



Sept 10, 2024

J. R. Robson High School

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Principal's Corner

The ship has set sail for the 2024-25 school year and we are all excited to be back. Welcome to all of the new students who have joined us from various parts of Alberta, Canada and other countries. We are excited about everyone being here and contributing to our school culture.

Mark your calendar for our **Open House on September 18** from 5:00-7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome to stop by for a burger, take a tour through our building, meet our teachers and see what is going on. In addition, our football team will be playing a home game so feel free to go out and catch our football team in action.

Extra-curricular activities are

already underway and our first tournament was Mega volley Sept. 5-7. We have had a good turnout for all the volleyball teams and cross country running.

We are at cross-roads for our nutrition program at the school. Due to a variety of factors, mainly staff cut backs, dropping student enrolment, and availability of students taking short order cooking in Home Economics class, we have put the hot lunch and snack programs on hold for September. In order to continue these programs, we need parent input and ideas to create a sustainable plan moving forward. We no longer have the school staff to

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Around the School

Our annual Mega Volleyball Tournament was held in Vermilion on the weekend. 8 venues and over 30 teams participated. Below is our Marauders playing at St. Jerome's School



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School Council Meeting

**Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024
at 7 pm in the Learning Commons. All parents welcome!**



Want to know what is happening in the school? Follow our Pirate Crews Instagram:
[@jrrpiratecrews](https://www.instagram.com/jrrpiratecrews)

Website:
irrobson.btps.ca
School Calendar
<http://irrobson.btps.ca/Calendar.php>
Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/JRRobsonSchool/>
App
<http://bit.ly/JRRapp>



Principal's Corner Continued

dedicate time to prepare food for these meals nor the students who want to prepare the food. Parents looking to get involved to come up with a solution are encouraged to please contact me to discuss your ideas.

On June 20th, 2024 the Minister of Education sent a letter to parents explaining the Alberta government's introduction of new restrictions on the use of personal electronic devices and access to social media sites in schools. I have attached a copy of that letter in this newsletter. In addition, on August 30th BTPS Superintendent Mrs. Webb sent a letter to parents and guardians outlining the documents that BTPS has in place to support this Ministerial order. I have included that letter in this newsletter as well. At our assembly on the first day of school I went over this information and our expectations with all students. I want to clarify that while Chromebooks are included in the BTPS definition of Personal Electronic Devices, as principal I can give permission for the use of these devices in planned, purposeful instruction. The use of Chromebooks will continue to be an integral learning tool at our school, the only school in BTPS that is a 1:1 Bring Your Own Device school, although certainly not the only 1:1 school in Alberta. We value the use of this technology in our learning activities and will continue with the use of Chromebooks.

We will be having a **School Council meeting**

on Wednesday September 25 at 7:00 p.m. in the Learning Commons room. Our returning chair is Mr. Ed Reddy. Other executive positions are available. Meetings roughly last an hour and our local Board of Trustees do give a report. Please plan on attending and we hope to see you there.

On September 30th, there is no school for students as BTPS will recognize the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The day honours the children who never returned home and the survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. As a school we will have some related learning activities for students during the week prior in select classes. These activities will be embedded into regular classroom instruction, as will other indigenous learning activities throughout the year. September 30 is also Orange Shirt Day, a day that is an Indigenous-led grassroots commemorative day intended to raise awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of residential schools, and to promote the concept of "Every Child Matters". We are encouraging our students to wear orange shirts on September 27th.

Looking forward to seeing you at our Open House September 18th.

Mr. Bates

Pirate Crews



An assembly was held on Friday, Sept 6 to welcome new and old students and staff to a new school year. Nominations for Pirate Crew executives was done electronically afterwards. Elections will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 11 during the lunch hour.



Counsellor's Corner



As of September 3, our school year is in full swing. It is so good to see all of our returning students and the many new faces who have joined us. We want to welcome each of

you.

We would like to welcome Ms. Carnegie who will be teaching Physical Education 7 - 12. Mrs. Barnes will be taking over the junior high math program and outdoor education, along with Mrs. Scully and Mrs. Polishuk, who will be teaching junior high science.

This school year, we will all be embarking on a new journey of limited cell phone use in schools. There will be many challenges for students, parents and staff as we adjust to the new policy. We will all have to learn to be patient and understanding as we navigate through the process.

