

Good Morning Applewood Heights,

This is Mr. Pearson with some important information. For many years, across many countries, people have been asked to rise and take off their hats/ hoods for the playing of a national anthem.

AHSS, do you actually know why we rise and remove our headgear for the anthem?

Taking off our hats actually has its origin in medieval times with knights on the battlefield and it eventually evolved into a military setting and showing respect for soldiers. This continues to be a significant and important reason for doing so today. I myself take my hat off when the anthem plays and I have also discussed this with my own children and they also take off their headgear when the anthem plays.

Another reason for removing our headgear is to show respect for our country, for what others have sacrificed and given so that we may live in a democracy and work to ensure rights, freedoms, equity and inclusion for all. Part of this freedom we have been given is for individuals to act how they choose as long as it does not infringe on the rights and freedoms of others. Because of those who have come before us, we have the ability to make informed decisions that must guide our actions. I want you to be able to make informed decisions. Once you understand the why of something and act accordingly, you are making an informed decision. This way your action of removing your hat and hood will have meaning and purpose.

Given our school's Triple Rs of - Respect, Responsibility and Relationships there is a logical connection, and for myself, an easy way to demonstrate the 3r's would be to remove your hats and hoods.

As we play our national anthem today and moving forward, I personally ask that you make an informed decision and understand why we remove our hats and hoods. This is really just a small gesture that easily demonstrates respect for those who have given more than we could possibly imagine for our democratic system. I will be posting this message to our school's website and sending an email regarding this so that conversations may be had at home so that you can make an informed decision.

As we continue to recognize our school's diversity and work towards equity and inclusion for all there are many ways that we can demonstrate the 3r's as a school community, such as our selection of national anthems.

Many cultures, ethnic identities, and languages flourish in Canada and have maintained their cultural heritage across generations, as have Indigenous peoples been fiercely determined to preserve their ways of life in the wake of oppressive colonialism and its injustices.

Asani, an Indigenous women's a cappella group from Edmonton, Alberta, presented a stirring rendition of "O, Canada," re-imagined to reflect the myriad peoples who call Canada their homeland.

As we listen to the national anthem today and moving forward, please keep in mind the injustices that were done, the legacy Indigenous people have on playing an active role in shaping the Canadian identity and what we can do to help to work towards reconciliation.

Here at AHSS we will continue to focus and expand on our efforts in recognizing our diversity, building on our work with equity and insuring inclusion for all.

Ladies and gentlemen, here is the Indigenous group Asani's rendition of O'Canada.

Please rise if you are able, stand and make your own informed choice to either remove your hats and hoods; or not, as we listen to our national anthem.