

# James Mowat School Family Handbook 2015-2016



**A Community of Excellence**  
James Mowat School

# WELCOME

Welcome to James Mowat School, “A Caring School”. Our mandate is to look after the academic, social, emotional and physical needs of our students during the school day.

The intent of this handbook is to provide you as parents/guardians with information about our school. If any questions arise, please call us as soon as possible. Our school phone number is **780-992-1272**. In addition, we always welcome your suggestions as to how we can improve this handbook.

James Mowat is an elementary school serving students from ECS to grade 6. The school day is broken into 30 minute periods. We offer the regular elementary program with French as a Second Language for 4 periods a week starting in grade 4.

At James Mowat we have started to incorporate the principles of restorative practice in our everyday life. We will be using the principles of restorative practice when dealing with discipline issues as well as incorporating it into our character education program. Our Character Education Program focuses on helping students learn characteristics that will help them to succeed both academically and socially. It also gives a common focus and a common language within the school which is used by the staff and students when discussing school behaviour expectations.

Our Literacy Support Program provides students with small group instruction outside the regular classroom. This may be offered to any students needing literacy support. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities are available for students who choose to participate (examples include choir, safety patrols, school council, track team, intramurals, hand chimes, newspaper club, badminton club, basketball team, chess club, and fantasy club). Information on these activities and events can be found in the monthly newsletters which are posted on our school website.

A Speech Therapist comes to the school once a week to provide assistance to students with speech, language and hearing difficulties.

A nurse from the Health Unit visits the school periodically to provide some care in specific areas (See Public Health Services in this handbook).

# JAMES MOWAT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## MOTTO

“A Caring School”

## VALUES

Integrity  
Inspiration  
Acceptance  
Learning

## OUR MISSION

Our mission as a learning community is to provide  
Our students with the tools that will enable them to be  
**Successful.**


We do this by recognizing individual learning styles  
And equipping students with the best strategies to  
**Learn.**

We do this so that all our students achieve the skills  
And knowledge necessary to be  
**Life-long learners.**

## OUR VISION

A Community of Excellence

## 2015-2016 School Year

For the most up-to-date information on important school dates please visit [www.jamesmowat.ca](http://www.jamesmowat.ca) and click on the “full calendar” link on the right side of the page. If you are already using Google calendar, you can add the school calendar to your personal calendar by clicking on the  link. If you have any problems viewing or adding the calendar please call the school and we can assist you.

### Accident Policy

Should a student sustain an injury during the school day, he/she is brought to the office. If the injury is of a minor nature, (a cut requiring a bandage or a bruise needing an ice pack) it will be tended to in the office.

If the injury appears more serious, parents or the emergency contact person will be notified if possible.

Serious injuries requiring urgent action will be directed to the Fort Saskatchewan Hospital. Should the injury require dental work, parents will need to make arrangements for this work by a dentist of their choice.

Broken eye glasses are not covered by EIPS insurance.

### Agenda Books

James Mowat Agenda Books are available to all students. Each student is expected to have one and to carry it with them between home and school each day. Students are expected to record all assignments that they are given each day and check them off as they complete them. Any tests and upcoming events should similarly be recorded. Parents should check the books daily to see how their child is progressing and what assignments and/or tests are coming up. Used appropriately, these can be an excellent tool to assist the students in organizing themselves for each day and to communicate between home and school.

### Allergies

Several students and staff at the school suffer from various allergies. To assist these people, we are asking your cooperation in the following areas:

When sending snacks to school, check with the teacher if there are any students in the class that are allergic to the foods you are intending to send. This is especially true for **peanut type** foods.

Please do not send pets to school with your child for the full day. If your child would like to show a pet, please discuss it with the teacher before bringing it in, and then taking it home after the showing. Again, it is important to check with the teacher to make sure no children will react to the pet before bringing it to the school.

## Assignments

Each student is expected to complete the assignments given in class, either in class or as homework. Students who are absent are responsible for checking what was missed and completing the work missed as required. Assignments constitute a large portion of student evaluation and could affect test scores. Because incomplete assignments tend to have a detrimental effect on the child's learning, we solicit your support in helping us monitor your child's assignments and making sure they are completed.

