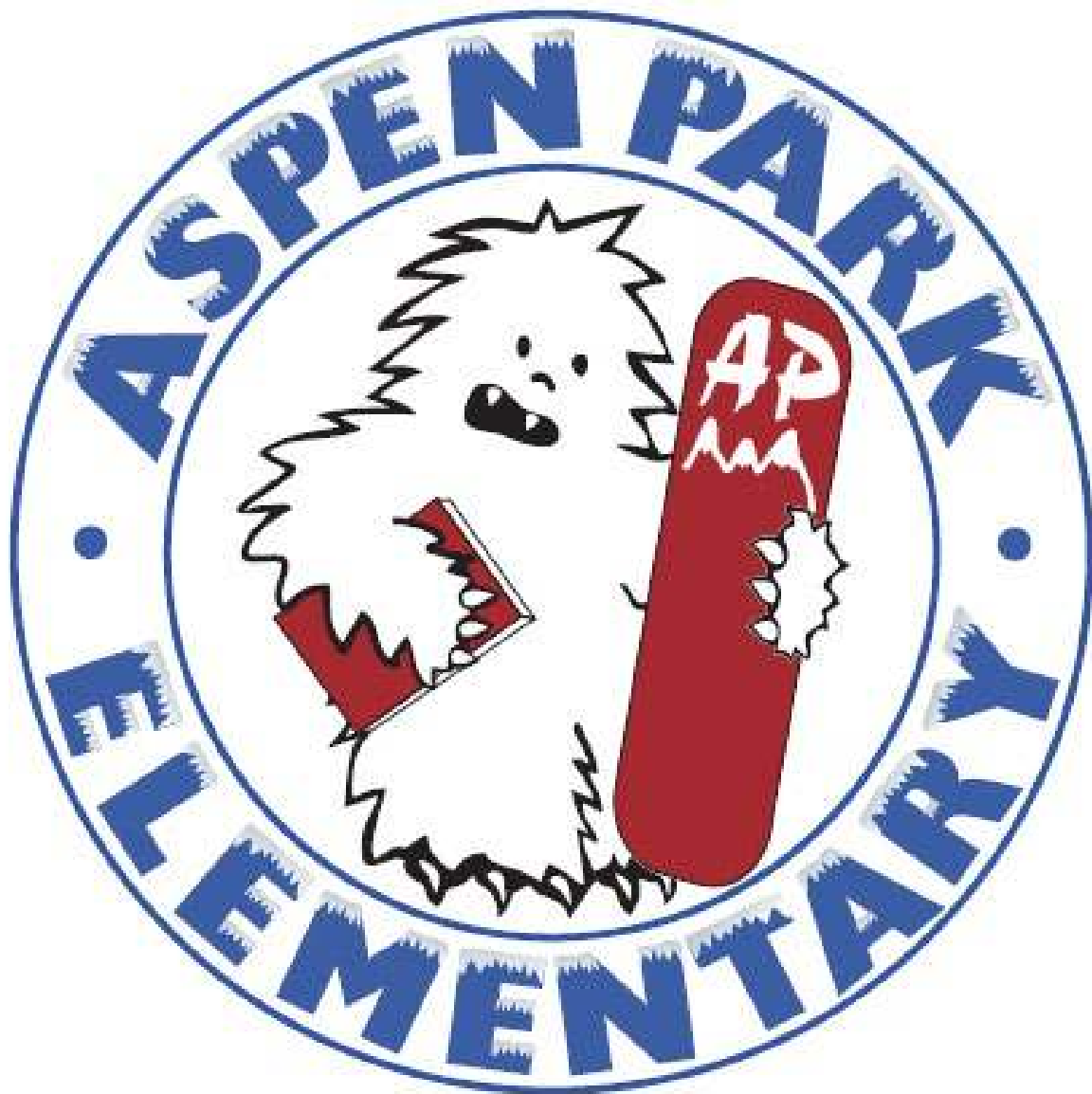


**Aspen Park Elementary
2026/2027
Student-Parent Handbook**



School Philosophy

At Aspen Park Elementary, we believe that every child deserves to learn, grow, and thrive in a safe, caring, and inclusive environment. We recognize the unique strengths, backgrounds, and potential of each student and are committed to creating learning experiences that nurture curiosity, confidence, and compassion.

