, 2026	PAC Movie Night

READ-AND-FEED BREAKFAST CLUB VOLUNTEERS PROVIDING FOOD TO HOWITT STUDENTS.

Alberni Valley Read-and Feed breakfast club volunteers will be providing healthy breakfast options each morning. Food will be available for pick up in the office after the bell for any student that is hungry. Thanks to Mrs. Sally Anderson and the Read-and-Feed program for supporting our school with breakfast program food items.



STUDENT CELLPHONE EXPECTATIONS: away for the day

We continue to have conversations and learn about the appropriate use of smartphones/cellphones at school. As staff we strongly believe that the 300 minutes students are with us each day should be cellphone free time for students. Below is the proposed update to our cellphone expectations. This will bring us in line with expectations around cellphones from the Ministry of Education and Pacific Rim School District.

Morning:

- Once students arrive at school (i.e., by bus, car, or walking to school). They should not be brought out until the end of the day. We would like to see them socialize and talk to their classmates!

During the day:

- We ask that students have their cell phones put away. There could be a time when they are needed in class but will be used for an educational purpose and under the direction of their teacher (this would not be a regular occurrence!)
- **There are no pictures or video taken at school at recess or lunch (privacy issues).**
- If a student needs to contact a parent, we ask that they speak to their teacher first, we will then find a way to support them to contact home.
- **We ask that students do not listen to music when on school grounds as well. Headphones or air pods are best left at home, so they do not get lost.**
- If you need to get a hold of your child for an important message, please call the school (250)723-7521. We will support them to phone you. Please do not text them.



End of the day:

- Students can have their phones out as they leave school. We understand that they may need to check texts or contact their families. Again, there should be no pictures or videos being taken on school grounds, or the school bus, at the end of the day.

2025-2026 Cellphones at school expectations for Howitt:

- Cellphones away in backpacks as soon as students come onto school grounds. Cellphones should not be on a student at any time.
- Phones are silent or turned off and stored in a student's backpack. Not on them, and not on their desks or in their binders. Cellphones should not be in a student cross body bag.
- A student who has their cellphone out may be confiscated by staff. Any cellphone taken by a staff member will be stored securely in the office. Phones will be locked for safety and returned by the end of the day. A Howitt staff member will contact families if a phone is confiscated.
- Phones can be used in class under the direction of a teacher.
- Students have been good at buying into our updated cellphone expectations. If you would like to provide feedback for us on these expectations, please email Mr. Brown (sbrown@sd70.bc.ca)

A REMINDER TO DRESS FOR THE WEATHER



Just a friendly reminder to encourage your children to be prepared for colder wet weather. Boots, waterproof raincoat, and an umbrella will all be needed. We plan to go outside each day at recess and lunch!

If possible, a change of clothes left at school would be advantageous, so students won't need to phone home if their clothing accidentally gets wet or muddy. If you have questions, please contact the office.

SCHOOL VISITORS and STUDENT SIGN IN & OUT

To ensure the safety of our students and to minimize the disruption to classes please check in at the office whenever you visit the school for whatever reason. Anything to be delivered to a student can be taken to their outside classroom door or it can be dropped off at the office. If you are picking up your child for an appointment, please plan ahead of time with your child's classroom teacher. Or if it is needed, please come to the office and we will help connect you to your child. Please knock on the front door or call the main office at (250) 723-7521.

LUNCH PROGRAM

The John Howitt lunch program is available for all students. Families can sign up once to cover the entire year and can remove themselves from the program at any time. A weekly menu is emailed to families so that they can see what lunch comes up each week. Nourish Cowichan, in partnership with SD70 Pacific Rim, provides delicious and healthy lunches for students. For more information on the program please contact the school.

HOWITT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARENTS' ADVISORY COUNCIL (P.A.C.)

We have a long tradition of parent involvement at John Howitt Elementary with a wide variety of opportunities available for parent volunteers. For its size, our school community is very rich in resources and opportunities for our students thanks to the committed efforts



of our parents over the years. The P.A.C. has worked with staff to make John Howitt a cohesive learning community dedicated to student success.

Our next meeting is **Thursday November 27th, 2025, at 5:30 pm** in the library.

REPORTING A STUDENT ABSENT OR LATE

If your child will be absent or late, please contact our school at (250)723-7521. You may also email either lbehnke@sd70.bc.ca, or your child's teacher, to report an absence.



KINDERGARTEN BUILDING: STAFF PARKING

The parking spots directly in front of the kindergarten building are staff parking spots. Please avoid parking there in the morning as our staff members use those spots each day. You are welcome to come and park at the front section (near Tebo Avenue) of our main parking lot if you are dropping off your child. In any of our parking lots, we ask that you back into the parking stall. This allows you to see any small friends in the parking lot as you leave. Thanks in advance for helping us with this!



PACIFIC RIM SCHOOLS AND JOHN HOWITT ELEMENTARY APP FOR SMARTPHONES AND

TABLETS: ***Absence reporting option is not functional**

You can now download the Pacific Rim School app to your iPhone, iPad, or android device. Search Pacific Rim Schools in the app store. It is very easy to set up, and you can select multiple SD70 schools. So, if you have students at Howitt and ADSS you can set up the app to receive information from both schools. You will be able to see the school calendar, news items, and more.



REMINDER FROM THE RCMP

The RCMP will be enforcing all motor vehicle infractions within school zones and would like to remind drivers of the following common concerns.



- Vehicle speed is 30 km/hr. within all school zones.
- Vehicles **cannot** park within 6 meters of any traffic control device, cross walk or stop sign.
- Reminder to come to a complete stop at all stop signs.

2025-2026 Important Dates

December 18th	Student Learning Update #1 reports sent home
December 19th	Last Day of School before winter break
Dec 22nd to Jan 2nd	Winter Break (2 weeks)
January 5 th	School Re-Opens (Monday)
January 19 th	Non-Instructional Day (no school for students)
January 27 th	PAC Meeting at 5:30 pm in the library
January 27 th	Family Literacy Day
February 13 th	Non-Instructional Day (no school for students)
February 16 th	Statutory Holiday: Family Day (no school for students)
February 26 th	PAC Meeting 5:30 pm in the library
March 4 th	Student Learning Update #2 reports sent home
March 6 th	Last Day before Spring Break
March 9 th to 20 th	Spring Break (two weeks)
March 23 rd	First day back from spring break
March 24 th	PAC Meeting 5:30 pm in the library
April 3 rd	Statutory Holiday: Good Friday (no school for students)
April 6 th	Easter Monday (no school for students)
April 17 th	Spring Individual Student Photos and Class Photos (Friday)
April 21 st	PAC Meeting 5:30 pm in the library
<u>April 22nd & 23rd</u>	<u>Early dismissal for Student Learning Conferences (dismissal at Noon)</u>
April 24 th	School Based Pro-D Day (no school for students)
May 11 th	Pro-D Day (no school for students)
May 19 th	Statutory Holiday: Victoria Day
May 26 th	PAC meeting in the library at 5:30 pm
June 21 st	National Indigenous Day
June 25 th	Last Day of School for students
June 27 th	Admin Day (school closed)



If you have any questions please contact the school, or touch base with your child's Teacher!

Sincerely,

Mr. S. Brown
Principal