

Gator Bites

The Official Newsletter of Greene Central School - February Edition

February has been quite a mixed up month! I can't recall having so many snow days, delays, and early releases in a single month, in my 20-year career! Everyone at GCS is looking forward to a return to a more consistent schedule. Of course, in Maine, you can never quite predict the weather this time of year!

- Principal McDonough

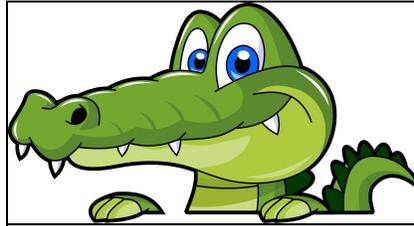


Winter is (still) here!

The recent snowfall and cold temperatures really require the proper clothing for the kids to go outside. Many students are still coming to school unprepared for outdoor recess. Please be sure to send your child with a hat, gloves, boots, snow pants, and a warm jacket each day. If any of these items are a hardship for your family, please contact our school counselor Jennifer Simmons, and she will assist you.



You've probably noticed that with all of this snow, the roadways have become much narrower. That is definitely the case with Main Street, just outside of the GCS entrance. This makes it especially important for anyone parking on Main Street to stay clear of the school's entrance. Our buses require extra space to turn, and cannot execute a proper turn if vehicles are parked too close to the entrance. Thanks for your help with this. Plus, we wouldn't want anyone to get towed!



IMPORTANT DATES

DATE	EVENT
2/16	Board Mtg. @ TMS 6p
2/18-26	Winter Break
2/27-3/3	Book Fair - Family Night 3/1, 5-7p
2/28	Friends of GCS 6p
3/1	Gr. 4 - NAEP Assessment
3/1	Budget Mtg. @ LCS 6p
3/9	PK Info. Night

To Families of English Language Learners (ELL):

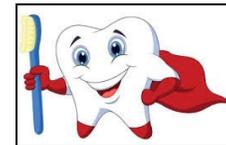
The ACCESS test for English Language Learners is being administered this month. This is the state test given to all ELLs annually to measure academic English in speaking, reading, writing, and listening. The deadline for this test is Friday, March 3rd.

CogAT Testing: Grades 3 & 6

The week after February vacation, the 3rd and 6th grade students will be taking the

Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT). This is a district-wide test that measures problem-solving skills in three different areas: verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal. Because reasoning skills develop gradually throughout a person's lifetime, and at different rates for different individuals, student scores will help teachers work with students to strengthen thinking skills. The CogAT does not measure such factors as effort, attention, motivation, and work habits. However, we do ask students to come to school well-rested and ready to do their best on this test.

Health Office Happenings:



February is National Children's Dental Health

Month. Greene Central School participated in a variety of dental health activities including partnering with the University of New England's College of Dental Medicine. On February 3rd, thirty six future dentists from UNE visited several of our classrooms with fun and interactive lessons that promoted good nutrition and healthy smiles. We also coordinated a successful SUGAR OUT DAY with our food service program that encouraged our students to make wise food choices. There were lots of fruits and vegetables available and the breakfast and lunch

More on reverse!

Gator Bites

The Official Newsletter of Greene Central School - February Edition

options were delicious. In addition to these events, many of the teachers will be hosting healthy snack parties later this month. Each student will also receive a dental goody bag containing a new toothbrush, toothpaste and floss. These kits are courtesy of UNE as well as some grant money and scholarships our school received.

As you know, our students are continuing to experience a moderate amount of illness throughout the building. The most prevalent complaints are gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea as well as strep throat and fever. It is so important to keep your children home for at least 24 hours after the symptoms have resolved. A few students have returned to school too soon, only to further spread the virus to classmates and teachers. I so appreciate your assistance in this matter and realize the impact it has on our families. Hand washing regularly with soap and water, coughing and sneezing into our sleeve, and staying home when sick are steps each of us can take to stay healthy.



Here are some fun links that you can share with your children about

the correct way to cough and sneeze:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXXgRdvg7fg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtnEwvUWDo0>

Math Fact Fluency:

The upper grade (4-6) math teachers would like to stress the importance of mastering multiplication facts. There are many easy ideas to help at home, such as good old fashioned flash cards, *Post-It* notes on the fridge with those tricky facts, listing multiples at stoplights while traveling, and accessing online resources to play review "games". Mastering facts is so important to mathematical success in the upper grades.



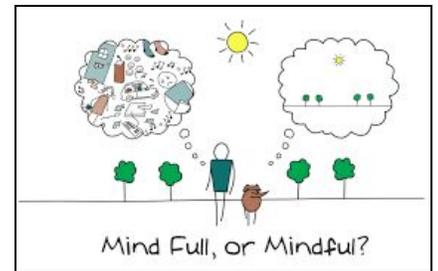
From the School Counselor's Desk:

4th and 5th grade guidance classes: In guidance, we have been exploring the topic of stress. What if feels like in your body? What causes stress? What emotions go with stress? How to handle stress – both positive and negative stress? What questions do the students have about stress?

The students have a very realistic grasp of this topic. They experience stress in many different ways for many different reasons. We will go into depth on how to handle stress and ways to avoid stress. The one common theme, students report is that they do not have time to just relax and do nothing. Many kids feel overwhelmed with the number

of activities they are involved in and would like an evening of hanging out at home.

In the 5th grade classes, we have begun each class with breathing. Deep breathing to calm their mind and their bodies. We are up to 2 minutes of silent time with all students participating. This practice of being present with what is happening in the moment and focusing on the breathing is called Mindfulness. It is a very effective way to relax the body and the mind.



Four ways to help avoid stress:

- Sleep well,
- Eat healthy foods,
- Take part in leisure activities, and
- Have fun! Vacation is here...try to do these four every day!!

Welcome Miss Wandlear, our new 6th Grade ELA Teacher!