Grounded in our district's values ([Comox Valley School District](#)) of learning, equity, relationships, safety, integrity, and truth and reconciliation, we work together as a community to support the whole child—academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. We believe that strong relationships are the foundation for meaningful learning and that a sense of belonging is essential for every student's success.

School Goals

Belonging and Connection

We want every student to feel safe, valued, and connected to our school community. We focus on building positive relationships and creating a strong sense of belonging for everyone.

Equity and Inclusion

We believe all students deserve the support they need to succeed. We work to remove barriers to learning and ensure every child has fair and meaningful opportunities to grow

Learning

We encourage curiosity, creativity, and a love of learning. Our goal is to help students develop the skills, confidence, and resilience they need to reach their full potential.

Principal's Message

On behalf of the entire staff, welcome to Aspen Park Elementary School. Aspen Park has a strong sense of community and a proud tradition of care, connection, and collaboration. Our school is more than a place of learning, it is a vibrant community where students, families, and staff work together to support one another, celebrate growth, and create a welcoming environment for all.

Each school year brings new opportunities to learn, grow, and build meaningful relationships. At Aspen Park, we are committed to creating engaging and inclusive learning experiences where every student feels valued, supported, and inspired to reach their full potential. Our focus on belonging, equity, and curiosity guides everything we do as we work to nurture confident, compassionate learners.

Education is a true partnership, and we deeply value the role families play in their child's journey. Together, we can make school a place where every child feels safe, connected, and excited to learn each day.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions, comments, or ideas to share.

We look forward to working with you,

Zale Darnel
Principal
Aspen Park Elementary School

SCHOOL HOURS

8:35	Start of Day
10:10 - 10:25	Recess
11:45 - 12:05	Eat Lunch
12:05 - 12:30	Lunch recess
12:30 – 2:30	Dismissal

Student Tardiness

When students arrive at school on time, they experience more success. Please help your children start their day well by having them arrive at school prior to the beginning of instruction at 8:35 am. We recommend that students arrive between 8:25 and 8:35 am.

Reporting Absences

Each morning, we verify all unaccounted absences through our Whereabouts Program. Your cooperation in reporting all absences (via School Messenger, telephone, email, or a message sent with a sibling) is appreciated. If no word is received by 9:00 am, an automated phone call home will be made to check the whereabouts of your child.

School Messenger

School Messenger is a communication suite used by Aspen Park Elementary for attendance reporting and to notify parents of unexcused absences.

Emergency notifications (e.g., snow closure) are also broadcast to parents/guardians using School

Messenger. Instructions for opting-in to receive SMS text messages from SD71 can be found below.

An app is available to parents/guardians that can be voluntarily installed to mobile devices allowing messages to be received on a mobile device. Instructions for how to sign-up, download and configure the app on your mobile device, as well as accessing the platform on the web, can be found below:

- [SchoolMessenger Parent App Mobile Device \(PDF\)](#)
- [SchoolMessenger Parent App Website \(PDF\)](#)
- [SMS Text Messaging Opt-In Instructions \(PDF\)](#)

You can also report an absence by:
calling (250 890-0944)
emailing (aspenpark@sd71.bc.ca)

School District Calendar

School District information such as the calendar and other useful information can be found on the district Website at <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/>.

Inclusive Education

Aspen Park Elementary School is able to provide the following support services: Learning Support Teacher, Counsellor, Speech and Language Pathologist, Indigenous Support Worker and Educational Assistants. In addition, gifted children have the opportunity to participate in the District Challenge program, following a referral and assessment.

Learning Support Centre

Students bring a wide range of strengths and areas for growth to their learning. Learning Support Teachers (LSTs) play an important role in providing targeted support for students who require additional assistance, primarily in the areas of literacy and numeracy.

