



Student & Parent Handbook 2025-26

Big Lake Elementary School

PO. Box 70, Big Lake, BC V0L 1G0

Phone: **250.243.2255**

On Facebook: @biglakeelementary

School Hours of Operation:

8:00 am	Classes Begin
9:30 - 9:45 am	Recess
11:45 – 12:30 pm	Lunch
2:00 pm	Classes Dismissed

Big Lake Elementary - Mission, Vision, and Values

MISSION

Working collaboratively in an environment which promotes both confidence and excellence, we will enable students to develop a lifelong enthusiasm for learning and a caring, inclusive attitude toward our community and the world.

VISION

Our vision is to unlock the full potential of every student. In pursuit of this vision, our school is committed to inspiring life-long learners, fostering a student-centered thinking culture, providing a safe, inclusive learning environment, and welcoming parent and community involvement.

VALUES

The school values form the word BEAVERS relating to our long-time mascot.
Beautiful – Energetic – Artistic – Visible – Excellence – Respect – Sportsmanship



School District 27 – Cariboo Chilcotin Mission, Vision, Values



Big Lake Elementary Staff Directory:

Principal & Teacher: Ms. Sari Small – sari.small@sd27.bc.ca

Secretary: Mrs. Cindy Swan - cindy.swan@sd27.bc.ca

Teacher: Mme Michelle Roberts – michelle.roberts@sd27.bc.ca

Teacher: Ms Heard – darci.heard@sd27.bc.ca

Education Aide & Library: Mrs. Katie Chaffee

Education Aide: Ms. Jessika Woods

Playgroup: Mrs. Shay Dyer

Bus Driver: Mrs. Andrea MacDonald

Custodian: Mrs. Peggy Gleason

District Specialist/Contacts:

Speech and Language Teacher –Mrs. Rilla Temple

Counselor – TBD

Occupational Therapist – Mrs. Carole Anne King

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC)

The Big Lake PAC is an active group of parents who support school initiatives through volunteering, organizing activities and fundraising. All parents are welcome and encouraged to join PAC. Meetings are held once a month. Elections of the executive (President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer) are held annually in the Fall.

Please Note: Our Code of Conduct can be found in the front of the Student Planner and on our Website.

Big Lake Elementary School Expectations

Communication:

Newsletters/Communication

A school newsletter (and calendar) will be sent home or posted to the Big Lake Pages of the School District Website at least monthly notifying parents of school and school district news items. Please phone or email if you have information to include in the newsletter that is school related. The school Facebook page is used to post information, reminders and *sometimes* to share photos and celebrations. Find us on Facebook - Big Lake Elementary School.

Attendance/Lates and Absences

It is the responsibility of each parent/guardian to provide a note or contact the school prior to, or on the day of, a student's absence to inform the school as to the reason for the absence. If phoning, please leave a message on the answering machine. Messages will be checked daily: before school, at lunch, and after school. It's also acceptable to email Ms. Small **and** respective teacher (email addresses are on page 2). If you know your child(ren) have an upcoming absence, please let us know as early as you can. Students who are regularly late miss experiential learning opportunities that can often not be made up, as well as our morning circle which is the foundation of our community-building. If late arrival is persistent, please contact us so we can support you.

Extended Absences

Students absent from school for an extended period of time due to illness or injury may be provided with work that can be done during their absence in order to maintain their course standing.

Visitors' Procedures

At Big Lake Elementary, we believe it is important to have a warm and welcoming school with open lines of communication. Our staff does it's best to remain available and reachable for parents. Please call ahead of time to make an appointment to meet with a teacher or administration.

If you are picking up your child before regular dismissal, the teacher, principal or secretary should be informed.

Telephone Calls

Students are permitted to use the office telephone before and after school, at recess and lunch, with an adults' permission. Using the telephone during class time is not encouraged unless an emergency occurs. We discourage students from using the phone to make last minute after-school arrangements. Visitors should check with a staff member if they need to use the telephone.