Should a child habitually neglect his/her assignments, parents will be notified. Teachers may also ask students who have not completed their assignments to remain after school to work on them. Parents will be notified if the child will be kept beyond 3:15pm.

## Attendance

Regular and punctual attendance is expected from all students. One day's absence really affects 3 days; the review from the previous day, that day's work and the taking up of the assignments the next day. When a student is away due to illness or other reasons, parents or guardians are asked to please call the school making us aware of the absence. Please leave a message if there is no answer with your child's name, class and reason for the absence. Parents can also access the Student Attendance link on our website.

Our school website at [www.jamesmowat.ca](http://www.jamesmowat.ca) is equipped with a Student Attendance button on the right side of the home page. Simply click on GO, Select Student Attendance from the drop down menu of our Contact Section and fill in your information. Your child's absence will be sent directly to the school once you hit Submit.

Please Note: **All absence notifications should be sent to the Student Attendance email address rather than emailing your child's teacher directly.** Teachers are not always able to check email first thing in the morning, and these emails are not accessible to substitute teachers who may be in the classroom on the day of the absence. Thank You.

Attendance checks are taken in the morning and afternoon. These are compared to the absences that have been reported. Office personnel will attempt to verify all unconfirmed absences by calling home, the work number and/or the emergency contact number provided to the school.

If absences become a concern, a letter will be sent home notifying parents/guardians of our concerns. If absences continue, a meeting with the parents will be scheduled with the school administration. If absences continue to be a problem the attendance board will be notified as is required by the school act.

## Bell Schedule

Regular School Day		Early Dismissal	
08:25	Warning Bell	08:25	Warning Bell
08:30	Period 1	08:30	Period 1
09:00	Period 2	09:00	Period 2
09:30	Period 3	09:30	Period 3
10:00	Recess	10:00	Recess
10:12	Warning Bell	10:12	Warning Bell
10:15	Period 4	10:15	Period 4
10:45	Period 5	10:45	Period 5
11:15	Period 6	11:15	Period 6
11:45	Lunch	11:45	Lunch
12:05	Recess	12:05	Recess
12:25	Warning Bell	12:25	Warning Bell
12:30	Literacy Time	12:30	Period 7
12:50	Period 7	01:05	Period 8
01:20	Period 8	01:35	Period 9
01:50	Recess	02:05	Dismissal
02:02	Warning Bell	02:15	All Clear
02:05	Period 9		
02:35	Period 10		
03:05	Dismissal		
03:15	All Clear		

Students should not arrive prior to 8:10am in the morning or return prior to 12:15pm if they go home for lunch and should be off school property after 3:15pm as there is no supervision before 8:10am and after 3:15pm.

On early dismissal days students will be dismissed at 2:05pm. Parents should expect their child(ren) to come home approximately 1 hour earlier than usual. On early dismissal days, the morning schedule remains the same. During the afternoon, we will operate 3 periods. School wide Literacy Time will not be held on those days and there will be no afternoon recess break.

### **Bicycles, skateboards, scooters and roller-blades**

Students who ride their bikes to school must proceed directly to the bike racks and ensure their bikes are locked. When coming to school, students should ride their bikes up to the school grounds area, and then walk their bikes the rest of the way to the racks. Similarly, when going home, they should walk their bikes to the end of the school grounds area and then proceed home. No bikes shall be ridden through the parking lot. Bike racks are out of bounds during school hours. Remember, helmets are required to be worn by law. Skateboards, scooters, Heelys and roller-blades should not be brought to the school as there is no place to keep these items safely stored for the day.

## Communication

The school agenda outlines the school year, the bell schedule and many of our school procedures. Each student receives an agenda at the beginning of the school year. The cost is added to the school fee.

Our newsletter is available online at [www.jamesmowat.ca](http://www.jamesmowat.ca). If you would like our monthly newsletter emailed directly to you then please provide the office with your email address.

Other communication can come in the form of special notes, letters from teachers, announcements or telephone calls home. We encourage parents to also call us whenever they have a question or concern.

## Computer/Internet Use

Our school is equipped with computers and access to the internet. Prior to being allowed on the internet, each student and their parent or guardian must sign the EIPS User Agreement which indicates that the student using the internet will do so in accordance with all the rules and regulations of EIPS governing the internet. These forms will be sent home in September.