The Learning Support Teacher provides direct instruction, strategies, and resources to support students both within the Learning Support Centre and in classroom settings. LSTs conduct academic assessments, support classroom teachers through ongoing consultation, and collaborate to adapt programs to meet individual student needs. They may also provide additional resources and strategies to assist teachers in supporting diverse learners.

Learning Support Teachers case manage students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), coordinate classroom and school-based supports, and are active members of the School-Based Team (SBT). As part of this role, LSTs support planning, monitoring, and communication related to student learning and progress.

In addition, LSTs work closely with members of the District Support Team to support key transitions, including entry to Kindergarten and transition to high school. In consultation with the School-Based Team and families, LSTs may also initiate referrals for district services such as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Assistive Technology, and other specialized supports.

School Based Team (SBT)

The School-Based Team (SBT) is a collaborative, problem-solving team that works alongside classroom teachers to support student learning and well-being. The team develops and reviews educational programs and supports for students who may or may not have formal special education designations.

The SBT typically includes the Learning Support Teacher, Principal, Counsellor, Curriculum Support Teacher, Speech and Language Pathologist, Youth and Family Program Worker, Indigenous Support Worker (ISW), and the classroom teacher. Other participants may include the School Psychologist, district specialists, and parents/guardians, depending on student needs.

Through a collaborative process, the SBT works together to identify student strengths and needs, develop classroom-based strategies, and provide practical resources and supports for teachers. The team also makes decisions related to case management, referrals to district services (e.g., Speech-Language Pathology, School Psychology), and the allocation of school-based and district resources.

Library Learning Commons

Our Library, or more recently known as our Library Learning Commons (LLC) uses a whole school approach to building a participatory learning community. The library learning commons is the physical and virtual collaborative learning hub of the school.

At Aspen Park Elementary we have incorporated both spaces for collaboration, as well as quieter spaces for individual or small groups. We have a

Lego table area, a mobile math centre, and two different areas with the ability to project from a computer.

In our Library Learning Commons, we work to foster a love of literacy and encourage collaboration and problem solving. Literacy initiatives include, book exchanges, theme book displays, book talks, reading clubs, reading challenges, a journalism club, author visits and book fairs.

On any given day you might see students in the library using various technologies such as robots (Ozobots, Blue Bots, Dash, Sphero Indi, Cubelets, Makey Makey, etc.) Students might be using computers for research, coding with Scratch, Code.org or Hackergals lessons, designing with Canva or writing using accessibility tools. iPads might also be in use for any number of things including stop motion. You might see a class or small teams working on a digital breakout game, or ADST happening using cardboard and Makedo.

More information on our Library Learning Commons can be found at [Aspen Park Elementary Library Learning Commons – Learn71](#)

Counselling

At Aspen Park Elementary, school counselling services are available to assist students with personal, social and emotional development. This includes individual, group, and class work to provide both an intervention and prevention service to students and families. It is not a disciplinary or long-term therapeutic service. The focus is on assistance with immediate issues, crisis intervention, short-term problem solving and skill building. This year, our school counsellor is on-site on Tuesday to Friday and alternating Mondays.

Indigenous Education

The Aspen Park Elementary Indigenous Support Worker (ISW) provides direct support to all self-identified Indigenous Students K-7. Their main role is to make connections with students and to provide the following:

- To increase every Indigenous student's sense of belonging, cultural identity and self-esteem.
- To increase the academic success of all Indigenous students through personalized learning.
- To increase the awareness and understanding of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit history, traditions and culture for all students.
- To increase Indigenous students' skills, qualities and confidence in leadership.

Student Safety

School Visitors

Please be sure to check in at the office when visiting the school. Visitors will be asked to sign in and may be given a visitors' badge.

Stay Home When Sick

Anyone entering that school including staff, parents, caregivers, and students should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities.

If a staff member, student, or other person develops symptoms of illness at school and is unable to participate in regular activities, they will be supported to go home until their symptoms have improved. Appropriate infection control precautions will be taken while the person is preparing to leave the school premises, including

use of appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids.

Medication for Students

On occasion, we are asked by a parent/guardian to ensure that a child receives prescribed medication. Administrative Procedure 316 [Management of Health Conditions and Medical Emergencies](#), Section 3 details the required procedure.

