

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

Dear Parents and Guardians,

In the interest of open communications, the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board (KPR) is sending you this letter to inform you about vermiculite, a construction material used in our school building.

Vermiculite is a kind of insulation that was used commonly in the construction industry in older buildings. It is known to contain a very small amount of asbestos. Vermiculite was used inside the block walls, and in between the outside and inside walls.

When vermiculite was found at another school during renovations, the Board's Facilities Services staff acted immediately. With the help of independent environmental consultants, KPR identified 11 buildings that had vermiculite used in their construction. Our school was one of those buildings.

We have been assured by the Ministry of Labour and Health Canada that, as long as the vermiculite is isolated, sealed and in good condition, it does not pose a risk. This is the case in our school. In fact, last weekend, Facilities Services staff and the independent consultants inspected the area above our ceilings, and sealed off all holes and cracks as an added, preventive step.

You may be aware that asbestos could pose a risk of lung disease or cancer if inhaled in large quantities; however, it would have to be present in the air for this to occur. It is NOT in the air at our school, and the Board has taken steps to ensure our environment remains healthy. All drilling of walls and ceilings has been prohibited until they are cleared as safe. In addition, areas of our building that contain vermiculite will be inspected regularly. This will ensure the sealed vermiculite does not get into classrooms or other occupied areas. Although we are not required by law to follow these additional steps, we would rather err on the side of caution.

As always, student and staff safety is our highest priority. Should you wish more information, we encourage you to visit the Health Canada website at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/iyh and click on the page for vermiculite. In addition, please feel free to call me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Principal