Volunteers In Schools

Adults volunteering in the school or chaperoning school fieldtrips are asked to complete a criminal record check. The criminal record check can be completed online at:

<https://justice.gov.bc.ca/criminalrecordcheck>

- Access code: 8PXZL5DNZ3

Volunteers are required to sign in at the office upon arrival. In case of emergency, it is very important that the office has an accurate list of people in the building. In the case of an emergency, volunteers are required to follow emergency procedures set by the school and meet by the Hall and report to the school secretary or designate.

Family involvement

Under the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection Act and/or other relevant legislation, it may be necessary to advise other parties of serious breaches of the Student Code of Conduct. Big Lake Elementary School's Code of Conduct was established to ensure each child and staff member's safety. We ask for student and parental support in honouring our commitment to ensuring the safest learning environment for all. Parents can help in the following ways:

1. Discuss the Code of Conduct with your child.
2. Be in close contact with your child's teacher.
3. Should you have any further questions, please phone the school 250-243-2255.

Special considerations may apply to students with diverse needs if these students are unable to comply with a code of conduct due to having a disability of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional or behavioural nature.

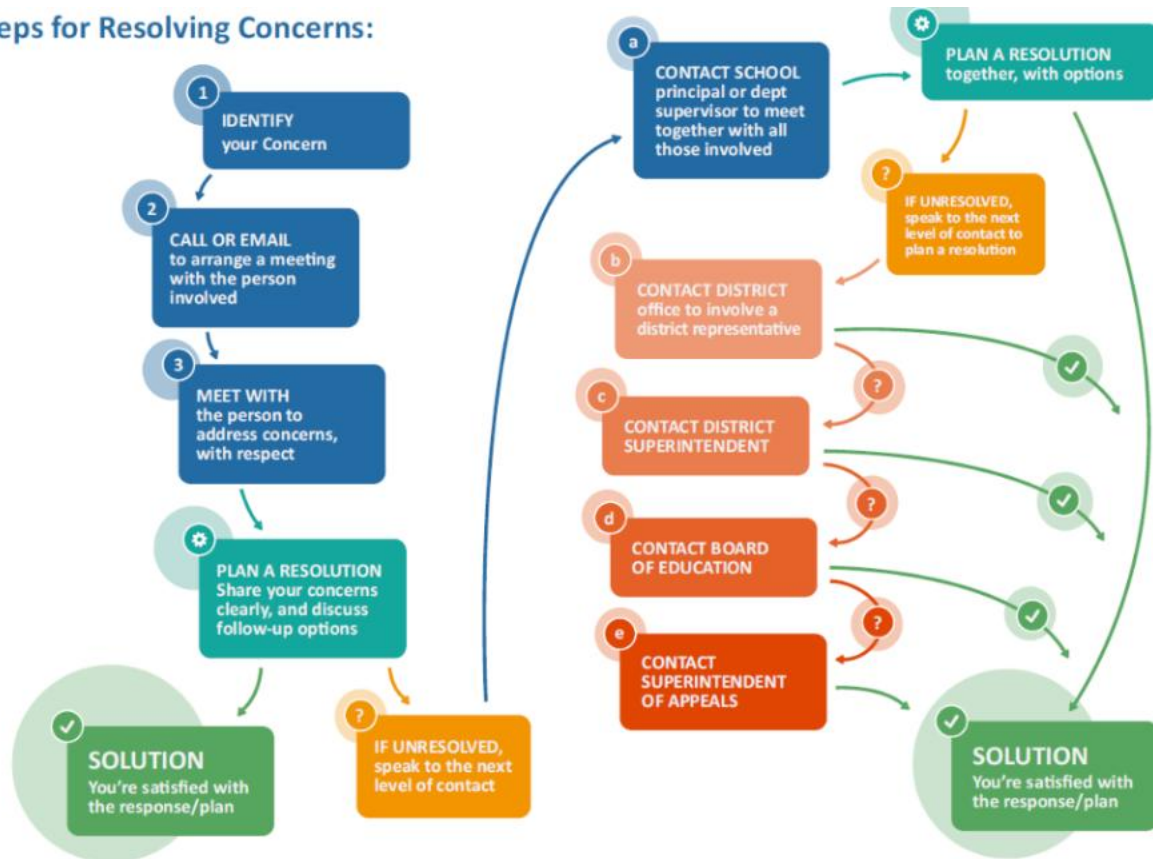
Steps To Resolve Concerns

Our school district has a process to help parents and caregivers resolve a concern at school. The full guide can be found on the district website under the Students & Families tab and linked here : [Steps To Resolve Conflict](#). We always encourage parents and students to speak directly with those involved. This could mean speaking to your teacher, staff member, administrator, or school counsellor when an issue arises.

Guidelines for how we interact with each other:

- Begin at the school level first and attempt to discuss things directly with those involved.
- Focus on the students' needs and wellbeing.
- Be respectful with one another.
- Clarify the issues: What is needed? What are some options for solutions?
- Seek to understand each other through listening. Each person has a right to be heard.
- Bring a support person to your meeting, if you desire, but let everyone know who is attending.
- Set up a plan of action and expectations, with times/dates and follow-up.

Steps for Resolving Concerns:



Equipment and Resources:

School Supplies

Please send \$40 per student early in the school year for school supplies. Students will need a large backpack, a full change of clothes (something to change into in case of the need arising, clearly labelled with their name - in a bag) and non-marking indoor running shoes they can easily change into independently. They should also have their own headphones for using with electronic devices. Please contact the school if you need support with school supplies or