No medication shall be given to any student without written direction from the doctor or parent/guardian. It is the responsibility of a student's parent/guardian to complete and return to the school a [Medical Alert and Prescribed Medication Record](#) for their child and to ensure that appropriate medication is provided to the school and replenished as needed. If prescription medications are listed on the Medical Alert and Prescribed Medication Record, the form must be signed by a physician.

Emergency Response Drills

Regular drills such as Fire, Earthquake, Hold and Secure and Lockdown emergency response drills will be held throughout the year to practice student safety procedures.

District emergency preparedness information can be found on the district website at <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Comox-Valley-Parent-Emergency-Letter-2022.pdf>

School Closure

There will be occasions when schools must temporarily close due to inclement weather, power outages or for emergency reasons. The superintendent may make the decision to temporarily close *any or all* district schools when

the safety of students and staff may be compromised.

Parents, students and school district staff will be informed through the school alerting system, email, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) & [Instagram](#), and by notifying local media by **6:30 a.m. – at the latest**. Every attempt will be made to post announcements about closures on the school district website, however, power outages may interfere.

If there is no announcement on the school website /social media, please be sure to listen to one of the local radio stations:

- **97.3 FM** – The Eagle
- **98.9 FM** – The Jet
- **100.7 FM** -The Raven

No announcements by 6:30 am indicates schools are open and operating at usual.

[School Closures and Bus Schedules during Inclement Weather / Power Outage \(PDF\)](#)

Bicycle Safety/ Scooter Safety

Parents are asked to review bicycle safety with their children. Cyclists must always ride single file with the traffic on the right-hand side of the road, and they must know and follow the rules of the road. All students must wear bicycle helmets as this is the law in British Columbia.

Bikes and scooters must be stored in the designated bike rack lock up area or scooter storage area during the school day.

Weather Preparedness

Outdoor play is an important part of the school day, supporting students' physical health, social development, and overall well-being. Students are expected to go outside for recess and lunch

on a daily basis, and we ask families to help ensure children are prepared for the weather each day.

Please send your child to school dressed in weather-appropriate clothing, including suitable outerwear such as rain jackets, warm layers, boots, hats, and gloves when needed. Students are also required to have separate indoor and outdoor shoes, which helps us keep learning spaces clean and safe.

We strongly encourage families to provide a change of clothing to be kept at school, particularly during the fall and winter months when wet or muddy conditions are more common. Having extra clothing available helps students stay comfortable and engaged in learning throughout the day.

In most weather conditions, students will be outside during recess and lunch. Only in cases of high winds and heavy rain will students be kept indoors.

Mental Health and Wellness

Comox Valley Schools is committed to the well-being of all students and staff. It is recognized in our Strategic Priority Plan as a top priority, and we continue to invest funding and resources to ensure we maintain and enhance a robust program that addresses all topics related to mental health.

More information on mental Health Programs can be District website at

<https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/mental-health/>

Drop Off and Pick Up

School Entry

The expectation is for students to drop off their belongings at their designated entry location and stay outside where supervision is available. No student will be allowed to stay in a classroom unless supervised by a teacher or staff member.

Picking Up Students During the Day

When picking up a student outside of the regular dismissal times please check in with the office either in person or by phone on arrival.

Please inform the office if you are sending someone other than your regular contacts to pick up your children.

Leaving During the Day Unattended

Students may not leave the school premises during school hours without written permission. Students are expected to go directly home after dismissal.

Student Drop Off/Pick Up

Our school has limited parking and drop off/pick up options. Please observe parking lot signage. Drop off and pick up (no parking) can occur using the designated drop off/ pick up lane. Please pull way forward so others can pull in behind you. Vehicles should not be left in the drop off lanes. Just Stop, Drop and Go

The bus has priority and must be able to pull into the bus loading areas and pull out easily from our parking lot. Areas of the parking lot have been painted to indicate zones where vehicles should not stop and well as which direction traffic must go. Please observe all directional signage.