With the introduction of Artificial Intelligence, schools have reported the rise of incidents involving AI generated sexually explicit images and videos. As a result, the Canadian Center for Child Care Protection has created a guide for parents to keep your kids safe on devices. This guide will provide information on online luring, sextortion, deepfakes and online sexual violence. Here is a link to the online guide: https://content.c3p.ca/pdfs/C3P_ParentingInTheOnlineWorld_en.pdf

Our VIBE Coach, Ramona Mathison ramona.mathison@btps.ca, will be available to students and involved in classes on Tuesdays and Fridays. **Amy Olobayo**, amy.olobayo@btps.ca will be our **Social/Emotional Coach** for this school year. Amy will be in our building to meet with students on Monday, Wednesday (afternoons), and Fri-

day, to meet with students.

Mrs. Scully, kelly.scully@btps.ca and Mrs. Hart monique.hart@btps.ca will share the counselor duties and are available for career counseling, registration information, personal counseling referrals and post-secondary questions. **Mrs. Scully will be looking after the grade 8, 10 & 12** while **Mrs. Hart will be looking after the grade 7, 9 & 11 students.** We **invite parents** to contact us, at any time, if you have any concerns about your child's programming.

For specific learning needs, Mrs. Scully and Mrs. Kaye will be operating our Inclusive Learning department. If you have high school questions, please contact Mrs. Scully kelly.scully@btps.ca, and junior high please contact Mrs. Kaye krisy.kaye@btps.ca

We will be hosting an **open house on Wednesday, September 18 from 5:00 - 7:00.** We would like to invite all parents and students to attend and enjoy a light supper with us. As part of this evening's entertainment, our Marauder Football Team will be playing in their home opener. Come and cheer the team on.



Students requiring extra help: Each teacher offers extra help sessions as part of their program. Please see course outlines or ask the teacher when they have extra help sessions. **Lunch and Learn** will be running again and this is an opportunity for students to get extra help to finish missing work.

Junior High Students: Welcome! Please stop by and introduce yourself. If you need help with preparing for exams, study skills, having trouble with some friends or just need someone to talk to, please come and see us, as we would be happy to help out.

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Counsellor's Corner Continued

Grade 10/11/12 Students: Just a reminder the last day to add or drop courses for this semester will be Sept. 13. If you need to make a timetable change for semester 2, please do it as soon as possible as sometimes it is easier to do these changes when we have the entire year's timetable to work with.

Many post-secondary institutions will be hosting **Open Houses** during the months of September to November and students are encouraged to attend to learn more about potential programs and to choose the post-secondary institution which is right for you. Below are the first open house dates for the year.

Grade 12 Students: See Mrs. Scully to review your program and make sure you are prepared for your post-secondary options. **Registration will open on October 1 for most post-secondary institutions.** Apply early. Many students are put on waitlists which adds to the stress of waiting for acceptance. A graduation meeting will be held in early October for both parents and students to begin planning the graduation event and to review the process of applying for post-secondary school. Please watch for the date of this meeting. Also, students will be asked to set up a MyPass account <https://public.education.alberta.ca/PASI/myPass/welcome> with Alberta Education to access diploma exam results, access transcripts; an **ApplyAlberta** account <https://www.applyalberta.ca/> to apply to post-secondary schools; or a **Student Finance System(SFS)** account <https://studentaid.alberta.ca/>. *Please use a home email address to access these sights as your Buffalo Trail Public Schools email does not exist after graduation.*

For scholarship purposes: all scholarship information is located on our school website.

From the home page choose - Students and then choose - Scholarships. Scholarship research begins in September. Students in grades 10 - 12 are encouraged so start searching for scholarships that will suit their needs along their education journey. **Here are a couple of significant scholarships that are available now through Scholartree:**

- ⇒ <https://scholartree.ca/scholarship/td-scholarship-for-community-leadership/NFjon0Fff>
- ⇒ <https://scholartree.ca/scholarship/loran-scholars-foundations-scholarship/Oq6c1o346>
- ⇒ <https://scholartree.ca/scholarship/schulich-leader-scholarship/ytymOpt18>

Work Experience/RAP/Green Certificate students. Mrs. Kaye will be responsible for all of the work experience in our school this year and Mrs. Hart will monitor the RAP and Green Certificate Programs.

