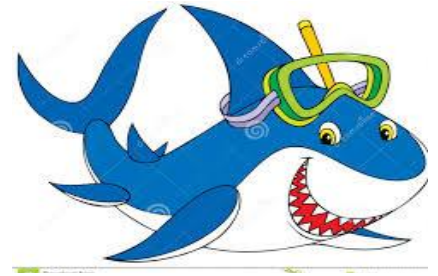


Roger Sherman Elementary School

250 Fern Street

Fairfield, CT 06824

Phone (203) 255-8330



Source: Worldartsme.com

Dr. Ian M. Banner, Principal

The best method of overcoming obstacles is the team method.

– Colin Powell

For: March 2019

Dear Parents and Families:

I tend to try and live by and therefore encourage others to also implement two simple, albeit, general rules: (1) Be nice and (2) work hard. And it is with great pleasure that I share recognition of Sherman's efforts in both of these areas. At our last town meeting, two awards were presented to the Sherman students. Mike Fedak, who manages the non-profit public charity, *Only You*, whose aim it is to support families with special needs, presented the *Team Spirit Award* and the *Mile Challenge Trophy* from their annual 5K and mile kids' run back in September. Sherman students had the most participating students in any of the events (5K and kids' mile run) and had the lowest average time of the top three runners in the mile run, respectively. Bravo to you all for supporting this wonderful cause and we hope for our Sherman students to again bring back both trophies next year and in so doing, show their support for others.

Most recently, the CT State Department of Education released their recognition list of high-growth and/or high-performing schools, and I thrilled to announce that Sherman Elementary was acknowledged as a *School of Distinction*. This is an acknowledgement given to schools that score in the top 10% with respect to the state's Accountability Index (not to be confused as being *only Smarter Balanced Assessment* achievement).

These achievements are recognition of the Sherman community's efforts of being nice (to others) and striving for excellence, and I'd like to express just how proud and thankful I am to be part of this community and team. I'd also like to give credit to the Sherman families and students, as well as the fabulous staff and Mrs. Roxbee for making the aforementioned credits possible.

Stop-Kiss-n-Go

I try to adhere to the practice of considering all viewpoints and information available on any topic in order to be able to take the most appropriate and fitting next step, which unescapably takes a great deal of time and patience. However, in so doing, I find the results to be much more effective and often more sustainable. In fact, I can relate this to the more recent instructional emphases that we place on our students—to adhere to a methodical and patient approach that considers both sides of an argument and to deeply understand, and when necessary, solve issues, all with the goal of becoming thoughtful and informed citizens.

As such, I am aware that there have been many questions and concerns regarding the recently discussed suggestion for parent drop-off/pick-up or Stop-Kiss-n-Go (SKG) scheme that has been under consideration. I want to reiterate that I personally feel the committee has done a tremendous job of exploring and considering *all* possible schemes and ideas and has taken all the pros and cons into account when discussing each one. This has taken a great deal of time, which I feel has been necessary to avoid simply jumping to a conclusion or next step without fully understanding all of the intertwined and embedded challenges; hence, the most recent proposal being disseminated for community feedback.

As I have communicated previously in my monthly newsletters, it is important that you are fully aware of all of the information regarding Phase III renovations that is available and needing to be considered, which includes such items as the SKG, and it is imperative that your views and perspectives are heard. While SKG has recently become a topic of concern for many, I actually think of it as a wonderful opportunity for our community to engage in a dialogue on its evolution—where it was, but now currently is, as well as what it needs to do to navigate through the new realities, all while trying to preserve what it holds dear. This can only be guided by considering the most current information on our school and the challenges our community faces.

Having watched how students arrive at and leave school each day since September, the majority of students do so in a vehicle. In recent calculations (acknowledging that when this current data was collected it was cold), close to 80% are driven either by bus or car. As far back as September, I witnessed firsthand with the police that traffic lined up on Beach Road up to and beyond the island to enter the SKG line, and this was despite many cars dropping off and picking up on Fern street, which according to recent data collection efforts, indicates that almost 10% of our 452 student population is coming to and from school this way. Understandably and inevitably, this information suggests that there are challenges that need to be addressed and possible new methods considered and explored to support students staying safe when coming to and from school.

Exploring a New SKG and Bus Drop Off Plan

There evidently exists a need to consider possible alternatives to the most recent proposal for SKG. While it is the only one that could possibly ease the traffic congestion in many surrounding Sherman areas, it would certainly impact families being able to gather on and around the playground and blacktop before and after school, which the community has expressed is something it holds dear and is part of the unique Sherman experience, such that it is something to be preserved. Last week, I met with Dr. Jones and members of our Central Office staff who have a history on these evolving traffic challenges around our school dating back to a 2010 traffic study that proposed pointers for SKG and bus drop-off. This report firmly believed that parent drop off should be on Fern Street and the buses should enter into and exit from the school—the current SKG route. Because we feel a need to at the very least explore whether or not this would help the current challenges, starting April 1, 2019, we will switch the SKG and bus drop-off and pick-up for the remaining months of school or until the data we collect dictates otherwise. This will provide us with a necessary opportunity to add more information to this dialogue and will help us all and together direct our next steps.

I am currently in the midst of planning all of the critical aspects of this shift and will be meeting with the police and other stakeholders including staff, parents and non-parent neighbors to consider all of the details. This also means that there will follow in the coming weeks communication to clarify the expectations for SKG. Additionally, and in an effort to model to our children the kindness and compassion and courtesy and respect we daily speak of in school and at home, I ask for your patience and for your unwavering commitment to helping us implement this new plan to see how it works.