School/Library Property

During the school year, students may be issued with textbooks and other school resource materials. They also have access to library books. Students are expected to care for the materials and return them in good condition. Students will be charged for damaged or lost items.

Lost and Found

Unclaimed items found in hallways, classrooms and the playground are placed in the Lost and Found box. Please ask your child to check through the box regularly to see if any items belong to your family.

Leadership Opportunities:

Citizenship Group

The students in Grades 5, 6 & 7 will have a chance to participate in a leadership program where they may sign-up for different leadership opportunities. Mrs. Chaffee's Citizenship Group is responsible for planning and running some school activities as well as acting as mentors for other students. They also

will do some fundraising throughout the year to support both their school and other charitable ventures. They meet with the student body to best represent them and work with the staff to turn ideas into events and activities.

Health and Safety Issues:

Healthy Eating Active Living

Big Lake Elementary encourages healthy eating and active living through nutrition education, food programs and physical activities. Planning for “garbage free” lunches is one way to ensure healthy eating & snacking. We support an energetic lifestyle resulting from exercise and good dietary habits, as well as daily activity. There is a Healthy Schools Policy in place in our school district www.sd27.bc.ca. The school often provides a healthy snack in the morning to foster healthy eating habits. Sharing of food from home is discouraged because of nutrition and allergy concerns.

Drinks

What we drink has a significant impact on our health. We encourage healthy drink choices. Healthy drinks do important jobs for children’s growing bodies, like providing hydration or supplying nutrients like vitamins and minerals. Healthy drinks provide these benefits without giving children too much sugar. Teachers will talk to their class about healthy drink choices with the aim of helping students to adopt healthy lifestyle choices. We ask that parents/caregivers **do not send sugary drinks** such as energy drinks or pop to school. More information to help educate students about healthy choices can be found at Sip Smart BC

Medical Room

Students who become ill at school are to report to the teacher, who may refer the child to the office/principal. The parent/guardian will be contacted and arrangements made for them to go home.

Allergies

If your child has any allergies, it is important to note it on the school registration/verification form. If your child has a life-threatening allergy a school plan will be developed and posted in the office and staff room and everyone on staff will be made aware of procedures. Please contact the school immediately if your child develops any allergies during the school year.

