

## Birch Grove Community School & Community Service Weekly Newsletter

October 9, 2025

### Upcoming Events:

Wednesday, October 8 ~ Annual Tofte Fire & Rescue Visit for Fire Prevention Week

Thursday & Friday, October 16 & 17 ~ No School for MEA

Tuesday, October 21 Annual School Board Meeting @ 4:00 Regular Meeting to Follow

Sunday, October 26 ~ Annual PTO Halloween Carnival from 2-4pm

Monday, November 3 ~ No School/PD for Staff

Tuesday-Friday, November 4-7 ~ K-5 Parent/Teacher Conferences

Wednesday-Friday, November 26-28 ~ Thanksgiving Break

### Mission Statement:

*Birch Grove Community School will promote academic excellence utilizing our unique natural setting to prepare students to become socially and environmentally responsible, self-directed, life-long learners.*

### **From Ms. Diane Blanchette:**

*School Director, Birch Grove Community School  
Lead Coordinator, Birch Grove Community Service*

Birch Grove gets quite festive at this time of year, and pumpkins can be found in many places. It's such an exciting time for all of us here at Birch Grove! 🍁🍂🎃

Along with autumn comes our annual visit from Tofte Fire & Rescue during fire prevention week. Fire and Rescue members talked with the children about home fire safety, "Stop, Drop, and Roll" and answered many "What If" questions. The team asked the children to take their fire safety booklet home and review it with the adults in their household – please do so! Then everyone went outside and rotated to different areas with the firetruck and the firehose being the favorite, of course. Everyone got to take home a goodie bag that included a cool red fire hat. Many thanks to Tofte



Fire & Rescue for sharing important information with Birch Grove children during Fire Prevention Week! You do good work!

Autumn also brings our Annual PTO Halloween Carnival, a staple in this community for nearly half a century. We continue the tradition and strive to improve this annual event. Please see the website page that has now been dedicated to the carnival at: <https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Annual-PTO-Halloween-Carnival>



All K-5 students will have an opportunity to earn a \$5 carnival ticket to the Annual Halloween Carnival on Sunday, October 26 from 2:00-4:00. The opportunity will be linked to academic work.

Lots of volunteers are needed to pull this annual event off. For those BGCS families that are planning on attending and enjoying the carnival with their child(ren), perhaps consider bringing two adults to the carnival so that one can enjoy the carnival with your child(ren) while the other volunteers to work, then change places halfway through the carnival! It's a win-win for everyone! Also, be sure to let grandparents, neighbors and friends know. The volunteer activities are easy to do, and consider the joy you will be bringing to many children! You can find the link on the website page or click on the link below: Volunteers must be 16+



<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0C45AAA92AA2FF2-59419157-halloween#/>



Remaining fall hikes for Birch Buddies ~HIKE!

<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/Birch-Buddies>

10/9 Leveaux (Oberg trailhead) 2.3 miles

10/14 White Skyrock & Lake Agnes 2.5 miles (Tuesday)



Fire Prevention Week  
with  
Tofte Fire & Rescue!



Find more pictures of  
this event on the Birch  
Grove Facebook page!

[Facebook](#)

# THE ANNUAL BIRCH GROVE HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL!



**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26**

**2:00 - 4:00**

**AT BIRCH GROVE IN TOFTE**



- ~ FUN FOR ALL AGES!
- ~ KIDS GAMES!
- ~ WIN PRIZES!
- ~ CAKE WALK!
- ~ COOKIE DECORATING!
- ~ FABULOUS FOODS!
- ~ BINGO! WITH CASH PRIZES FROM  
GRAND MARAIS STATE BANK~TOFTE



**WEAR A COSTUME (OR NOT)  
AND BRING THE WHOLE FAMILY!**



**IT WILL BE A SPOOKTACULAR TIME!**

**CARNIVAL TICKETS ARE \$5 EACH - CASH OR CHECK ONLY.**  
**MULTIPLE ACTIVITIES CAN BE ENJOYED FROM ONE TICKET.**



**BIRCHGROVE@BOREAL.ORG**  
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🍁 4/5 spent time at the Campsite doing paper pencil nature sketches. They loved it! When finished, they all compared sketches and complimented each other on the drawings and leaf rubbings. Students all said that it was so calm and relaxing and they want to do it again!  
<https://www.birchgroveschool.com/The-Great-Outdoors>



