

OCTOBER 2025

SPARKS NOTES

Similkameen Elementary Secondary Monthly Bulletin

Principal's Message:

Dear SESS Families,

Welcome to October! We had a wonderful and busy September with many activities including the Terry Fox Run, curricular field trips, sports teams starting up, Welcome Back BBQ and Truth and Reconciliation activities. On Monday our school recognized Orange Shirt Day and Truth and Reconciliation Day with an assembly and guest speakers, who spoke to our whole school community, as well as Cawston Primary. We acknowledge that our school's commitment to reconciliation extends far beyond a single day and must continue to be reflected in everything we do at SESS.

Students are now settled into the routines of their classes, and extra-curricular activities are in full swing including volleyball, soccer, cross-country, and band. We are looking forward to hosting parents and families in person on October 22nd for our Family Conferences. For your planning purposes please remember that October 22 & 23 are early dismissal days and there are no classes on October 24. Please watch your email for more information about Family Conferences and booking links coming soon. I hope that you enjoy some time together outside taking in the beautiful colours of autumn in our gorgeous valley.

Sincerely,
Stacey Smith

Principal: S. Smith
ssmith@sd53.bc.ca
Vice Principal: K. Anderson
kanderso@sd53.bc.ca
Phone: (250) 499-2727
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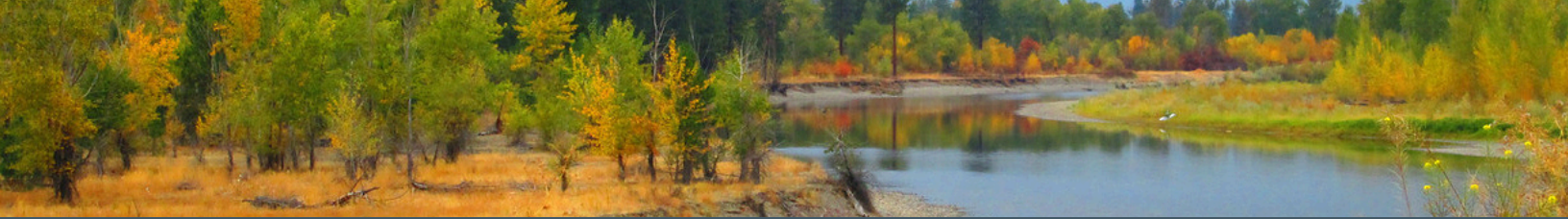
Important Dates:

October

- 1 Elem Soccer Exhibition @ OSE
- 1 Fishing Club Trip (8:45-12:30)
- 2 Elem XCountry @ CPS
- 2 PAC AGM @ 6:30 - Library
- 3 Bus Safety Orientation Drill
- 6 11's to Career Fair @ OSS
- 7-9 Kokanee Glacier Cabin Hike
- 13 Thanksgiving (No School)
- 16 Elem Soccer Tournaments -
Girls @ OSE, Boys @ TEN
- 16-17 Band Camp @ Camp Tulahead
- 22 Family Conferences (1/2 Day)
- 23 Photo Retakes (Early Dismissal)
- 24 Prov. Pro-D Day (No School)
- 29 Inquiry Time (Early Dismissal)
- 31 Hallowe'en

Please check out our [website calendar](#) for all upcoming events





Where to get SESS news?



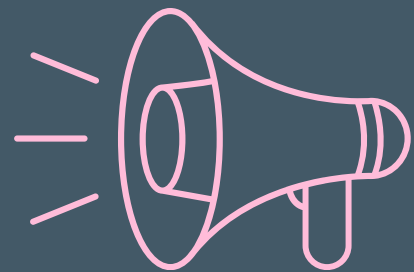
The best way to access news and information about SESS is through our school website at sess.sd53.bc.ca which is continually updated. On the website you will find news items as well as our calendar of events. We also have links to various resources for parents and students and other practical information such as our timetable, code of conduct, bus routes and schedules. SESS also has various social media accounts which we encourage you to check out!



Facebook: [_SimilkameenSchool](https://www.facebook.com/_SimilkameenSchool)



Instagram: [@similkameensparks](https://www.instagram.com/_similkameensparks)



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Welcome to Similkameen Elementary Secondary School

[Learn More](#)

Communicating Student Learning

The K-12 Student Reporting Policy is now in its third year across the province. At SESS in grades 5-9, staff will be reporting using the SpacesEDU e-portfolio tool. Our goal is that parents and caregivers will be well-informed about their child's learning and understand ways to support and further their child's success at school. Spaces allows students, teachers and parents to participate in deeper conversations and thereby get a better or clearer understanding of each child's learning. Parents, you will be receiving an email invite to join SpaceEDU and thereby can follow your child's progress throughout the school year.

