



KELSET Elementary School

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MEDICAL ALERT - REMINDER, January 14, 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Last year, a child currently in Grade Five at our school was diagnosed with a type of childhood cancer (Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia). We hope this letter can help support your child in understanding this child's unique experience and help us to keep her healthy now that she is back at school.

Cassidy Boland is currently in remission and is receiving low dose chemotherapy called Long Term Maintenance, until March of 2015. While her immune system is strong enough that she is permitted to attend school most days, she is still immune suppressed, so certain precautions are in place. We appreciate that Cassidy's parents prepared this summary for us to share with you. We are delighted to see Cassidy back at school and doing so well!

Chicken pox and other viruses: If your child presents any symptoms of the chicken pox, please inform the school immediately. The hospital would urgently administer a serum to Cassidy that would help to protect her. This virus is life threatening for a person with a compromised immune system. The chemotherapy has nullified all of her childhood vaccinations therefore, she is an unvaccinated child. While we realize that many parents choose this for their children, for a child with a compromised immune system, the viruses that boosters protect against are very dangerous. Therefore, **if you are aware of any other viruses that may be in the school such as measles, please notify the office immediately.**

Hand washing: Please encourage effective hand washing when at school as well as at home. Please remind children to avoid touching their faces and to cough or sneeze in a tissue or in their arm. These are simple ways to decrease the spread of germs and limit the exposure for Cassidy and others.

For children who wonder: Cassidy is in remission. This means that the chemotherapy made the cancer go away. The medicines she takes now are to keep the cancer away. She has a weakened immune system but she is strong enough to return to school. Students may notice some changes in Cassidy which will lessen over time: reduced mobility and stamina and loss of hair (her hair is now growing back.)

Some information about childhood cancer: It is considered relatively rare. It is estimated that less than 2% of all cancer cases occur in childhood. You may wish to tell your child that cancer is not contagious and is not the result of doing anything wrong. If your child has any questions that you feel unable to answer, please feel free to call the oncology staff and Victoria General Hospital at (250)727-4258 or (250)727-4449. Ask for Sarah or Ann.

When a child with cancer is well enough during or after treatment, they are encouraged to return back to school. Returning to school for children and their family members is a big part of feeling normal and productive, often giving families a sense of hope for the future.

For any parents or children who would like to see a more personal account of Cassidy's cancer fighting journey, please go to the website cassiesgrace.com