Green Certificate: Green Certificate is a 16 credit course allowing students to explore learning in the following categories: greenhouse, bees, equine, swine, poultry, sheep, cow/calf, and field crop. These 16 credits can be earned from Grade 10 to 12 and involve 3 tests levels X, Y, Z which can be written in November/February/May when the student feels they are ready to challenge that test. Please email: monique.hart@btps.ca if you are interested in registering for this program.



From the Guidance Counseling Team: Mrs. Hart and Mrs. Scully

Open House Dates	
University of Saskatchewan	Sep 20
King's University	Oct 19

The Vermilion Rotary Club is excited to be able to participate in the Rotary Youth Exchange once again.

If you or someone you know is interested, please visit this website to learn more about the process.

This is NOT affiliated with JR Robson School. We are merely helping to advertise this great opportunity.



→ yexrotaryvermilion.com

Marauder Football 2024 Schedule

<p>Preseason: Hanna Sunbowl Jamboree Saturday Sept 7 - <i>JC Charyk School, Hanna</i> Four 35 min games, first game starts 12:15 pm</p>
<p>Week 1: Away game vs. Rimbey Wednesday Sept 11 - <i>Rimbey Jr/Sr High School</i> Game time: to be announced</p>
<p>Week 2: Home game vs. Caroline Wednesday Sept. 18 - <i>JR Robson School</i> Game time: 5:00 pm</p>
<p>Week 3: Away game vs. Westlock Thursday Sept. 26 - <i>Altador Athletics Field in Westlock</i> Game time: 5:00 pm</p>
<p>Week 4: Home game vs. Breton Thursday October 3 - <i>JR Robson School</i> Game time: 5:00 pm</p>
<p>Week 5: Home game vs. Roland Michner (Slave Lake) Wednesday October 9 - <i>JR Robson School</i> Game time: 5:00 pm</p>
<p>Week 6: Home game vs. OLMP (Camrose) Thursday October 17 - <i>JR Robson School</i> Game time: 5:00 pm</p>

Playoffs start the following week, October 20-26
 Below: photos from the Hanna Sunbowl Jamboree



Government of Alberta announcement:
"To safeguard student mental health and reduce distractions, personal mobile devices will no longer be permitted during class time and access to social media sites will be restricted." Effective September 1, 2024.

Take proactive steps to help your family prepare for the new device-free policy.

- Learn about the new policy and implementation plan in your child's school; and talk with your children to prepare.
- Convey a positive attitude about the change and focus on the benefits.
- Brainstorm ways to communicate during school time when needed and create the habit of planning.

Focus on the benefits of device-free classrooms:

Students learn better without phones.

Research shows that when phones:

- are away, test scores increase.
- are present, students who are already struggling, struggle more.

Students have improved mood and mental health without phones. Benefits include:

- Increased self-control and ability to focus.
- Improved ability to self-regulate.
- Reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- More in-person time with friends, peers and mentors helps improve their mood.

Tips for device-free success:

- Although students may still have access to their phones on their breaks, create the habit of planning each day without text messages or phone call reminders. Plan ahead for pickup times/locations, appointments or other activities. This will instill responsibility and help them develop valuable executive-functioning skills.
- Help your children memorize your phone number and other emergency numbers. If they need to reach you while they are at school, they can call from the school office or ask their teacher for assistance.
- Call the school office if you need to relay a message to your child vs texting or calling their device.

Tips to encourage healthy cell phone and device habits:

- Set aside devices during mealtimes and focus on conversations.
- Make common areas where family and friends hang out together, device-free to promote positive interactions.
- Put away your own devices when your children are around and want to interact with you. Give them your full attention – they will appreciate you for it, and you will set a great example.
- Encourage everyone to put their devices away at least an hour before bedtime and keep them out of the bedrooms.

MORE RESOURCES

Search online:

[Screenagers](#)

[Away for the Day](#)

MyHealth.Alberta.ca

Information on mental health, community supports, programs and services in your area:



Addiction Services Help Line
1-866-332-2322

Mental Health Help Line
1-877-303-2642





ALBERTA
EDUCATION

*Office of the Minister
MLA, Calgary - Bow*

June 20, 2024

Dear parents:

On June 17, Alberta's government introduced [new restrictions](#) on the use of cellphones and access to social media in schools. Beginning this fall, we will no longer permit the use of personal mobile devices in classrooms, or access to social media sites on school networks. In recent months and years, Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia have all done the same.