***Halloween* COSTUMES**

THE DRAMA DEPARTMENT IS RENTING HALLOWEEN COSTUMES! \$5 PER COSTUME. SEE MRS. DAVIDSON ABOUT DETAILS OR EMAIL JDAVIDSO@SD53.BC.CA TO SET UP A TIME TO GO THROUGH COSTUMES.



Terry Fox Run

Our annual Terry Fox Run is took place on Friday, September 25th. The Terry Fox Run is an event held in commemoration of Terry Fox, a Canadian cancer activist who held a Marathon of Hope to raise money for cancer research. Thank you to our Leadership class for organizing the run for both elementary and secondary students. Every year our students make us proud with their participation in this important event.

Grade 6 Immunizations

Our Public Health Nurse will be at SESS with her team on **Thursday, November 13th, 2025**, to provide immunizations for our grade 6 students. Consent forms will be sent home soon. Please return them to the school office as soon as possible.



Fall Family Conferences

Please watch for information in your email about appointments for Parent-Teacher Conferences on **Wednesday, October 22nd**. This year, conferences will be conducted in-person. Teachers will be available to meet with parents between 1-3 and 4-6pm. Early dismissals will be at 12:00 pm on October 22nd and on October 23rd. Friday October 24th is a Pro-D day.



Bus Expectations & Passes

Expectations for bus behaviour have been shared with all students in Elementary and High School. Students are expected to follow the school's Code of Conduct when riding the bus.

When students will be riding as a guest on a bus that they are not registered on, parents/guardians must contact the office to ask for a bus pass. These passes will be signed by Administration and given to students to present to the bus driver when boarding the bus.

Please complete this planning with the office and your child(ren) before 1:00pm on the day of travel



School Fees 2025-26

SCHOOL FEES CAN BE PAID BY CASH OR CHEQUE IN THE OFFICE (PLEASE MAKE ANY CHEQUES PAYABLE TO SIMILKAMEEN ELEMENTARY SECONDARY). CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS CAN ALSO BE MADE ONLINE (SEE STUDENT QUICK PAY INFO)

GRADES 5-7- \$40.00

THIS IS A \$40.00 ACTIVITY FEE WHICH HELPS WITH THE COSTS OF ACTIVITIES SUCH AS ICE SKATING AND SPIRIT DAYS.

GRADE 8 & ANY SECONDARY STUDENTS WHO ARE NEW TO THE SCHOOL - \$60.00

THIS INCLUDES A \$40.00 ACTIVITY FEE AND A \$20.00 TEXTBOOK DEPOSIT.

GRADE 9-11- \$40.00 THIS IS AN ACTIVITY FEE.

GRADE 12- \$200.00

THIS INCLUDES A \$40.00 SCHOOL ACTIVITY FEE AS WELL AS AN \$160.00 COMMENCEMENT FEE WHICH INCLUDES FEES FOR THE GRADUATION CEREMONY, CAP & GOWN RENTALS, PHOTOS, DIPLOMAS, ETC.



Online Payment System

Student Quick Pay allows you to pay by credit card online [HERE](#). You will be able to add money to your child's lunch account, pay student fees, and athletic fees, all from the comfort of your own home! Please [click this link for instructions](#) on how to set up your account. If you have any questions or difficulties, please email sessoffice@sd53.bc.ca

Truth & Reconciliation Day at SESS

Staff and students at SESS recognized Orange Shirt Day and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by holding an assembly, and providing multiple opportunities to learn about and reflect on the historical wrongs committed against Indigenous people. Cawston Primary School joined us for our assembly. At SESS we know that our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation extends far beyond a single day.



