



We acknowledge that for thousands of years the Malahat, Lake Cowichan, Quw'utsun, Halalt, Penelakut, Stzuminus, & Lyackson Peoples have walked gently on the unceded territories where we now live, work, learn, and play. We seek a new relationship with the first peoples here, one based in honour and respect, and we thank them for their hospitality.



## Welcome Back to the Village



We are so delighted to begin our fourth year - walking together - **Q'shintul**. Without the tight COVID restrictions of last school year (strict learning groups, no mixing of PODS, no parents participating in our day to day living together, etc.), **the energy and joy is palatable**. To think that children can once again choose their favourite Playful Inquiries with any number of fascinating and passionate educators *every afternoon*. To imagine the young ones being once again apprenticed by the older children. To have such talented educators once again collaborating rather than being isolated and often feeling lonely. These examples and many others will support our children's growth and development - as they continue the amazing learning journeys each one is on. **We welcome our new children and fellow travellers; we can't wait to meet you!**

We are thrilled to welcome Vanessa Tam and Cayla Brown who have joined our teaching team as the "Gardening Lead" and the "Middle Years Humanities Lead" and Marya Sylvester as a knowledge keeper from Penelakut who will be a part of our community on Fridays. **We are stoked to have them with us in our Village.**

You will also notice that we have created teaching teams for this year - with a Dandelion Clan and a Cedar Clan working in connected learning spaces - both inside and outside: Anne and Sheila (downstairs Annex); Erin and Vanessa (main building); Lawrence and Myra (main building); Cayla and Brian will be the leaders of our older children - Smuqw'a' (heron) Clan (upstairs Annex). Phaedra will be providing a focus on literacy development for all six Dandelion/Cedar groupings (downstairs Annex). Karin will continue to lead the Blended Clan (upstairs Annex) and all the MBNS children will hopefully enjoy her science skills during Playful Inquiry afternoons this year. We are imagining that this kind of collaboration will support the children's development through diverse teaching skills/talents, and provide sustainable support systems for our highly engaged, hands on, hard working teachers. Ever-in-the-making, we will be telling the stories that emerge from this work, and find ways to polish, edit and tweak. **We always welcome your feedback as a co-composer.**

## Different and Familiar rhythms



**Our soft start mornings have shifted this year** to find time for our more focused literacy work; we will now welcome soft start beginnings at **8:00 am** (rather than at 8:30 am) - except on Wednesdays when soft start will be from 8:30-9:00 (a time for families to connect with teachers or watch their child(ren) at play). **Most days, the Moose Call warning will be heard at 8:25 and the final Call will be at 8:30 am. School ends everyday at 2:15 pm.** *If your child LOVES to play before our day begins, please make sure they arrive early to play!*



Walking Together in the warm land of the Cowichan Valley

# Mill Bay Nature School

# Q' Shintul Invitation



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September 1, 2021

## WELCOME BACK TO THE MILL BAY NATURE SCHOOL COMMUNITY ★

All families are welcome to join us for a 'soft start' to our week and to our year together



which we hope will honour the Hul'qumi'num' ideals of NUTSUMAAT and UY SHQWALAWUN -  
*'we are one and we can problem solve together'*  
and *'we desire to live, work, play 'with a good heart and mind'*



**Tuesday, September 7**

**8:30- 11:00 am**

**Children stay until 2:15 pm - for pick-up**



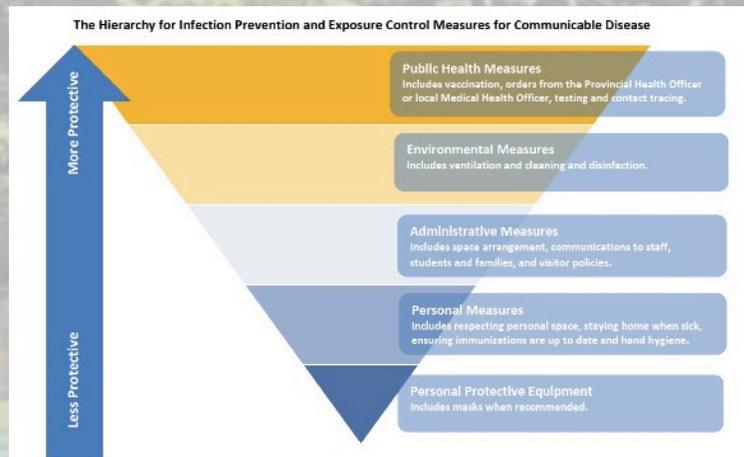
*for Refreshments  
Introductions  
Reunions  
Checking out the garden growth  
Laughter  
Sharing  
Play*