# THE ANNUAL BIRCH GROVE HALLOWEEN CARNIVAL!



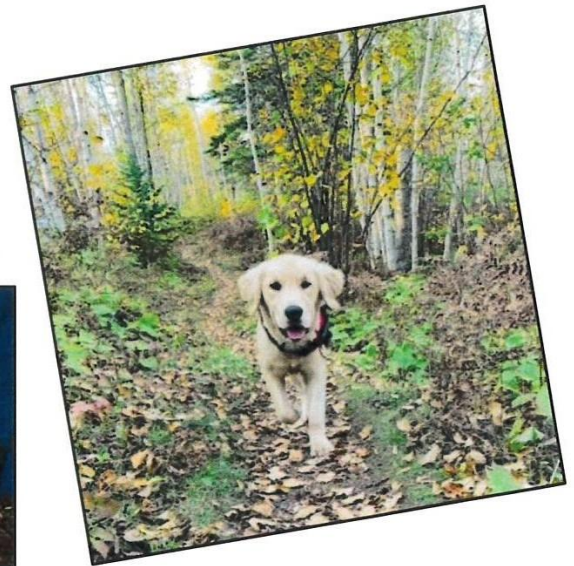
**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 26**

**2:00 - 4:00**

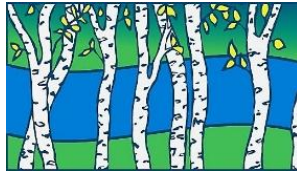
**AT BIRCH GROVE IN TOFTE**

**NEW THIS YEAR: MAKE S'MORES AT THE CAMPSITE!**

- HEAD OUT TO THE CAMPSITE AND ROAST MARSHMALLOWS TO MAKE S'MORES!
- MEET WALTER, BIRCH GROVE'S NEWEST STAFF MEMBER!
- YOUTH MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EVENT
- PLEASE USE EXTRA PRECAUTION WITH FLAMMABLE COSTUMES
- IF IT IS RAINING OR EXTREMELY WINDY, THIS EVENT WILL BE CANCELLED. THE REST OF THE CARNIVAL IS RAIN, SHINE, OR SNOWFLAKE



Please have your child read (or be read to) 20-30 minutes per day/night (or more!). If there is one thing that you can do at home that has a huge positive impact on your child's academic growth, this is it! Happy reading!



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[www.birchgroveschool.com](http://www.birchgroveschool.com)

School Spirit Store Link: <https://birchgrove.logosoftwear.com/> You can use GRAB15 for 15% off

Face Book: [Birch Grove Community School and Community Services #4145 | Facebook](#)



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**From Ms. Emily VanDoren**

*Seedling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

The Seedlings learned all about pumpkins this week. We started our week by learning about the life cycle of a pumpkin. We used visual aids to discover how pumpkins grow from a seed, to a sprout and then a vine, and then forming a flower and finally a pumpkin. We read several books this week that had a focus on pumpkins. We read *We're Going on a Pumpkin Hunt* by Steve Metzger, *The Stubborn Pumpkin* by L.G. Bass, and *The Biggest Pumpkin Ever* by Steven Kroll.

The Seedlings worked on a pumpkin match game as well as pumpkin shape games. We used play dough to make faces for foam pumpkin cut outs. The Seedlings also colored a picture of a pumpkin patch with markers and used orange paint and cotton balls to paint a picture of a pumpkin.



We had a special treat on Wednesday after nap time. When the Seedlings woke from their nap, we were able to go outside to see fire trucks from Tofte and Schroeder fire departments. The Seedlings loved watching the Saplings and the K-5 students take their turn with the fire hose.

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**From Ms. Pam Holm**

*Sapling Teacher, Birch Grove Community Service*

The initial part of the week was dedicated to fire prevention awareness. Firefighters wearing heavy coats, masks, and oxygen tanks can appear daunting to children. Consequently, young children tend to hide during fires. To alleviate this concern, I provided firefighting equipment, including helmets, masks, boots, and hoses, to help them become accustomed to the gear and feel more comfortable. Through collaborative efforts, Saplings practiced tackling simulated fires, typically at the Haunted House, and successfully rolled up the 50-foot fire hose. We also learned and practiced the 'Get Low and Go' technique, crawling out of the room during our simulated fire drill.

Math and manipulative exercises featured water droplet counting, count and clip cards, hydrant size sequencing, counting puzzles, and block measuring of diverse firefighter apparel. Literacy training emphasized the letter F, employing letter tracing activities and searching for items that start with the letter F.



The second half of the week kicked off with a Ghoulish Green theme. In the Saplings laboratory, they fashioned some Picasso-esque Frankensteins and accomplished the resurrection of Frankenstein through a chemical reaction involving vinegar and baking soda, resulting in the production of carbon dioxide that inflated a Frankenstein balloon.

The cauldron was brewing as they utilized their counting skills to create potions according to recipes. *Room on the Broom* by Julia Donaldson was read and witches were crafted to soar through the air. We emphasized letter W practicing our writing skills.