## Discipline

Elk Island Public Schools has a well-developed discipline policy which is used as a guide to develop the growth of self-discipline and responsible behavior. Students are asked to be accountable for their actions with logical consequences. (These may include missing a recess, writing out their actions and strategies for better choices in the form of a think-paper, staying after school, missing activities that would normally be regarded as extra-curricular, or in-school and/or out-of-school suspensions if the behavior is repeated or severe.) The behavior is reviewed with the student and alternative actions are discussed. Parents are notified of **repeat** minor offenses or of major offenses. Parents are encouraged to contact the school anytime they have questions or concerns. Should any parent want to read the entire EIPS discipline policy or policies (Student Behavior Plan Policy IG, Suspension or Expulsion of Students Policy IGC, and/or Student Transportation Discipline Plan Policy IGD), a copy may be obtained from the office.

## Dress Code

Students are expected to be dressed appropriately for school and for weather conditions. Skimpy tops, short shorts, half-shirts and T-shirts with obscene, vulgar or inappropriate messages, and clothing which may offend others, are not appropriate. Students wearing inappropriate clothing will be asked to change. Make-up is not considered appropriate for elementary students. Shoes must be worn at all times. Each child needs two pairs of shoes, one for indoor use and one for outdoor wear. Indoor shoes should have soles that do not mark the floor. Depending on the activity, students may be asked to change into appropriate attire for Physical Education. Because so many pairs of shoes are similar, **parents should put the child's name on all footwear**. Hats may not be worn inside the school unless a special 'hat day' is declared. We appreciate all the parent volunteers and expect that they will set an example

for the students by following the above dress code when they are volunteering in our school. Thank you for your cooperation.

### **Early Dismissal**

Students will be dismissed at 2:05pm on September 2<sup>nd</sup> and the first Wednesday of every month thereafter. Please note that your child will be coming home approximately 1 hour sooner than usual on these days. (See Early Dismissal Schedule in this handbook)

### **Field Trips**

Field trips that incur extra costs may be funded by school funds or School Council if funds are available from these sources. Some field trips may require us to collect money from the students on a user pay basis.

Teachers planning field trips will notify parents in advance to indicate that their child will not be in school for part of the time on a particular day. The notice will outline the time of departure, anticipated time of return and the itinerary and type of activities that will be involved. Parents will be asked to sign a consent form indicating that they are aware that their child will be leaving school grounds during the day and approve of such leave.

Students going on co-curricular or extracurricular trips are reminded that these are considered part of the school program and all school and EIPS rules and policies apply. Further, students are ambassadors of James Mowat School and need to conduct themselves accordingly. Students who misbehave on trips may be sent home at the parent's expense, may be restricted from going on other trips or meet other consequences as deemed appropriate. Students may not be allowed to participate in the fieldtrip if school fees have not been paid.

Where bus transportation is provided, all the rules of the EIPS bussing policy shall apply.

When extra supervisors are required or invited to come along, they must be a minimum of 18 years of age as per EIPS policy.

### **Home Assistance**

Parents often ask what they can do to assist their child with his/her school work, or how they can help their child improve his/her grades. Following is a brief list of the most common tips parents may use:

1. Make sure your child has enough sleep each night.
2. Make sure your child has a good breakfast and a nutritious lunch.
3. Check with your child daily as to what assignments he/she has that day.
4. Sign or initial the agenda book daily.
5. Check to make sure your child has all his/her books and supplies.
6. Set aside a daily time and quiet space to do homework and study.
7. Have your child read and review daily, even if no tests are scheduled.
8. Call or email your child's teacher if your child is having difficulty understanding what to do.



### **Hot Lunches**

The Parent Council sponsors several 'hot lunches' over the course of the year. These are pre-sold approximately 2 weeks in advance and brought in on the specified day. On these days all students may stay for lunch without any lunchroom fees being levied. Watch the newsletter for dates and type of hot lunch available.

### **Jay PRIDE Awards**

James Mowat recognizes students who take pride in our school through perseverance, respect, integrity, discipline and excellence. Students may be commended in the classroom, during announcements and/or in the monthly assemblies.