Alberta's new standards were developed following months of consultation with those most impacted, including students, parents, and teachers. The feedback was clear: more than 90 per cent of 68,000 survey respondents said they are concerned about cellphone use in schools.

In addition to our stakeholder engagement, my department reviewed recent research and statistics regarding the impact of mobile devices and social media use in classrooms and found reports of increased distraction, instances of inappropriate usage, negative impacts on learning and mental health, and an increase in cyberbullying.

According to the [2023 UNESCO report on Technology in Education](#) it can take up to 20 minutes for a student to refocus on learning after checking their phone, which in turn impacts recall and comprehension.

A 2023 Statistics Canada report found that one in every four Canadian teens has experienced cyberbullying, ranging from online or text message threats, to hurtful information posted about them online, to being excluded from virtual communities. Another Statistics Canada study reported mental wellness rates dropped from 77.9 per cent in 2015 to 62.3 per cent in 2021 in young Canadians between 12 and 17.

The new restrictions announced June 17 will answer the call for a standard approach to how schools navigate these policies in Alberta, while still affording those authorities the autonomy and flexibility needed to implement policies that best meet the needs of their students and communities.

.../2

While schools *must* make exceptions for health or medical reasons, or learning needs, these restrictions are decisive and clear. This fall, students will return to class, but their devices will not. By doing this, we're prioritizing learning and protecting student mental health.

Your school authority will communicate the specific details of their personal mobile device and social media policy in the coming months. This will include information on whether access to personal mobile devices is being limited during class or whether the school will be going further and not allowing them to be used during the school day. School authority policies will also outline where and how mobile devices will be stored during class time, how to apply for an exemption if your child has health or medical needs that require the use of a mobile device during class time, and the consequences for violations of the policy.

If you have specific questions regarding your school's specific policy, please contact your school authority, as they will be best positioned to speak to how these restrictions will be implemented at the local level.

As a parent, I am happy to know that when kids head back to the classroom this fall, their devices won't be with them. Students should be fully focused on learning and developing healthy social skills away from screens.

I'm proud of the world-class education system we've built in Alberta. I trust these changes will only make that system stronger by minimizing distractions and protecting our children's mental health and well-being.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Demetrios Nicolaides". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "N".

Demetrios Nicolaides ECA PhD
Minister of Education



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August 30, 2024

Re: Use of Personal Electronic Devices

Dear BTPS Parents and Guardians,

We want to inform you about the new regulations on personal electronic devices in our classrooms, as directed by a recent [Ministerial Order](#) from the Alberta government. This order aims to reduce distractions and promote a better learning environment for our students.

The Ministerial Order is in response to concerns that personal electronic devices in classrooms can distract students and negatively affect their mental health. Studies have shown that cell phones and social media can hinder learning, contribute to mental health issues, and increase cyberbullying.

The new regulations will be implemented in Buffalo Trail Public Schools starting September 1, 2024. These changes are designed to help students focus better during class and engage more actively in their learning by minimizing distractions from screens.

Detailed guidelines about these regulations can be found in our updated Board Policies ([304BP](#)) and Administrative Procedures ([303-1AP](#)). We encourage you to review these documents on our website.

Usage and Restrictions

- Social media will be blocked on school Wi-Fi and school devices.
- Students will not be able to use their cell phones or personal electronic devices during instructional time but may use them outside of this time as outlined in the school's specific plan.
- Personal devices include, but are not limited to, any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate with or access the internet (such as cell phone, tablet, laptop, Chromebook, Smartwatch, headphones, and gaming device).
- If your child requires a personal device for medical reasons, please contact the school administration.

Parents are encouraged to discuss these new regulations with their children and support them in adjusting to these changes. Parents can contact the school office, and students may access the school phones for communication as needed.

We appreciate your support in implementing these changes to help create a focused and respectful learning environment. Additional information specific to your child's school will be shared from your school principal at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. For further details or questions, please contact your child's school.

We wish all of our students and their families a wonderful start to the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Michelle Webb
Superintendent