This Friday, we will engage in a reading of *Little Goblins Ten* by Pamela Jane, followed by a walk in the deep green glen and a gathering in the stick-built hovel, mirroring the story, while practicing our counting and doing some journaling.

Pajama Day next Wednesday, October 15th!

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**From Ms. Sara Knottski**

*K & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

K/1 has been curious about emotions! For the first month of school, K/1 learned about identifying emotions, what to do with them, and how to get back to our learning mind. We read “How Full is Your Bucket” and used the concepts from the book as our social and emotional vocabulary. If you are not familiar with the book, essentially every person has an imaginary bucket on top of their head. The actions that each person does will either fill or dip into a person’s bucket. The fuller your bucket is, the happier you are. We use the terminology ‘how can you fill their bucket’ often. We will be continuing to talk about our social and emotional skills throughout the year!



Kindergarten learned the letters T and P and are continuing to learn about numbers! We can identify numbers up to 10 and count various groups of objects. We finished our first unit in math! First grade continued to practice with letters of the alphabet, decoding, spelling, and reading! We are getting proficient at reading three letter words and with fluency! In math, we started our second unit in math! We are learning about representing addition and subtraction through pictures.

Please look for an email later next week about online programs you can access for extra support at home. Also, make sure to be reading to/with your child for twenty minutes every day. I notice a difference when students read at home! Another basic support you can do at home is practicing identifying letter names, letter sounds, and numbers!

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**From Ms. Samantha Forster**

*2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

We had a beautiful week here in our classroom! We started the week by finishing up clean up in our community garden plots. We spent our days learning about maps, which was a very intriguing topic for our class. We talked about what to include when making a map, how to title a map, what you can make maps of, and how to use a map to tell the direction of things. We did a re-creation of the “Mona

Lisa” this week to stay with our theme of European artists. We ended our week with a nature scavenger to make fall inspired bookmarks for the chapter books that students have started to fall in love with!

In reading, we spent time focusing on more vowel teams and VCe words. This was coupled with decodable readings and word sorts. We spent time reading about Walter Myers and Jason Reynolds. We listened to Jason Reynolds read one of his books for morning meetings this week and was loved by everyone. With that reading, vocabulary words were discussed and the importance of authors within our country. We also read a book about the Golden Gate bridge. We had to spend time discussing the background of the bridge, looking at pictures, and talking about how historical fiction can be a wonderful way to better understand history. Lastly, the week ended with some games of scrabble and various other phonics games to build vocabulary and problem solving.



In math, we focused on place value and word problems. Place value was paired with manipulatives to visualize what numbers up to 200 look like. This is a great base to learn how to add and subtract bigger numbers. Word problems were occupied with drawings, constructing the operations and solving the problems. Students are doing a wonderful job of utilizing different strategies to help them solve multiplication problems.

It was a great week! It is getting cooler out so please ensure that students have many layers at school to stay warm. We love our outdoors at Birch Grove and want the students to be as comfy as possible as we are exploring!

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**From Ms. Stacy Coronis**  
*4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Elementary Teacher*

Part of being in the “big kid” room at Birch Grove means more responsibility. We have established many routines that your child does each week that allows them practice to develop the skill of responsibility. First of all, our class runs a student led Morning Meeting each day using the character building skills from a curriculum called Responsive Classroom. All students participate, share ideas and greet each other in a positive way. We review our learning targets for the day as well as any

special events on our schedule. Students are all assigned a specific day of the week where they can share big ideas or items happening in their life which develops a respectful culture of individual differences in our classroom. It is a great life skill!

Secondly, students complete a weekly Math Geo assignment. This comprehensive activity focuses on US and world geography and requires students to use globes, maps, and landform knowledge to learn about the continents, countries, oceans, rivers and states of our world. Next we use that geographical information to practice our grammar and spelling by writing complete sentences. We use the editing process each week to self correct our work until it is done correctly. This weekly writing activity teaches the students to work carefully the first time so that they can avoid having to rewrite their sentences. The last component of Math Geo is to complete the varied math problems which review 10 core concepts of 4th and 5th grade math. This part of the Math Geo work allows students to gain traction in their math work and spirals so that multiple review opportunities happen throughout the year to reach mastery.



Finally, students are expected to read chapter books each month at their individual reading level. Most students read about 2 chapter books a month. Students record their book titles, genres, dates completed and rate the book on a difficulty scale. After this is written down they have a short conference with me and then I sign off on their book in their reading log. Several readers have chosen to participate in the 40 Book Challenge this year which requires 40 books read in 5 different genres. Hopefully you are seeing your child reading at home for about 25 minutes most nights. Thank you for all of your support at home!

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