### **Legal Names**

Our student information system, Power School, does not allow us to print school documents with a child's "preferred" first or last names. All student documents (report cards, class lists, PATs, etc.) will show the "legal" name of the child; the one printed on their birth certificate. If you have any questions about this please call the school.

### **Lost and Found Box**

We have several 'lost and found' boxes located in the school. Items that are found, or left abandoned, are placed in the boxes. Students and parents are asked to check these if they are missing any item. The boxes are emptied three times a year and all items that are not claimed are given to charity.

### **Lunchroom Program**

The James Mowat School lunchroom program is an optional service for the convenience of parents whose children are unable to go home for lunch. Students are welcome to stay daily or when the need arises. The service is useful for working parents, long distance travelers or during inclement weather.

The lunch program is non-profit with payments covering the cost of hiring supervisors. Fees are charged so that the program does not have to be subsidized from instructional funds, as any shortfall would have to come from the general school budget which operates the educational programs.

Current fees for lunch room service are:

Daily	\$ 1.00
Yearly (due October 31 <sup>st</sup> )	\$ 100.00
Family Plan (3+ students)	\$ 200.00

Lunch statements are issued as necessary. Prompt payment is appreciated.

Children who stay for lunch are expected to use proper "Restaurant" behavior which includes:

1. Staying seated in a desk.

2. Using inside quiet voices.
3. Asking permission to get a drink or go to the washroom.
4. Waiting until the end of lunch to throw garbage away, recycle juice containers and clean desks.

Supervisors are in charge and students need to conduct themselves appropriately in class and on the playground.

Sufficient time is allowed for eating lunch. Problems often arise when:

- students choose to go outside rather than finish eating
- students choose to visit rather than eat
- the amount and type of food is not to the student's liking

Students often like to throw out lunch they have not eaten. To allow parents to see how much they ate, they are asked to take uneaten lunch home. Supervisors encourage students to finish eating their lunch, but cannot force them to do so. Please send the appropriate amount of lunch and the kind of food the student will eat. Lunches should be fully prepared and ready to eat as students do not have access to microwaves. Too many treats and the healthy food is left uneaten. Please encourage good eating habits at home and school.

After eating, the remaining time is to be spent outside so it is important that students dress appropriately for the weather. If the weather is too cold or wet, students are kept indoors and partake in games and other activities.

The lunchroom program is considered a privilege. Students who do not follow the guidelines or who are disrespectful to the supervisors may have this privilege withdrawn. Students who stay for lunch are not allowed to leave the school grounds without written permission from their parents.

### **Medication**

As one child's medication may be another child's poison, all medication that students require at school must be brought in and stored in the office. No students shall keep any medication with them. Students will come to the office to receive any medication that they require. When students are leaving the school grounds for a field trip, teachers will take the medication required with them. **Parents/guardians must complete and sign the Child/Student Medication /Personal Care Management -Parent/Guardian Consent form the Child/Student Medication Management Plan and/or the Child/Student Personal Care Management Plan before medications will be administered at the school.**

If a student develops a headache or other symptoms while in school, parents will be called. Should they so desire, they can come in and administer medication to their child. School personnel will not administer medication that is not required on a daily basis. No authorization will be accepted over the phone.

### **Parent Advisory/School Council**

The James Mowat School Council is an advisory body of parents that meet once a month, September to November and January to May. Besides acting in an advisory capacity to the school administration on school matters, they review Elk Island Public Schools policy proposals, and support various school projects both by funds and labor. In the past the council has raised funds for field trips, individual class projects, and school projects like our new playground. The council also sponsors “hot lunches” several times during the school year. A separate arm of the council, James Mowat School Parent Advisory Association, also meets on the same night and is responsible for the fundraising. They are a nonprofit organization which allows them to participate in fundraising Casinos.

All parents are encouraged to attend the council meetings and participate in school activities. Please read the monthly newsletters to confirm the dates and times of the parent council meetings.