Food Programs

Aspen Park Elementary offers food programs to support student well-being and ensure all students are ready to learn.

We offer a breakfast program that provides a simple breakfast to students at no cost. Breakfast is available each morning in the multi-purpose room from 8:15 a.m. to 8:35 a.m., prior to the start of classes.

In addition, for 2026-2027 we will offer a Universal Lunch Program for all students. This program is intended to support students as needed and is provided in a respectful and inclusive manner.

As a reminder, the school office does not supply cutlery or cups. Students are encouraged to bring a reusable water bottle each day and pack any utensils they may need for their lunch.

Communicating Student Learning**Reporting**

Aspen Park Elementary communicates student learning and progress through Learning Updates using MyEd. Formal Learning Updates are sent home three times per year.

If you are unsure about the reporting process or have questions about your child's progress at any time, we encourage you to connect directly with your child's classroom teacher.

Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences

Conferences traditionally occur in November. However, we encourage parents to contact individual teachers to discuss their child's progress at any time.

School Supplies

Aspen Park Elementary will be providing basic school supplies to students in kindergarten to grade 7. Instead of parents purchasing individual sets of supplies, families provide money to the school and the school will purchase supplies for each student. This approach will ensure equity and equality among all students and will save parents time (no shopping!) and money (ordering in bulk, our discount on school supplies is significant). The only items parents will have to provide are a backpack, a lunch bag, and appropriate shoes for gym.

- Kindergarten to grade 7 the fee will be \$40
- The office will accept cash, cheque, or e-transfer
- Fees are due no later than September 30 each year

Payments can be made at the school office or electronically by using e-transfer.

If paying by e-transfer, you can send the transfer to aspenpark@sd71.bc.ca When using this option in the comments section please make sure you use the following message:

School Supplies-Student(s) Name

There are, however, a few items that families will still need to provide for their child. These include a backpack, a lunch bag, a water bottle, appropriate indoor or gym shoes, headphones, and any personal items.

Dress Code

Aspen Park Elementary School is committed to providing students with learning environments that are safe and inclusive. We ask that students and staff wear clothing that allows them to

participate in the intended activities. We also expect our staff and students to refrain from wearing clothing that promotes drugs or alcohol, displays offensive language, or images, or encourages discrimination.

Lost and Found

Any items such as clothing left behind by students will be kept on the lost and found rack by the main entrance outside the office. Articles that remain unclaimed, are donated to charity three times during the year (Winter Break, Spring Break, and end of year). All items are displayed prior to being donated. Please encourage your students to check for lost items regularly.

School Community Rights and Responsibilities

We have the right to:

- a) Learn and grow. We have the responsibility to work at learning.
- b) Be respected as an individual. We have the responsibility to treat others fairly.
- c) Be safe. We have the responsibility to treat others with care.
- d) Enjoy school. We have the responsibility to respectfully socialize at the right time.
- e) Be included in all activities regardless of financial reason. We have the responsibility to take care of the school, its materials and equipment.

We have the responsibility to:

- a) Listen to instructions, work quietly, complete assignments and ask questions.
- b) To cooperate and participate in all school activities and do our best

- c) Show respect and considerations for all students and their ideas
- d) Be respectful to all adults and to follow the directions of school personnel
- e) Respect the personal property of others and to respect their right to privacy
- f) Have a good attitude and to participate in a way that helps make our school a place where everyone can enjoy and be successful

Parent and Guardian Concerns

We value open communication and believe that concerns are best resolved as close to the source as possible. To support clear and timely communication, we ask families to follow the steps below when a concern arises.

For classroom-related concerns, families should first contact the classroom teacher. In most cases, concerns can be resolved quickly through direct communication. If the concern is not resolved, families may then contact the school Principal or Vice-Principal for further support.

For school-wide concerns, families are encouraged to contact the school Principal or Vice-Principal directly. The admin team will work with families to address the concern and seek a resolution.

Our goal is to work collaboratively with families to ensure concerns are addressed respectfully, efficiently, and in the best interests of students. Thank you for partnering with us to support a positive school community.

Code of Conduct

Our Aspen Park Elementary code of conduct can be found on our school website.

