

# The Buzz



*A Message from  
our Principal -  
Kolby Snellenberger*

Hello Families!

It is so nice to see the weather cooling off again and even a few leaves starting to change color. I loved our first fall and winter here in Vermont and I am so excited for everything that is yet to come. I am dusting off my jackets in anticipation of our first chilly day.

Today marks the end of our first full week of school and I am thankful that we are able to start with a three day week followed by a four day week to help us build our stamina. As I greeted students and families this morning I noticed that there were extra tears from our youngest students as they were being dropped off this morning. It can be so hard for our littlest ones to build up that routine and be ready five days a week.

I had a similar struggle with my youngest son last night. He asked whether he had to get up for school in the morning and when I said yes he flung himself on the bed and loudly proclaimed "we just have to go to school all the time now". This was followed by several minutes of sulking. It seems like such an over reaction to an adult, but frustrations and big feelings are difficult for children to manage. At times like this I try to remember that I have 42 years of practice at regulating my emotions and he needs help learning to do that. To help him I spent a few minutes doing some co regulation with him. Co regulating with children helps them to learn self-regulation skills that they need later in life. The best part is that we don't have to be perfect and can use our own mistakes to grow ourselves and help our children grow in turn.

In partnership - Mr. Snellenberger

## IMPORTANT DATES

- September 18th - Picture Day
- September 27 - Early Release; 11:30 Dismissal
- September 28 - Open House & Welcome Back BBQ
- October 9 - Indigenous People's Day - No School

### Picture Day is Almost Here!

Picture day is scheduled for Monday, September 18th, beginning at 8:30 am. All pictures will be taken outside on our beautiful Edmunds Campus. Order forms have been home for those that would like to purchase packages of their students.

**Remember to say "Cheese"!**



### Open House & Welcome Back BBQ

Join us on Thursday, September 28th, for a free dinner, and Open House. This is a chance to hear from your child's teachers, learn more about the coming year and meet other families in our EES community. Dinner will be served on the field from 5:30-6:00 followed by classroom visits until 7:00 pm.

Sabrina Leal is so excited to return to the BSD after working in Chittenden County over the past 12 years in a number of school social work, community mental health and crisis mental health positions. Most recently, she was the School Clinician at Winooski High School. She started her career at IAA as a Behavior Interventionist many moons ago! When Sabrina is not teaching, she is also very involved in the local theatre community (so you may recognize her from there!). She is originally from Virginia but has been in Vermont for 18 years. She is a mom to a 2nd grader at IAA and also one cat and one Leopard Gecko :)



# From the Health Office

**Keeping Kids Home From School** - As a rule of thumb, a child should stay home if there is:

- fever of 100°F degrees in the last 24 hours
- vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours
- frequent cough
- persistent pain (ear, stomach, head, etc.
- widespread rash

If your student tests COVID positive they must quarantine at home for 5 days. Day 1 is the day after symptom onset or the day after an asymptomatic test. Those who test positive may return to school on day 6 as long as they have had no fever for 24 hours AND symptoms are improved. CDC recommends masking days 6-10, but this is optional in the school setting. Students do not have to test again after they have tested positive to return to school.

Covid remains a reportable disease. School nurses are obligated to report any positive cases of all reportable diseases we know about to the health department. If you have any questions or concerns about the guidance, please call the school nurse at 802-864-8473; Option 4 or email me at [cmartin@bsdvt.org](mailto:cmartin@bsdvt.org). Free COVID-19 tests are also available in the health office.

## New 23-24 Attendance & Truancy Policy for BSD

In 23/24 BSD is changing what counts as an excused absence. We are discontinuing the practice of accepting parental communication as the primary determinant of excused absences and using the guidance from the AOE regarding when an absence is considered excusable.



### **Excused Absences**

**From the AOE Website:** An absence is considered excusable when it is the result of:

- Personal illness;
- Appointments with health professionals that cannot be made outside of the regular school day;
- Observance of recognized religious holidays when the observance is required during a regular school day;
- Emergency family situations such as a death in the family;
- Planned absences for personal or educational purposes which have been approved.
- Absences due to suspension or expulsion

**All other absences will be marked as Absence Unexcused.** This includes absences such as those that occur when a student needs more sleep, family is in town for a visit, the student is attending a non-AOE approved alternative programming, there is an event that the family wishes to attend with the student, etc.

### **Planned Absences**

In cases of planned absences, families must submit a [Planned Absence Request Form](#) alerting us to planned absences of three to nine days. If a planned absence will extend beyond nine consecutive days, a [10+ Days Planned Absence Request Form](#) must be filled out by the family and signed by the principal and teachers. Unless a planned absence of three to nine days is approved, it will be considered an unexcused absence.

### **Truancy**

In terms of truancy, we are moving to a more restorative approach focused on understanding why a student has been absent, the impacts on their schooling, and how the school can work with the family to have improved engagement with school. A truancy notification letter will be sent to any student who has five or more absences from school whether they are excused (such as illness) or unexcused. All families will receive the truancy [letter](#) regardless of the reason for the absences. Missing multiple days of school can impact a student's academic progress including meeting State Standards and/or their IEP goals. In circumstances where a student attends outside programming one day per week, this constitutes them missing 20% of the year's curriculum and families should be aware that such absences can impact learning.