### **Parent Visitors/Volunteers**

As a school we are very appreciative of the assistance that we receive from our parents and community volunteers. If anyone is interested in helping us in any way, please contact our office and let us know your area of interest. Some of the areas that we have received assistance in the past are reading to and listening to students read, working within the classroom, making classroom materials, supervising field trips, clerical work in the office and the library and coming in as guest speakers on special topics of interest. All these make the educational experience more meaningful for our students. Following Board policy, all volunteers will be required to complete a Volunteer Form which is available at the school office. This form is only good for one year.

The staff at James Mowat School are committed to providing a safe learning environment for all children. We therefore request your cooperation with the following procedures;

- We require all parents to sign out their child in the office if they are picking their child up outside the regular pick up times. If you are picking up your child early, please come to the office instead of waiting outside your child’s classroom. We will be very happy to call your child down to the office. We will no longer send children out of the school, to wait outside, at the request of a parent.
- If parents have materials or lunches to deliver to their child during the day, we ask that you please come to the office and we will be happy to do this for you.
- All visitors and volunteers must wear a nametag and sign in at the office.

*We thank you for your support and look forward to having you visit our school.*

## **Personal Property**

All private items that the students bring to school should be clearly labeled with the student's name. These include clothing items such as mitts, shoes, boots, and school supplies. Students should not bring games, toys, iPods, MP3 players, etc. to the school. Toys and games are often attractive items for other students. Any student who brings these does so at his/her own risk. Although every effort will be made to try to recover such lost or stolen items, the school is not responsible for their security. All trading cards should be kept at home.

## **Phone Use**

Students will be allowed to use the phone only in case of emergencies or school related matters. They must obtain the consent of the homeroom teacher who will either send a note or buzz the office prior to the student being allowed to use the phone.

## **Playground Conduct**

Common sense and safe practices should guide playground activities. Students need to use all equipment in the way that it was intended (example: walk up the ladder of the slide and slide down the slide, sit while on the swings, etc.). No 'roughhousing' or 'play fighting' is allowed, as it is often very difficult to distinguish between "play fighting" and an actual fight. Students are responsible for their own actions and need to be aware of where their hands and feet land at all times. Most 'accidents' are really carelessness on someone's part. Language should be appropriate for an elementary school playground and respectful to other students and supervisors.

Students who do not use due care or are purposefully irresponsible may be asked to leave the playground area, be asked to sit out for a period of time or be suspended from playing on the playground for a period of time.

## **Public Health Services**

The following Health Unit services are available to students for this school year:

### *Public Health Nursing – All grades*

- \* Communicable diseases control and emergencies as necessary
- \* Health education on a variety of health related topics

### *Kindergarten*

- \* It is strongly advised that your child should complete the recommended immunization during the kindergarten year. Please contact your nearest Health Unit office to make an appointment. Immunization is NOT given to kindergarten children in the school setting.

### *Grade 5*

- \* Hepatitis B Immunization Series
- \* Before any immunization is given in school, a consent card will be sent home for your signature. After immunization a notice will be sent home. Students are encouraged to keep this record for future reference.

### *Dental Health*

Come smile with us! Public Health dental professionals visit schools and invite students and their families to visit the Health Unit. We offer:

- \* Information packages about current dental issues, i.e. dental product safety and use
- \* Counseling for those students interested in a dental career
- \* Classroom dental education and tobacco prevention/cessation presentations
- \* Protective fluoride service in non-fluoridated rural communities
- \* Visual dental assessments to determine the overall dental health of our schools
- \* Options for children and families who have dental treatment needs

### *Speech, Language and Hearing*

Speech-Language Pathologists provide speech and language assessments and intervention services in the schools or at the local Health Unit office. Referrals can be made through the teacher or directly by the family by contacting the school Speech-Language Pathologist. An Audiologist is available at the Health Unit to do hearing tests.

Note: consent will be required before your child can receive services. If you have any questions, contact the Health Unit office at 998-3366.

### **Reporting Periods and Interviews**

Report cards are issued 3 times a year: end of November, mid March and end of June. Parent-teacher interviews are scheduled after the November and March report cards go home.

The Elementary Report Card is based directly on the Alberta outcomes-based curriculum and describes some of the key knowledge and skills Alberta students are expected to acquire in each subject.

The purpose of the outcomes-based report card is to provide parents/guardians a clear, realistic and useful description of their child's learning.

Parents are encouraged to contact the school anytime they have a concern with their child's progress.