Until then, I also urge those of you dropping students off on Fern Street to avoid parking, even momentarily in anyone's driveway, and to avoid stopping in the middle of the road and allowing students to run across it. It is not my jurisdiction to manage traffic on streets, and the police have communicated this to us regarding the potential liability of doing so. However, I would be remiss if I did not mention it here and in preparation for what is to come, as going forward, we will rely on the police for managing traffic drop-offs that fall outside of the upcoming communicated and expected plan.

I thank you in advance for your support of this trial and for adhering more strictly to safe and courteous drop-off and pick-up procedures.

Nurse Update

I am happy to inform you that we now have a consistent nurse, Mrs. Nancy Prusak. Nancy has been a registered nurse for 25 years and has worked in the hospital physical rehab unit and spent over 12 years as a Hospice Home Care nurse with the CT Hospice. Also, she has recently managed a rehab unit in a Nursing facility in New Rochelle. This is Nancy's second year as a school nurse serving previously at both Assumption and Dwight prior to joining us here at Sherman. If you have questions for the nurses, please call the nurse's line: 255-8331. If no one picks up, please contact the main office to ensure your message or question is received and addressed.

Start Time Reminders

Mrs. Davis sent out an IC message reminder last month regarding opening times for school on regular and delayed-start days. I have included that same reminder again here:

To ensure student safety, please remember the following regarding morning drop-off:

- The school building opens for students at 8:45 am. Staff members are not contractually available to supervise children before 8:45, which is the reason that students are not permitted to enter the building before then. Therefore, please do not drop children off and leave them unsupervised before 8:45 am.
- This is also the case on a 2-hour delayed openings; students may enter the building at 10:45 am.

School Safety

As a reminder, on the weeks specified below, which may be subject to change, we will be conducting either fire or lockdown drills. During these exercises, students will continue to practice responding to such events under trained faculty direction and in a calm and orderly manner. It’s also an excellent opportunity for the staff to further review and refine our procedures to avoid needing to think in the event that a real emergency does arise and simply act with speed and efficiency.

Month	Week of	Safety Drill
September	31 10-14	Fire drill Lockdown 1 (regular)
October	15-19	Fire drill
November	5-9	Fire drill
December	3-7	Fire drill
January	7-11	Lockdown 2 (drill 2)
February	11-15	Fire drill
March	11-15	Fire drill
April	8-12 22-26	Lockdown 3 (drill 3) Fire drill
May	20-24	Fire drill
June	3-7	Lockdown 4 (drill 4)

Curriculum Notes

PE Update from Coach O and Coach Lovelett

“You can’t exercise your way out of a poor diet”

Focus: Body Management (Gymnastics) K-5 from 3/1 – 3/29

Goal: Balance, Body Awareness, Controlled/Creative Movement

Important Events and Dates

Fire drill	March 11-15. Sometime during the week
School store	Wednesday, March 6 (during lunch)
Early Dismissal (at 1:40)	Tuesday, March 12
Pancake Breakfast	Saturday, March 16
PTA Meeting	Wednesday, March 20 at 9:00 AM
Parent-Teacher Conferences (Afternoon) Early Dismissal (at 1:40)	Conferences (Afternoon) Times for these will be between 1:45pm and 3:40pm
Parent-Teacher Conferences (Evening) Early Dismissal (at 1:40)	Thursday, March 21 (Evening) Times for these conferences will be between 5:00pm and 6:55pm
Sherman Spotlight/Talent Show	Roger Ludlowe Middle School at 5:30
Parent-Teacher Conferences (Afternoon) Early Dismissal (at 1:40)	Thursday, March 28, 2019 (Afternoon) Times for these will be between 1:45pm and 3:40pm

Note. Please also see *SharkBytes* for additional PTA information and events.

A Few FYIs

Because I have been made aware of a number of instances calling for schoolwork for absences, I wanted to inform you of our expectations and plan in such instances. When your child is absent from school, and especially for periods that extend beyond a day or so, I want you to be aware that teachers cannot provide current schoolwork in the absence of providing students with the necessary and associated instruction. The teachers will direct you to have them practice previously learned content, such as writing in their notebook using previously learned crafts or solving previously learned math problems, to name only two possibilities, but for missed work, students will be expected to attend to it once they return to school and after the instruction has been provided.

While this is the expectation, there may be some situations that require a teacher to carefully consider the circumstances of the absence, and when appropriate and necessary, deviate from the aforementioned expectation.

Swing set

I am still awaiting a date from our maintenance department regarding when the new swing set will be installed. I will update you once I hear back, but I know they are waiting for slightly warmer temperatures.

Roger Sherman Building Committee (RSBC)

The committee continues to meet every other Tuesday evening at Town Hall, so feel free to attend and stay abreast of what is happening, as well as be able to ask questions. Additionally, you can stay informed and up-to-date on the committee's work for our Phase III renovations by using this link (<https://www.fairfieldct.org/rsbc>). I also want to make note that Central Air is at the top of the list of items to be prioritized in Phase III, which is both the emphasis I have expressed to the committee on behalf of the students and staff, as well as the for the committee, too. However, central air will not be installed in time for the start of next year, just so you are aware.

Reminders

We encourage you to remain or become familiar with our school's website (<http://fairfieldschools.org/schools/sherm/>), from which you can also access our PTA information, and the district website (<http://fairfieldschools.org>). A great deal of pertinent information can be found at these online locations.

Your Feedback

Let me know what questions you have on these and any other topics, as well as how we're doing. While the staff and I are very busy in the educating of our youngsters (your children), an important and essential element of doing that effectively is having an open and on-going dialogue with you.

Yours truly,

Dr. Ian M. Banner

ibanner@fairfieldschools.org

Follow us on Twitter: @rogershermanllc