Parent Opportunities

The code of conduct applies during travel to and from school, inside and outside the school building, during field trips and whenever a student represents their school; it applies to everyone – students, staff and parents/guests. Students are expected to follow the directions of staff in and around the building at all times. This is designed to make sure we have a safe, caring school environment for all. Respectful dialogue is expected from everyone in all situations.

Taking Responsibility

All student behaviour provides an opportunity for learning. Students need to be given an opportunity to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to fix their mistakes.

W.I.T.S.

Aspen Park students are asked to use their W.I.T.S. when solving problems.

- **Walk away** – (from problem situations or to get adult help)
- **Ignore** – (when someone is bugging you ... do not retaliate back)
- **Talk it Out** – (in a peaceful manner with adult help if needed)
- **Seek Help** – (do this first before things escalate)

Should a student commit a serious breach of the Code of Conduct or develop a chronic pattern of non-compliance, the school administration will contact the home and offer support and/or consequences as deemed necessary. These may include: referral to school counsellor and/or outside agencies, school-based team, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, removal of privileges, etc. The school administration may exercise discretion in the application of this policy when and where necessary.

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

The purpose of the PAC is to encourage parent involvement in the school, and to support programs and education that enhance our students' learning environment and experience. To communicate with parents and build on the school community at Aspen Park Elementary School.

Members:

All parents and guardians of students registered at Aspen Park Elementary School are voting members. PAC meetings will be held once a month at 6:30 pm in the Multipurpose Room (dates are posted on the school Calendar). We encourage you to come out and join.

Parent Volunteers

We welcome the assistance of parents in all our school endeavours; for our classroom programs, as field trip supervisors or drivers, to help at sports days, to help with special events, etc. Some of our activities would not be able to happen without the help of parent volunteers. Thank you for your support!

Criminal Record Check

As per School District Policy 6031MR2 all volunteers will be asked to complete a Criminal Record Check before they are able to drive, volunteer in the classroom or participate in field trips. If you are thinking about volunteering at the school, please take the time to complete the Criminal Record Check process early in the school year. Criminal Record Checks are valid for 3 years once complete and will remain on file at the school.

Aspen Park Elementary School uses the Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP) online service:

Online Link:

<https://justice.gov.bc.ca/criminalrecordcheck>

Access Code: 2KU3BYRDJ9

Once in the system you will be asked to download the BC Service Card App to your phone. When you have the App and it is activated (activation can take a few days) you can proceed in completing the online Criminal Records Check. Once a completed form has been submitted it usually takes 2-3 weeks turn around time for verification.

Driving for School

We rely on parent/caregiver volunteers to drive on many of our school field trips to keep our costs to a minimum. Each year volunteer drivers need to submit volunteer driver forms to the office. These forms include a driver's abstract, proof of valid insurance with a minimum \$1,000,000 liability, and a valid driver's license.

Booster seats are required for students who are under 9 years of age and over 40 pounds in weight and should be used until the child reaches 9 years of age or a height of 4'9".

Personal Digital Devices

At our elementary schools, there is no student access to or use of personal digital devices at any time on the school campus during the school day, unless they have been given permission by the school vice-principal/principal. This is essentially a "bell-to-bell" restriction from the beginning of school to the end of the day. Parents are reminded that elementary students are always under direct supervision and that the school will

communicate with home for any emergent need that arises.

School District 71 Protocols

Consent for the Collection, Use and Sharing of Personal Information

Schools and Districts collect, use, and share student personal information that is directly related to and necessary for their educational functions. For other school or education-related purposes, parental or student consent is required.

The school is seeking your consent to collect, keep, use and share photographs, videos, images, and/or names of students in a variety of publications and on the school or District's website(s) for education related purposes, such as recognizing and encouraging student achievement, building the school community, celebrating your child's accomplishments, and informing others about school and District programs and activities.

For example, student names, and/or images may be used or shared in

- school and District communications, such as newsletters, brochures, reports in limited or public circulation;
- school and District websites;
- online communities created by teachers and administrators to share ideas, content and messages;
- the school yearbook and or year end slide show;
- press releases to local media and this includes photos of graduates that are posted annually

If you do not want this type of information published, complete the appropriate section of

the Protocol and Consent form. Forms will be sent home in the first week of school and are linked below.