Resources to Support Learning about Truth & Reconciliation

There are many published resources available to support anyone who wants to learn more about the history of Residential Schools and the impacts of colonization on Indigenous people. If you cannot access these resources and would like to borrow one from the school please email sessoffice@sd53.bc.ca. This [video from Monique Gray Smith](#) has some excellent suggestions for ways to speak with your child about Residential Schools (as well as some recommended resources for children/teens). The video "[Orange Shirt Day- Truth and Reconciliation in Canada](#)" is the video most often shown to explain the original origins of Orange Shirt Day. Below are more resources:

[Final Report from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada \(2015\)](#)

Books/Novels (for teens/adults):

Take the Indian Out of the Child: Syilx Okanagan Experiences in the Violent and Forced Assimilation of Indian Residential Schools (published by the Okanagan Nation Alliance)

Indian Horse by Richard Wagamese

They Called Me Number One by Bev Sellars

21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act by Bob Joseph

Films (for teens/adults):

[*We Were Children* \(National Film Board\)](#)

[*Indian Horse* \(CBC Gem\)](#)

National Residential School Crisis
Line (24 hrs): 1-866-925-4419

ATTENDANCE MATTERS!

Regular attendance is the key to your child's success at school. Chronic absences make it difficult for students to learn the necessary skills to be successful, and they also put a lot of pressure on staff to support students who miss a significant amount of in-class learning. This year we are focusing on attendance, and our priority will be communicating with families about the importance of students consistently showing up each day. Our automated callout system is used to notify secondary parents each evening if a student has an unexcused absence. A reminder that if your child misses school due to illness or a family commitment, then a parent or guardian must contact the school to excuse the absence.



Visitor Sign-In

Parents and caregivers, please ensure you are checking in at the office when visiting SESS. All visitors to SESS are meant to sign in at the office prior to entering other parts of the school building. This is to ensure the safety of students and staff and to minimize distractions in the hallways and classrooms. If you need to speak to, or get something to your child, the office staff are always happy to help.





The Grad class of 2025 have begun their grade 12 year with a sizzle, many volunteering for our local SizzleFest! Just a reminder to Grads to join the Spaces Grad Group in order to keep updated on important Grad happenings and due dates.

Fall Athletics

Elementary Soccer (Boys & Girls) - Boys - Mr. Fortune & Mr. Pillipow **Girls** - Mishak & Amber Potash & Ms. Heather
Elementary Cross-Country - Mrs. Jensen & Ms. Vesper
Elementary Volleyball - Ms. Chmelyk & Mr. Fortune
Junior Boys Volleyball - Josee-Anne Rouleau
Grade 8 Girls Volleyball - Mrs. Jensen & Ms. Kappeli
Senior Girls Volleyball - Taylor Moberge
Senior Boys Soccer - Mr. Kessler
Senior Cross-Country - Mr. Johnson & Ms. Rowe

**Thank you
Coaches!**





**The Outdoor Ed
group will leave
Oct. 7-9 for the
Kokanee Glacier
Hiking Trip!**





All the
September fun!

Meet the Advocate – Ms. Whitney

Introduction

Hello,

My name is Brianna Whitney, and I'm the Indigenous Education Advocate. This means I am part of your child's support team at school.

This is my first year at SESS and I'm very honored to be in this role within your child's school.

Earlier this year I completed my Education Assistant certificate. I believe that learning is an ongoing journey and we all learn new things everyday.

I look forward to partnering with you to ensure student success, throughout this school year!



I LOVE

- My Family & Friends
- Chasing waterfalls
- Gazing at the sky
- Listening to music
- Doodling/coloring
 - Arts & Crafts
- Berry picking/preserving food
- Adventures to new places
- Being a safe space for all

S → Self-regulation

P → Perseverance

A → Accountability

R → Respect

K → Kindness

S → Support



Contact Details

Phone: 250-499-2727

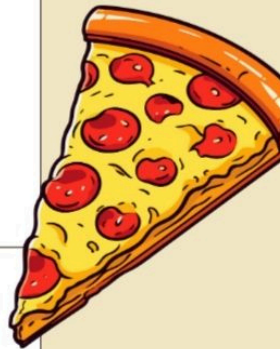
Email: bwhitney@sd53.bc.ca

October

2025



	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
		1 Chicken Burgers	2 Pizza	3 Chef Special
6 Turkey Bacon Ranch Wraps	7 Chicken Dinner	8 Qusadillas	9 Beef & Rice Bowls	10 Chef Special
13 No School	14 Beef Dip	15 Mac n Cheese	16 Cheesy Ham Melts	17 Soup & Bunwich
20 Beef Stroganoff	21 Chicken Caesar Wraps	22 early dismissal	23 early dismissal	24 No School
27 Chili on Rice	28 Tacos	29 early dismissal	30 Pizza	31 Soup & Bunwich



Cafeteria