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### The Way We Approach Holidays at WRS

As we approach Halloween and other winter holidays I want to share with families the way we address holidays at WRS. Our goal at WRS is to make our students' learning environment and schedule as consistent as possible. As you know, when schedules and routines are vastly different, children don't cope with that well. Some classroom teachers may choose to have a very low-key party on Tuesday, October 31st in honor of Halloween. (These teachers will notify you.) However, ***we don't allow kids to wear costumes, face paint or any other distracting clothing.*** For children who celebrate Halloween, there's already plenty of excitement and anticipation without adding more to it by wavering too far from their regular school day.

Thanksgiving: Our school holds a luncheon at which the entire student body and staff enjoy a meal together, family style. We cannot open this up to the whole school community since we simply don't have the resources or space for that. However, we are seeking volunteers to assist with setting up the dining hall (gym), clearing the dining hall and with washing dishes after the meal. *Please contact Mrs. Taber if you wish to volunteer and put "Thanksgiving Luncheon - volunteer" in the subject line and let her know which duty you're willing to assist with. We typically need about 10 volunteers.*

December holidays (Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, etc...) We approach this very similarly to Halloween. Some teachers will hold a simple party or gathering but we do not have gift exchanges or display decorations. We find that this promotes too much pressure on students and families. Our students will learn about various holidays and the ways that people celebrate them. Additionally, they will learn songs for our winter concert that are seasonal as well as songs that are specifically linked to religious holidays that are celebrated in December.

### Parent Teacher Conferences Next Week!

By now, you should be aware that the first trimester is coming to an end and that parent/teacher conferences are scheduled for November 2nd and 3rd. Students will be released two hours early on November 2nd to allow teachers to meet with families. Please make every effort to schedule and attend these important meetings. As I've said before, you know your child better than we do and your insight is valuable in helping school staff make educational planning decisions. These two days are designated for teachers to meet with you and it is difficult for them to find time to reschedule when these appointments are missed. [This](#) website has some really good information related to this topic.

**PLEASE NOTE: IF YOU MUST CANCEL YOUR APPOINTMENT, PLEASE EMAIL YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER. THE OFFICE WILL NOT BE COVERED ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND AFTER 4:00 PM OR ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD. MRS. TABER WON'T BE AVAILABLE TO TAKE YOUR CALL AND I WILL BE IN MEETINGS.**

### Request from Norwich Holiday Helpers - Peaches or Pears

"As we have done in the past, we would like to ask the children and families in your school to help the Hartford Norwich Holiday Basket Helpers program collect canned and dried fruit for the senior fruit baskets. We will distribute over 155 identical fruit baskets on December 9th to Seniors in need that live in Hartford and Norwich. Please stress that we need *single serving size* - not the large economy size cans. As well, if anyone would like to help with the assembly or delivery of the baskets, we are always in need of volunteers. Our goal is to collect as many cans as possible so our limited cash resources don't have to be used to buy what is not collected. We will then be able to provide more money on a grocery food card included in the fruit basket. The seniors are so appreciative for receiving a basket, made possible

because of the generosity of your students and their families.” Their website: [holidaybasketsvt.org](http://holidaybasketsvt.org) and inquiries can be sent to [info@holidaybasketsvt.org](mailto:info@holidaybasketsvt.org). We will be dropping off the boxes November 1 and will pick them up December 4 or 5. Delivery of the baskets to Seniors this year will be December 9th.

#### Update on CHaD Hero Penny Drive

Thanks to the generosity of our WRS school community we were able to contribute a significant donation to the Children's' Hospital at Dartmouth. Mrs. Mamroe B.A.T. club coach writes: “Thank you all for supporting the BAT team coin drive. We raised \$152.60 from students. Other contributions brought out total to \$347.60. With the donor matching by Finding Our Stride and Positive Track, we raised close to \$1000 for Children's Hospital at Dartmouth!”

#### Relocation Drill Held Today

As part of the HSD Safety protocols today we practiced a fire drill immediately followed by a relocation drill to Dancers' Corner. If ever there was a reason to evacuate WRS we would have a fire drill and relocate to Dancers' Corner until the HFD and HPD assessed the situation and made decisions about whether to remain at Dancers' Corner, go back to WRS or relocate to another facility in Hartford. It is possible that we would ask parents/guardians to pick up your child early. You would be informed of all of this by Superintendent DeBalsi using our automated messaging systems. THIS IS ANOTHER REASON WHY IT IS CRITICAL TO UPDATE YOUR PHONE NUMBER/EMAIL. THIS IS ALSO IMPORTANT WITH WINTER APPROACHING.

#### Calendar:

- November 2 - Early Release for students at 12:50 for Parent/Teacher Conferences
- November 3 - Parent Teacher Conferences- no school for students
- November 13<sup>th</sup> – Picture Retake Day!
- November 17<sup>th</sup> – PTA Family Movie Night
- November 30 - WRS Winter Concert @ 6:30 p.m.