- [Protocol and Consent Form](#)
- [Personal Information Consent](#)

Outside Media Consent

Media (including radio, television, newspapers, and other print and online media) are sometimes permitted or invited to come to the school or to school activities and allowed to take photos or video or conduct interviews with students, for the purposes of promoting public understanding of school programs, building public support for public education, encouraging student achievement, and celebrating your child's accomplishments.

If you do not want your child to be involved in such activities, you need to:

- Tell your child to avoid these situations,
- Tell your child's teacher of your wishes,
- Complete the Protocol and Consent form and ask the school and school district to take reasonable steps to avoid this type of publication of your child's name, image, or personal information by outside media.

[Outside Media Consent Information](#)

Note that school and district staff cannot control news media access in public locations (such as field trips or off school grounds).

Technology Rights and Responsibilities

The Technology Rights and Responsibilities Agreement is intended as a guide to support essential conversations about digital use, and help develop socially responsible skills, habits, and attitudes in all members of our learning

community. The intent of looking at both rights and responsibilities is to assist us in creating an inclusive and respectful culture which promotes participation and active citizenship in each unique learning community. Prior to the start-up of any computer or district device, a pop-up message will appear requiring users to agree to follow the "Agreement" before logging in will be allowed. A full copy of the Technology Rights and Responsibilities Agreement can be found using the link below.

[Technology Rights and Responsibilities Agreement](#)

Walking Field Trip Information

At various times throughout the school year classes may leave the school grounds to explore the local area as part of their educational experience. These excursions are considered Walking Field Trips and have the following guidelines:

- Starting and finishing at the school
- Generally staying within 1.5 km of the school
- Group walking as a single unit

The annual Walking Field Trip form can be completed at the start of each school year and is valid for the year.

Prior to a class leaving the school on a walking trip parents/ guardians will be notified by email. The email will outline where the class is going and the connection to learning.

Wild Animals

As a result of our natural surroundings, we may occasionally have visits from local wildlife. All

classes review best practices for bear and cougar safety throughout the year.

To help reduce wildlife visits, students are not permitted to take food outside during recess or lunch. Keeping food and garbage out of the playground and field areas helps minimize attractants for bears and cougars.

If wildlife is observed on or near school grounds, the school follows established safety procedures and reports sightings to Conservation Officers as appropriate.

Programs of Choice

Engineering, New Technology, Exploration & Robotics (ENTER) K-7

Aspen Park Elementary is proud to offer the ENTER Program, an innovative and engaging learning model that integrates engineering, technology, robotics, and design as dynamic pathways to teach the core curriculum. This hands-on, inquiry-based approach empowers students to think critically, solve problems creatively, and apply their learning in authentic and meaningful ways.

Building on the proven success of our Grades 6–7 ENTER classes, Aspen Park is excited to expand the program to include Kindergarten through Grade 5, creating a seamless K–7 pathway for innovation, inquiry, and experiential learning. This continuum ensures that students at every stage of their educational journey can develop the foundational skills and mindsets needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

The expansion of ENTER reflects Aspen Park Elementary's ongoing commitment to compassionate, connected, and personalized learning for all students. Through this program,

learners of all ages are encouraged to explore, create, and innovate in a supportive environment that values curiosity, collaboration, and the joy of discovery.

Program Goals

- Empower students from Kindergarten through Grade 7 to become curious, creative, and capable problem-solvers who engage deeply with their learning through design, and collaboration.
- Engage all students in hands-on, meaningful learning that fosters curiosity and confidence.
- Encourage mentorship opportunities, with older ENTER students supporting younger learners.
- Strengthen home and school connections through flexible and collaborative learning experiences.

Questions

If you have questions that are not addressed elsewhere in this handbook, please feel free to contact us at aspenpark@sd71.bc.ca. Our office staff will ensure your message is directed to the appropriate person and followed up in a timely manner.

