



HOLDREGE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

January 2011

Reminder—Change in Christmas Break

Due to an added teacher in-service day on Tuesday, January 4, 2011, school will resume for all Holdrege students on Wednesday, January 5, 2011. This is a change from the original calendar. Please be sure to make this change in your schedule.

School will dismiss on Tuesday, December 21 at 1:30 pm for Christmas break.

Dates to Remember

- **Tuesday, Dec. 21:**
Dismissal at 1:30 pm for Christmas Break
- **Tuesday, January 4:**
NO SCHOOL—change from original calendar
- **Wednesday, January 5:**
School resumes
- **Friday, March 4:**
NO SCHOOL-Spring Break
- **Monday, March 7:**
Dismiss at 1:30 pm
- **Tuesday, March 8**
Dismiss at 1:30 pm-
Parent/Teacher Conf.
4-8 pm (CHANGE)
- **Wednesday, March 9:**
Dismiss at 1:30 pm-
Parent/Teacher Conf.
2-6 pm
- **Thursday, March 10 &
Friday, March 11:**
NO SCHOOL-Spring
Break

Mailing address for all elementary schools:

PO Box 2002
Holdrege, NE 68949

Phone Numbers:

Washington: 995-4339

Franklin: 995-4269

R-7: 995-6179

Holdrege Public Schools
Website:

www.thedusters.org

School Closings

If school needs to be closed due to weather, local news media will be notified and Blackboard Connect will be used to contact student households. If possible, school personnel will make a decision to be broadcast on the 10pm news. However, a decision the night before is not always possible due to arising or deteriorating conditions during the night. A decision will be made during the early morning and the media will be notified as soon as possible.

Please make a plan with your children as to what to do or where to go if school has to be closed early with little warning. It is a concern that students do not know what to do in such a situation. Phone calls and messages are difficult to dispatch at this time. It helps if your child has an idea of what he/she is to do in these situations ahead of time.

Dibels Testing

During the month of December, teachers tested students on their reading skills using DIBELS, which stands for Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. The first tests were done in August, so staff will be able to see how students have improved in the past three months, and identify areas where students need extra assistance.



Toys at School

We know that many children are excited to show their friends what they received for Christmas and want to bring those toys to school. If students bring a toy for show and share, they will need to leave it in their backpack until it's time to bring it out in class with the teacher's permission. Students will not be allowed to take toys out at recess to play with. Also, we encourage students not to bring expensive items; please remember that we are not responsible for lost or stolen items. As outlined in Section 8 in the Student/Parent Handbook:

“Students, not the school, are responsible for their personal property. Students are cautioned not to bring large amounts of money or items of value to school. If it is necessary to bring valuable items or more money than is needed to pay for lunch, leave the money or valuables with a staff member in the school office for temporary safe-keeping. Even then, the school is not in a position to guarantee that the student's property will not be subject to loss, theft, or damage.”

Changes??

Have you had a change to your home phone, cell phone, or workplace? Please be sure to let your child's school office know so that your information can be updated. It is very important that we have current information so we can reach you if your child becomes sick, there is an emergency, etc.

Illness

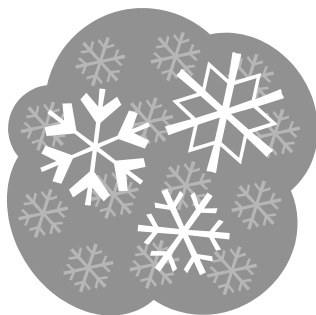
With the colder weather comes an increase in illness. Patsy Johnson, our interim school nurse, reminds all parents that if your child has a fever of 100 or above, flu-like symptoms, vomiting, or diarrhea, he/she needs to stay home from school. Also, if your child has a fever, it needs to be normal without taking Tylenol or ibuprofen (Motrin) for 24 hours before coming back to school. Please consult your Student-Parent Handbook for more detailed information about illnesses and attending school.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent, please let either the office or classroom teacher know as soon as possible. If your child is sick, please call the school office by 8:00 am. Wednesday is the day that we report to Two Rivers Health Department how many students are absent from school due to illness and what the symptoms are. Please let us know your child's symptoms when you call in an absence. Your help is appreciated.

Student Safety in Crosswalks

When you are dropping off or picking up students at Franklin or Washington, please watch for children using the crosswalks and do not stop in the crosswalks to drop off or pick up your child. This makes it unsafe for children who use the crosswalks and other cars can't see children who might be crossing if a car is blocking the crosswalk.