Allergy Aware

In respect of scent sensitivity and allergic reactions please refrain from bringing or wearing cologne/perfume or strong deodorants to school. Peanut, tree nut and other food allergies are also common and can be life threatening. Please contact your classroom teacher to be advised of any allergies and follow the classroom protocols when sending lunches. Classroom teachers will put notifications and reminders in their classroom memos regarding food restrictions and other preventative measures that will help reduce the risk of exposure both inside and outside of the classroom.

Student Medication at School

If your child is taking medication that needs to be administered by school staff during the school day, please contact the school office. We will give the parent the district form that needs to be completed by a doctor with procedures on administration of medication. This form must be completed by the physician and returned to the office before medication will be given by staff. When medication is

administered at school the medication is kept in a secure location in the office and each dose is documented. Do not send your child to school with medication in their backpacks or lunch kits as this could pose a risk to child safety to your child or their classmates.

Cold Weather Policy

School buses may not run if the temperature where the bus is parked is too cold, or if the road conditions are extreme. Unless directed otherwise, the school will remain open even when buses do not run. Parents can get bus information from the local radio station, the School District website or the bus garage (398-3881). A phone tree is sent home with the students in September each year to be used to alert parents in the event the elementary bus is not running. Contact the school if you need additional copies of the phone tree.

In Day/Out Day Policy

Students are expected to be outside before school, during recess, and at lunch. On days when the weather is particularly cold or wet, students will stay indoors and play quietly in classrooms. Many factors, such as windchill, contribute to the decision to have an “Inside” day. There is no set temperature for when this occurs; the decision is made at the discretion of the principal. We recognize that outdoor time is important for students’ well-being and contributes to their ability to self-regulate. On cold days, the principal may choose to shorten outdoor time to ensure students get some fresh air while also staying safe and comfortable. We encourage students to dress appropriately for the weather by wearing layered clothing, warm coats, and suitable footwear, ensuring they can be outside comfortably. The school understands that winter clothing can be expensive and is happy to assist families in providing necessary outdoor apparel.

Early Closure/Non-Scheduled School Closures

In the event of an unforeseen situation such as a power outage or extreme weather condition, school may be let out early. In this event, school personnel will contact parents/guardians or emergency contacts. All children will remain at the school or Community Hall with staff until arrangements have been made to ensure someone is at home or at the bus stop to meet the students.

Duty to Report

School staff are legally required under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* and by SD 27 policy to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Failing to do so is a serious offence. Reports are made directly to the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Staff do not investigate or make judgments about validity; they are obligated to report concerns or disclosures. We understand this process can be stressful for families. The principal will work with families and community partners as needed to support the child’s best interests while maintaining trust and care.

Student Threat Assessment Protocol: Fair Notice

All schools in SD 27 comply with the Safe School Initiative, which is a violence threat/risk assessment protocol. On our website under Code of Conduct please read the Fair Notice document which contains detailed information regarding the student threat assessment protocol. The school will work in partnership with community agencies including the RCMP as necessary for the safety of our school.

Emergency Procedures:

Drills

A minimum of 6 fire drills will be conducted throughout the school year. Students will receive instructions from staff as to the procedures. 2 Lockdown drills will also be practiced.

Emergency Response Plan

In the event the school must be evacuated because of fire, bomb or bomb threat, or an earthquake, the students and staff will meet in the parking lot by the Hall. Attendance will be taken and the Principal will ensure that all students are outside the school. Students will then be moved to the Big Lake Community Hall beside the school and calls will be made to parents/guardians to arrange for pick up of students. It is very important to have current home, work and emergency contact numbers on file in the event of an emergency situation. Fire, earthquake, and intruder drills will be held during the school year and students will receive instructions from staff on procedures that must be followed.