***(Children are welcome to attend on their own as well.)***

# COVID response - particulars of MBNS response

## Highlights of the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings:

- There's no longer a COVID-19 safety plan required, but instead transition to communicable disease prevention. The keys to prevention are: a robust illness policy for children and adults (stay home if sick); effective personal practices (hand washing, coughing/sneezing into elbow, etc.); environmental measures (cleaning and disinfecting surfaces every 24 hours, ventilation).
- Physical distancing is no longer required, and school gatherings can occur (at 50% capacity based upon fire regulations).
- Masks are expected to be worn **by all adults inside** the school building and are NOT required outside. Children who are ages 10 and up are expected to wear masks inside as well. **Because of the unique organization of MBNS, only children in the Smuqwa' Clan will be expected to wear a mask.** (If your child is unable to wear a mask, please have a conversation with Kim)
- Bus transportation is back to near normal with no spacing requirements. Students who are aged 10 and up (Smuqwa' Clan for MBNS) are expected to wear a mask on the bus.
- Parents and other visitors are welcome to participate fully in the goings and comings of MBNS (as long as you wear a mask whilst inside). This is such a welcome change !
- **Please note:** Vaccines are encouraged for all adults who work with children; there is no expectation of children being required to be vaccinated to attend school.



## Indigenous Ancestry & Support



**A message from Charlie Coleman** - District Principal of Indigenous Education: Welcome to a fantastic year of growth and learning. Indigenous education staff work throughout the district to foster inclusive classrooms where every student feels a sense of belonging and experiences many learning successes.

If your child has Indigenous ancestry - First Nations, Métis or Inuit, (documentation is NOT required) and you would like to self-identify, please see the school secretary for a self-identification form. Each year your child will be funded for and included in Indigenous Education programs. Almost all programs will be delivered in the regular classroom, to ALL students. You will be asked to give permission for any activities offered outside of the regular class. If you have self-identified with the school in previous years, you do NOT need to do a new form each year.

You can opt out of Indigenous Education services at any time by notifying the Indigenous Education staff in person or in writing either at your school or through the district office 250 748 0321 ext 235, or email at [ined@sd79.bc.ca](mailto:ined@sd79.bc.ca)

As you may know, in 2017, the Federal Government changed from using the term Aboriginal people to using Indigenous Peoples when referring to First Nations, Métis & Inuit peoples. This change acknowledges the rights of Indigenous Peoples as outlined in the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

(It will take us some time to transition to the new language so you may see the terms Indigenous and Aboriginal both used.)

## Philosophy of Learning Resources at MBNS

Since of the beginnings of MBNS, the use and repurposing of used school supplies and art supplies has been our priority. We have always (except for COVID restrictions) shared our supplies. With this in mind, please search under beds, in old backpacks, and even in Thrift Stores for broken crayons, gently used felts, pencil crayons, scissors, rulers, paints, glue, etc. If you notice school supply sales, and want to top up our very empty supply closet (thanks COVID !), feel free to purchase glue sticks, white glue bottles (preferably big ones), crayola felts and pencil crayons, tempera paint trays and brushes, quality pencils (lesser quality break easily and are tricky to sharpen), erasers, scissors, rulers, packets of plasticine, whiteboard markers, packages of sharpies - and anything else you can imagine children using to explore their thinking and play. Every child will receive a journal for their work - so paper and duotangs/binders are not necessary at this time. Your child may find they need one as their inquiries and learning emerge over the year.

We also joyfully accept gently used book donations for our collection, as well as loose parts for exploring and creating. "Loose parts" is a term that refers to any material that can be moved, carried, stacked, or altered\*. Loose parts can include **natural materials** (like sticks, stones, water, leaves, and sand) or **recycled materials** (like cardboard boxes, ropes, fabric, lengths of pipe, or milk crates.). Check with us before you throw something away !

## And last - BUT NOT LEAST - All-Weather Clothing (layers)

Clothing is an important part of an outdoor school - particularly as weather patterns shift with the changing seasons. A child that is consistently warm and dry throughout the day will be much happier and more likely to fully enjoy the benefits of learning in an outdoor environment than a child that consistently comes unprepared for the day's weather and is often cold and wet; we do live in a rainforest after all ! Remember, too, that each child is different and has an individual tolerance for wet/dry and cold/warm conditions, and depending upon their interests or personality, may naturally engage in activities that challenge the limits of their clothing constantly requiring multiple changes a day (think mud puddles ... deep ones). Each child will have a personal space in their mudrooms to stow their outdoor clothing. It's very important to label everything too as active and sweaty Free Play will often cause children to shed their layers; the names help the items find their way back to you (thanks to our amazing lost and found parent patrol !).

You don't have to invest in new and costly items to keep your child warm. Thrift Stores and online used clothing sites ( facebook marketplace) are great places to look for children's clothing at affordable prices. As our children grow, we will seek ways to facilitate clothing swaps ... any ideas ?

**That's all for now.  
Until next time,**

Q'shintul

Walking Together - which means  
our doors, ears & hearts are always open

Kim (aka Raven)

If your child is absent, could you please contact Tanya, our amazing secretary, nurse and healer so we don't worry about our friends.

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Phaedra is looking for helpers in our new literacy space - "The Owlery" - if you are interested in lending a hand as she organizes our book collections. She's also looking for donations of coloured electrical tape for the labelling of books to support the children's independence.