Pets

We understand that some students like to share their pets with their classmates as show and tell. However, due to health and safety issues that can arise when an animal, bird, or reptile is brought into the school building/classroom, our School Nurse, Patsy Johnson, asks that no pets be brought to school. This is following the Attack on Asthma guidelines for Nebraska. Thank you for your cooperation.

Car Safety

The staff at Holdrege Public Schools cares about the safety and well-being of our students, both in school and out. As a friendly reminder, we are sharing with families the guidelines for carseats and booster seats from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) when children are riding in vehicles.

- Rear-facing seats: in the back seat from birth to at least 1 year old and at least 20 pounds.
- Forward-facing seats: in the back seat from age 1 and 20 pounds to about age 4 and 40 pounds.
- Booster seats: in the back seat from about age 4 to at least age 8, unless 4'9" tall.
- Safety belts: at age 8 and older or taller than 4'9". All children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat.

Student Behavior at Sporting Events

Now that the winter sports season is in full swing, we would appreciate if you would talk to your child about their behavior at basketball games, wrestling matches and other activities. We would like students to come to these events to support the teams competing. We do not, however, want them to come to events and run around all of the time. For the safety of your child and out of respect for all those attending, please encourage your child to watch the athletes and show positive sportsmanship.

In the Classroom...

Mrs. Dannehl—Media—R-7, Washington, & Franklin

Have you caught the reading bug yet? “Catch the Reading Bug” is the theme in the media center this year. While reading fiction and nonfiction books students have learned many interesting facts about penguins, bats, spiders, and snakes. The kindergarten and first graders have also been enjoying books written by Eric Carle, Tedd Arnold, Kevin Henkes, and Laura Numeroff. The second graders learned how to use a general encyclopedia. Students were given a person, place, and thing to find in the encyclopedia. They found their subject in the correct volume and shared three interesting facts. The third graders practiced their dictionary skills. We reviewed guide words and what the entry of a word can tell us. Parts of speech, syllables, multiple definitions, and the plural form of the words were discussed. In computer class students learned how to use Word and PowerPoint. Ask your third grader about their All About Me PowerPoint. Fourth graders had fun learning about atlases and what information can be found in one. We also went online to find places at www.worldatlas.com and <http://maps.google.com>. In computer class we reviewed Word and created a PowerPoint on a state they researched in their classroom. Students learned how to add a hyperlink and an audio file to enhance their presentation.

Earlier in the year all students learned about internet safety. They took a pledge that they wouldn't share any personal information, meet with anyone in person that they had met online, and if anything makes you feel scared or uncomfortable always tell a trusted adult. I will continue to reinforce these ideas during the year. To help keep your kids safe at home I recommend the FREE online program offered by Norton. The web address is: <https://onlinefamily.norton.com/familysafety/loginStart.fs>. Sign up for the free account and follow the directions. You can monitor the web and set up filters, social networking, set time limits, and much more. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at school or by my school email: sdannehl@esull.org. I have used this at home with my three children for over a year. It will help protect your children when they are on the internet.

Mrs. Williams/Mrs. Janssen—2nd Grade—R7

The second graders at R-7 have been busy this school year. In December, the students read the traditional Christmas book, *The Night Before Christmas*, to practice their reading skills. The students found a lot of new words that they could learn and used clues from the story and the dictionaries to find their meanings. After rereading it to gain fluency, they were ready to take it home and read it to their family over Christmas break. What a fun way to practice reading skills and celebrate the holiday season! All of the word work they've been doing this school year helped them be successful readers with this story. Another Christmas activity was completed during Writers' Workshop time in December. The students read examples of quatrain poems and identified the characteristics of that type of poem. They each chose a Christmas topic and wrote their own quatrain poem about it. Using the *Six Traits of Writing* process, the students completed a wonderful Christmas poem for their parents. The students also presented a wonderful Christmas program at The Tassel on December 7 for all to enjoy. December was a busy and fabulous month in second grade!

Mrs. Komenda—Resource—R7

Wow, where did the 1st semester go? It is hard to believe it is January 2011. With the start of the 2010-2011 school year, reading was the focus for all of us. I decided that we needed a theme to get us all motivated for improving reading for all students. So with that, Mrs. Klein and I decided we would get "On Track Towards Reading"! We have been working along with the teachers using the classroom materials. It seems to be helping and it allows the students to still feel like they are involved with their class; they are just receiving a little extra help. As we begin 2nd semester, we will continue to focus on reading and meeting the needs of all students. Please continue to read with your child at home and watch them grow as strong readers.

Right: Mrs. Komenda helps encourage her students to get "On Track Towards Reading" with a train in her room.