Conduct:

Playground Expectations

Students are expected to play in a safe manner and refrain from any activity where there is a risk of injury to oneself or another student. The hands-off rule applies in all situations, including play fighting or wrestling, tackling, lifting students off the ground or piggy-backing, and so on. Students are also reminded that there is no throwing of any items such as toys, sticks, snow, rocks, or dirt at anyone or at school property. Students are to be mindful of language and speak in a school appropriate and respectful manner suited to all ages. It is also expected that students listen to the supervising adults and respect their decisions regarding safe play and boundaries.

Field and Athletic Trips

While a student is away on a school sponsored trip, he/she is subject to the Code of Conduct and all policies, rules and regulations of Big Lake Elementary School and School District # 27 (Cariboo-Chilcotin).

Drugs and Alcohol

District Policy dictates that a first offence of suspicion, possession or being under the influence of drugs/alcohol will result in a 10 day suspension and a second offence an indefinite suspension. Legal sanctions related to drug/alcohol infractions are doubled in drug free zones.

Dress Code

Students are to wear comfortable clothing that is appropriate in a business-like and family friendly environment. This includes clothing that is non-disruptive, and free from offensive or discriminatory imagery, slogans, or wording. Hats and clothing associated with groups that promote discriminatory beliefs or practices are not permitted.

To help keep our school clean students will be asked to keep a pair of indoor shoes at school. Students are required to remove outdoor footwear when they enter the building. Recommendation for indoor footwear is a pair of running shoes with non-marking soles. Hats will not be permitted in school assemblies and or other special events.

Tobacco Use

The school acknowledges the harmful effects from the smoking and chewing of tobacco products. The use of tobacco products is prohibited on school property. Warnings will not be issued as the use of tobacco products on school grounds is now a legal issue. Students will be given a three day suspension upon the first incident. Any further incidents will result in indefinite suspensions.

Weapons

The possession or use of weapons at school will automatically result in an indefinite suspension. Such weapons may include but not be limited to knives, firearms, laser pointers, explosives and similar items.

Harassment

Harassment is an unwelcome comment or conduct that may lead to adverse or negative consequences for the victim of harassment. In a school setting it can lead to unnecessary conflicts or student feeling unsafe or unwelcome in their classes or hallways. Harassment, or other forms of bullying, is often excused as teasing, but harassment is enjoyed only by the harasser. It is never acceptable. The ONLY judge of whether behaviour is unwelcome is the person on the receiving end. Under all circumstances, unwelcome harassing behaviour is inappropriate. It may also be illegal. In the case of sexual harassment it may be criminal. Please contact the school if there is an issue or concern that needs to be investigated.

Appropriate Language

Students are expected to express themselves in a positive, courteous manner. The use of coarse or abusive language is inappropriate at all times in or around the school. The use of 'please' and 'thank you' is encouraged, at all times, as a matter of courtesy.

Vandalism

Willful destruction of public or private property cannot be condoned. The costs of such damage will be the responsibility of the student/parent/guardian.

Internet Misuse

Any behavior that is in violation of SD27 Policy #5780 (www.sd27.bc.ca). Misuse includes, but is not limited to, the use of email or material posted to a website or sites to threaten or harass others, viewing or posting of indecent or obscene website content or attempts to disrupt network or computer operations. Students are directed to contact the teacher/principal if they are in doubt about any situation that may constitute Internet misuse.

Safe Transportation of Students:

Bus Students

All bus students must be registered on all bus routes they ride and are not permitted to ride a bus they are not registered on. For safety reasons, in the case of an unforeseen event, we must have accurate information regarding ridership. Students must abide by the Bus Conduct Rules as set down by the School District and failure to do so will result in appropriate consequences, which could include restricted access to riding the bus. The rules and expectations on the bus are in place to ensure students safety. All students riding the school bus are expected to sit with their bottom on the seat, face in the forward direction with feet inside the seating area (not in the aisle), remain seated while the bus is moving, refrain from putting any object or body part outside the windows and to be respectful of all other students around them. If students are not behaving safely and/or acting in a respectful manner the principal or designate will be notified, and the appropriate consequences as laid out in this code will be issued at school in support of safe ridership.