## Questions and Answers for Families Regarding Changes



### **Q: What if a student regularly attends an alternative program determined by their family instead of going to school?**

If a parent chooses to keep their child out of school to attend a part-time educational program (like Crow's Path, Davis Studios, etc.) the family should let the school know in writing and their child will be marked EDU (Alternate Education Program – Unapproved). As BSD cannot approve enrollment in programs unless they are taught by educators licensed by the Vermont Agency of Education, this attendance code will show up as an unexcused absence. Participation in these programs will continue to require students to make up missed work where appropriate, however, being absent for this reason will not prevent students from participating in any activities during or after school. Additionally, though families will still receive letters notifying them of their student's accumulated absences, these absences will not be factored into conversations regarding truancy with the legal system. Missing a day of school every week may impact a student's academic progress including meeting State Standards and/or their IEP goals.

### **Q: What should I do if a child is sick for more than three consecutive days or has 10 or more health-related absences?**

The administrative assistant or principal should connect with the school nurse and consider asking the parent for confirmation of illnesses from the child's primary care provider (doctor).

### **Q: Can absences be excused?**

Schools can excuse absences when a student is absent from school for religious, health, or emergency reasons. Excused absences are a legal part of the student's record; a student who does not attend school must be marked absent, even if the absence is excused.

### **Q: Do I have to contact the school if my student will not be coming to school, will be late, or needs to leave early?**

Yes, please call the school on the day of any unplanned absence and in advance of any planned absences. Families must provide a reason for absences. For late arrivals and needing to leave school early, students who arrive after the start of the school day must check into the main office. If your child is going to be late or absent, please call the school to let us know. Students must remain on school grounds during school hours. Students who have parental permission to leave during the school day must be dismissed by the administrative assistant in the main office and released to the pre-approved adult unless the school has permission to allow the student to leave school on their own.

### **Q: Does your student want to miss school and you are not sure why?**

Talk with them about what is happening in school. Reach out to your student's teacher or school counselor so that together you can figure out what it is the student is struggling with and whether it's for academic, social-emotional, or health-related reasons.

### **Q: Are there other ways schools can help families with student attendance?**

Yes. We can:

- Set up a "contract" with your student with goals for attendance, and rewards, and consequences.
- Set up a time to talk with a teacher, school counselor, or school administrator about attendance and any concerns.
- Look at any potential counseling services or mentoring for your student.
- Consider after-school or extra-curricular programs to help keep your student interested in school.
- Look at the class schedule and see if a change could help.
- Share other resources for families. Let your school know what your family and student needs (housing, healthcare, school supplies, clothes, toiletries); we are here to help your student be comfortable coming to school and being successful!

### **Q: Does your student want to miss school because of school work?**

Meet with the teacher or counselor and ask about the student's classwork. Ask about possible tutoring or homework help after school.



# FALL SESSION

SEPTEMBER - DECEMBER



## Program Updates

Welcome back! We start clubs on the week of 9/18!

Please make sure to sign out students at the front office each day.

If your student will be absent from a normally scheduled day let us know via text or email.

You can sign up via the QR code or the link sent to your email. Please sign up one student per form.

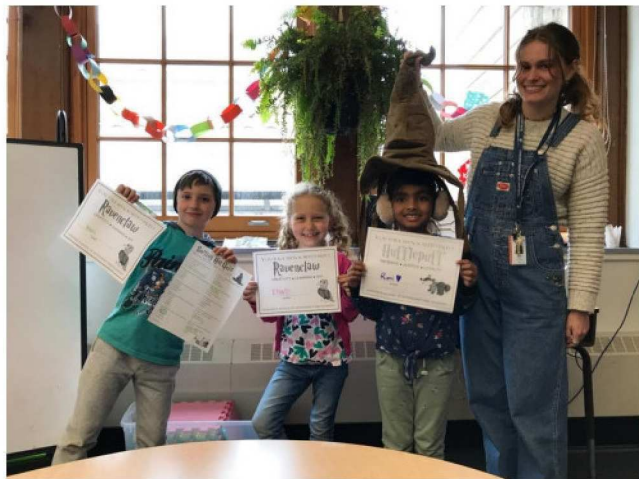
K students do not participate in session 1 clubs. They are already in K club!



Sometimes students end up in a class that just isn't the right fit for them. We ask that all students try the class they are in for the first week. After trying the class we allow for a switch to a different class if space allows. We only do switches during the second week of the session. In an effort to maintain clear and accurate attendance sheets we are asking that kids limit their class switches.



# FALL SESSION



## Important Fall Dates

**September 27** - Early Dismissal  
(11:30) no afterschool program

**October 6** - Professional Learning  
for Teachers no school

**October 9** - Indigenous Peoples'  
Day no school

**November 20 & 21** - Parent  
Teacher Conferences no school

**November 22-24** - Thanksgiving  
Recess no school

**December 22** - Early Dismissal  
(11:30) no afterschool program

## Sample Schedule

2:50- Pick up from classroom  
3:00-3:20 Supper provided by  
Food Services 3:20-4:00 Recess  
4:00-5:15 Afternoon Activity 5:15-  
5:30 Remaining Students Up  
Front for Dismissal