



## Goosehill Primary School

### Weekly Notes- September 21, 2012

Dear Parents,

During the first weeks of the school year, teachers devote a good deal of time teaching students the routines and procedures of the classroom. The goal of this work is to teach children to take responsibility for their own work and materials. Not only does this allow the classroom to function smoothly, it also fosters independence and confidence in our students.

Teachers know that although it takes more time initially to teach children to do things for themselves, the payoff is worth the effort. When students develop the capacity to follow routines and complete tasks independently, they are more able to succeed in school. Because they can manage their materials and class assignments with ease, they are “available” to learn to solve problems, interact positively with their peers, and advocate for their needs.

Parents often marvel at what their children are able to do independently in school. They pack and unpack their own backpacks, clean up after themselves, and follow directions---the first time they are given! Parents can support their children’s developing independence by recognizing all they do in school---how grown-up they are!---and then having them take responsibility for similar tasks at home. Here are some ideas:

- ✓ Have your child unpack his/her backpack when s/he gets home from school. Establish a routine for where notices go, where to put homework papers, and emptying the lunchbox.
- ✓ After completing homework, have your child pack his/her own folder and backpack for the next school day. Model for them how you mentally check off what is needed. (Homework folder? *Check!*)
- ✓ Involve your child in making decisions about lunch and snack. Look at the school menu together and talk about the choices. If lunch will be packed, plan the “menu” the night before.
- ✓ Lay out clothes for the next day. Allow your child to make simple choices from a set of options you are prepared to accept.
- ✓ Let your child participate in simple household chores, such as setting the table and putting away his/her toys.

Please know---things won’t be perfect from the start! Children need support, patience, and time to learn new procedures and routines. They need acknowledgement and praise---even when they don’t do the task perfectly! Ultimately, they will take pride in their accomplishments and you will see that your child is even more capable than you imagined. The greatest payoff will be your child’s developing confidence and how s/he begins to take pride in being a contributing member of your family.

Looking forward to seeing you at the picnic this evening! Have a wonderful weekend!

Warmly,

Lynn Herschlein, Principal