Bus Safety

- The bus driver is in charge of the vehicle and the students. It is expected that students will be courteous and obey instructions promptly.
- At bus stops and at school, students will line up and proceed towards the bus, onto the bus, or off the bus only when given permission by the driver.
- Courtesy and respect among passengers is expected. Disruptive behavior (including throwing objects) and/or excessive noise disturb the safe operation of the bus and will not be tolerated.
- Respect for property is expected. Vandalism or willful damage to a bus will result in removal of bus privileges.
- Students must remain seated at all times while the bus is in motion. Personal belongings as well as heads and arms must be kept inside the bus.
- Objects that may cause injury (skates or other sports equipment) must be safely packaged.

Disciplinary Actions for Violation of Bus Rules

- Driver warns student and may report matter to Transportation Supervisor who will inform principal.
- Transportation Supervisor warns student, contacts parent by telephone followed by a letter with copy to principal.
- Transportation Supervisor suspends student, informs parent by telephone and letter regarding suspension of bus privileges, with copy to principal.
- Disciplinary actions will be documented.

Student Safety – Student Pick-up From School

Teachers will only release students to school staff or to a parent/guardian they know. If someone else will be picking up your child, please call the school ahead of time to let us know. If an unexpected person arrives to pick up a student and we haven't heard from you, the principal or designate will keep your child at school until we're able to reach you directly to confirm the arrangement.

Transportation to and from School

- When parents/guardians are picking their child(ren) up from school, they do NOT need a note. For the safety of your child(ren), please make sure that school staff knows that you have your child(ren).
- Your child(ren)'s safety is of the utmost concern and in the event that parents/legal guardians have an emergent situation and are thus not available and are unable to make anyone else aware of their situation, the school will phone the person(s) designated on your "Emergency Contact Sheet" to pick up your child(ren) from school at any point during the school day.
- During field trips, it is NOT necessary to have a note or have your vehicle's insurance/driver's license on file at the school to pick up YOUR OWN child(ren). Refer to the next section below about transportation of other students.
- On a school field trip, if you want another person to pick up your child(ren) please read the following *Regulation* found in the *School District 27 Policy and Regulation Manual*:
*Approval for transportation of students by means other than a District school bus shall be given only where the approving principal is satisfied that the driver of any vehicle used in the transportation of students has adequate insurance, a valid drivers' license, that the vehicle is in an adequate state of repair, vehicle registration is current, that the tires on the vehicle are appropriate for the time of the year and the weather and that the **Driver Information form is completed**. The Driver Information form will be kept at the school for two years.*

Transportation of Students in Private Vehicles

If parents or other adults are transporting students in a private vehicle, a Volunteer Driver Application form must be filled out and kept on file at the school. The driver's license and insurance must also be checked to insure proper liability and requirements. The Principal or designate must check the physical condition of the vehicle, specifically looking at seatbelts and tires. It is the responsibility of the Principal to determine if road conditions are safe. This is a mandatory policy.

The responsibilities of parent volunteers are:

- To maintain confidentiality at all times
- To familiarize themselves with posted escape routes in case of emergency
- To conduct themselves in a manner befitting a school environment and in accordance with the school Code of Conduct
- To provide the school with a Criminal Record check (this can be done online, info. available at the school)

Reporting Student Progress:

Reporting

Formal written reports are done in December, March & June. There are also two informal opportunities for communicating student learning which occur in the Fall and in the Spring.

Student Support Services:

School District 27 provides support services for students. If a student is having difficulties, a referral can be made to the School Based Team. Strategies to assist the student are then put in place. A referral may be made to Student Support Services for further support.

Our school is an inclusive space and provides learning assistance to help all students in areas of need. Support for specific learning needs will be provided by our teachers and principal allowing a more integrated approach and creating more relevance for the student. The Elementary School Counsellor works out of Williams Lake and is assigned to our school on a crisis intervention basis. Please contact the principal if you require more information regarding student support services.