### **Outcomes Based Reporting**

Alberta's curriculum is outcome-based, it describes what your child is expected to know and be able to do. The report card tells you if your child has met these expectations. The report card focuses on clear descriptions of how well your child has acquired the key skills and knowledge in each subject.

### **School Fees**

For the 2015-2016 school term, the learning resource fee is \$50.00 per child for grades 1-6 and \$25.00 per child in ECS. This fee includes rental texts, workbooks and run off materials that the

students may need. Students who ruin or lose rental texts will be charged to cover the cost of replacements. The cost for the agenda in Kindergarten to grade 6 is an additional \$6.00.

School supplies such as pencils, pens, erasers, scribblers, etc. remain the responsibility of the students. A list of supplies is prepared each spring and sent home with the students indicating what they will need for the next year.

### **School Fees - Payment**

Elk Island Public Schools make use of the Acorn fee management system. This system synchronizes with all aspects of PowerSchool, our district student information system. All families with students registered in Elk Island Public Schools, are able to login through the parent portal of PowerSchool to access their school fees.

Through the Acorn system, parents/guardians can pay a variety of school fees (field trips, clothing orders, yearbooks, etc.). Families are encouraged to pay their school fees through the Acorn system using a credit card. Alternatively, parents may still submit fee payments (cash or cheque) directly to the school. Cheques should be made payable to James Mowat School.

For fees that are paid directly to the school, we ask that parents send in **exact change** for all transactions (hot lunch, school fees, fieldtrips, pictures, etc.). **Change will not be provided.** Thank you for your support and cooperation.

### **Safety**

The safety of our students and staff is always a high priority. During the day, the front door will remain open, but all others doors will be locked. During the recess breaks, morning, noon and afternoon, all doors will be open in case there is a playground emergency, but they will be promptly locked again once the recess is over. We remind all parents and visitors to our school to always sign in when you visit us. Thank you for your support and cooperation.

### **Supervision**

Teachers provide outside supervision starting at 8:10am in the morning, during the first and second recess, and from 3:05pm to 3:15pm after school. Noon hour supervisors provide supervision from 11:45am to 12:25pm. Students should not be arriving at school prior to 8:10am and should be on their way home by 3:15pm. Students who are not in the lunchroom program and go home for lunch should not return to school prior to 12:15pm. Teachers who detain students beyond 3:15pm so they can catch up on their work will request that the students contact their parents before they detain the students.

### **Synervoice**

Elk Island Public Schools has an automatic messaging system that is able to contact all parents to remind them about upcoming events or issues that require immediate attention. We may use this messaging device to remind you of deadlines, assemblies or school meetings. Your phone will show that James Mowat School has called. Please pick up the phone and listen to

the message. If you have any questions after listening to the message then please call the school.

### **Water Bottles**

Students are allowed to have a small water bottle with them in class. They are only allowed to have water in the bottle, no other kind of beverage. They are asked to take their bottles home and clean them on a regular basis.

### **Weather and Road Conditions**

Because Elk Island Public Schools covers such a wide area, it has been divided into four regions. For Fort Saskatchewan the school bus service, including all pay-ride bus services, shall be suspended when a temperature of  $-40^{\circ}\text{C}$  or a wind chill factor of  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$  is measured at the Edmonton International Airport at 5:00am.

EIPS believes it is a parent's right and responsibility to make choices for their children based on their beliefs and perceptions of safety during inclement weather conditions – even when the buses are running and the schools are open.

In the event that conditions are extreme, bus service may be suspended in any or all regions of EIPS when weather or road conditions warrant. In this instance:

- suspension of bus service information will be released to the public by local area radio and television stations commencing at 6:00am;
- a message will be placed on EIPS' central switchboard (**780-464-3477**)

**Parents must use their discretion when sending their children to school during inclement weather conditions, even when buses are running and schools are open.** For safety of students who ride school buses, it is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are suitably dressed for coping with the weather conditions and arrangements have been made for alternate shelter for their child if no one is home.

Our homepage website, [www.jamesmowat.ca](http://www.jamesmowat.ca), now has a "Transportation" button on the top right hand corner. This can be used to check if your child's bus is running on time.