



Winter Recess: Introducing the Polar Bear Club

As winter arrives, we must prepare for the challenge of indoor recess. The Calgary Board of Education's inclement weather guidelines recommend keeping students indoors when the temperature, including windchill, drops to -20°C or colder.

In past years, students stayed in their classrooms during these cold days, playing games or watching videos. However, extended periods indoors often impact their ability to focus and engage with academic tasks. Recess plays a vital role in a child's day, offering opportunities for fresh air, exercise, play, and social-emotional regulation.

To better support our students, we are excited to launch the **Polar Bear Club** this winter. This initiative allows students to enjoy recess outdoors in colder temperatures, provided they are dressed appropriately for the weather and they have returned this letter signed by a parent/guardian.

What is Proper Winter Attire?

Students must wear the following to participate in Polar Bear Recess:

- Winter jacket
- Snow pants
- Socks
- Mittens or gloves
- Toque
- Face covering, neck tube or scarf
- Winter boots

Through this initiative, students will also learn about layering and dressing for winter conditions to ensure they stay warm and safe.

Types of Recess

To address Alberta's unpredictable weather, we will follow a three-tier approach to recess:

1. **Regular Outdoor Recess:** When weather conditions are safe for full outdoor play.
2. **Inside Recess:** When extreme cold or other unsafe conditions prevent outdoor play.

3. **Polar Bear Recess:** When temperatures are below -20°C but safe for short, supervised outdoor play if students are properly dressed.

Important Notes for Families

- Staff will monitor for proper winter attire and provide extra gear if needed and available.
- Morning supervision begins at 8:15 a.m. Please avoid dropping off students earlier than this time.
- Students will have snack breaks before and after recess to ensure they stay bundled during outdoor play, reduce choking risks, and minimize playground litter.
- Ensure your child is dressed for all weather conditions. If your child has a medical condition that affects outdoor activity, please inform their teacher or the school office.

If a student is not dressed appropriately for Polar Bear Recess, they will remain indoors for supervised activities.

This new initiative aims to balance learning and play while building resilience in our students. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school office. We look forward to seeing our students enjoy the fresh air all winter long!

Sincerely,

Patrick Murphy

Principal, New Brighton School

Polar Bear Club Permission Form

My child _____ in grade _____ has my permission to participate in the Polar Bear Club Recesses as outlined in the letter above. I understand my child will only be allowed to participate if they are dressed appropriately in winter attire.

Parent/guardian name: _____

Signature: _____

Teacher's name: _____

Date: _____