

WELCOME TO

# Poplar Hill First Nation



**TEACH  
FOR  
CANADA**



# Ahneen





# Poplar Hill First Nation

Dear Teachers,

Poplar Hill welcomes you to our community! We are located near the Manitoba border on the beautiful Beren's River.

We look forward to seeing you in our new school. You will have the opportunity to teach in a beautiful, state-of-the-art building.

Your days will be busy. You will learn a lot as well. Some days will be challenging, others will be incredibly fulfilling; some will be both. Community members and colleagues will be there to support and encourage you when things get difficult and equally there to share in your joys and successes. Remember that everyone here is working towards the same goal: the success and happiness of the kids. By organising clubs and extracurricular activities, you can contribute even more to the ways that students can discover their strengths and interests.

The people of Poplar Hill are Ojibwe. Our community shares and maintains strong ties with Pikangikum and Little Grand Rapids. Take the time to discover the history, language, and culture during your time in Poplar Hill. It will help you understand the way of life here and allow you to have a much richer experience. One of the best ways to learn is to participate in community activities and events. You don't need to receive an invitation to attend, just come out, have fun, and lend a hand.

We look forward to meeting and working with you!

Sincerely,

**Rocky Landon**

Principal

Ahgwahbuush Memorial School

# Community



## A Brief History

- **1953** The Mennonites established outposts to share the word of God with the people of the region.
- **1960s** The community of Poplar Hill was established and in 1978 was formally recognized by the Department of Indian Affairs.
- **1962** The Mennonites established the Poplar Hill Development School, a residential school located across the river from the community. Students from the greater northwest region attended the school.  
  
A four-room day school was established in Poplar Hill, which students from the town attended.
- **1970s** A fire burns down the school and a new school is built to replace it.
- **1990** Poplar Hill Developmental Residential School closes.
- **2000** Planning for new school starts.
- **2012** Construction begins for the new school.
- **2016** Opening of the new school for 140 students.



# The Climate

The winters are colder in Poplar Hill than in the south, but there is less humidity so it doesn't feel as cold as it would in Hamilton or Toronto.

As long you as you dress for the weather (hat, good long coat, warm mittens, warm boots, etc.), you will be fine!

Moose and walleye are commonly found in Poplar Hill. You can fish in front of the community throughout fall, winter, and summer. Fishing Derbies are frequent and include ice, shore, and boat fishing.

## Poplar Hill Community Map





# Ahgwahbuush Memorial School



## Welcome!

### School Population

165 - predicted to grow to 200

### Grades

Kindergarten to Grade 8  
KiHS

### Principal

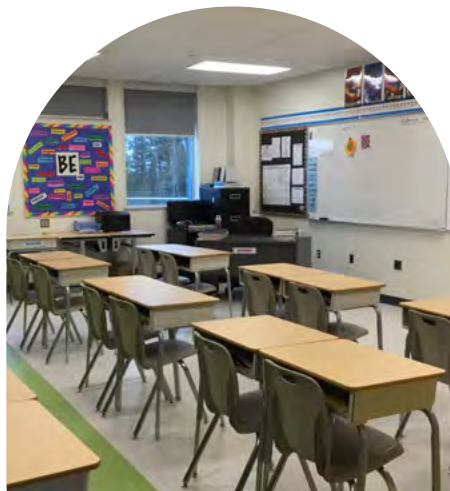
Rocky Landon

### Education Director

Donald Moose

### What is the school most proud of...

- We are very proud of our attendance rate which is around 88%. Students actively attend school. Students enjoy coming to school.
- Our students speak Ojibwe fluently. As a teacher, it is beautiful to hear kids speaking to each other in their language in the hallways and on the playground. Students graduate with their language intact.





# A Day in the Life of a Teacher

Teachers are expected to be at school from 8:30 AM to 4 PM, except for some Fridays, when they may leave as soon as the students have gone home.

When the school day ends at 4 PM, teachers typically stay for leisurely planning. They also receive a 30-60 minute planning period per day.

Teachers should strive to remain flexible, relaxed and willing to compromise. Students may initially be quiet in class, until they get to know their teacher, at which point they will become more relaxed and outgoing.

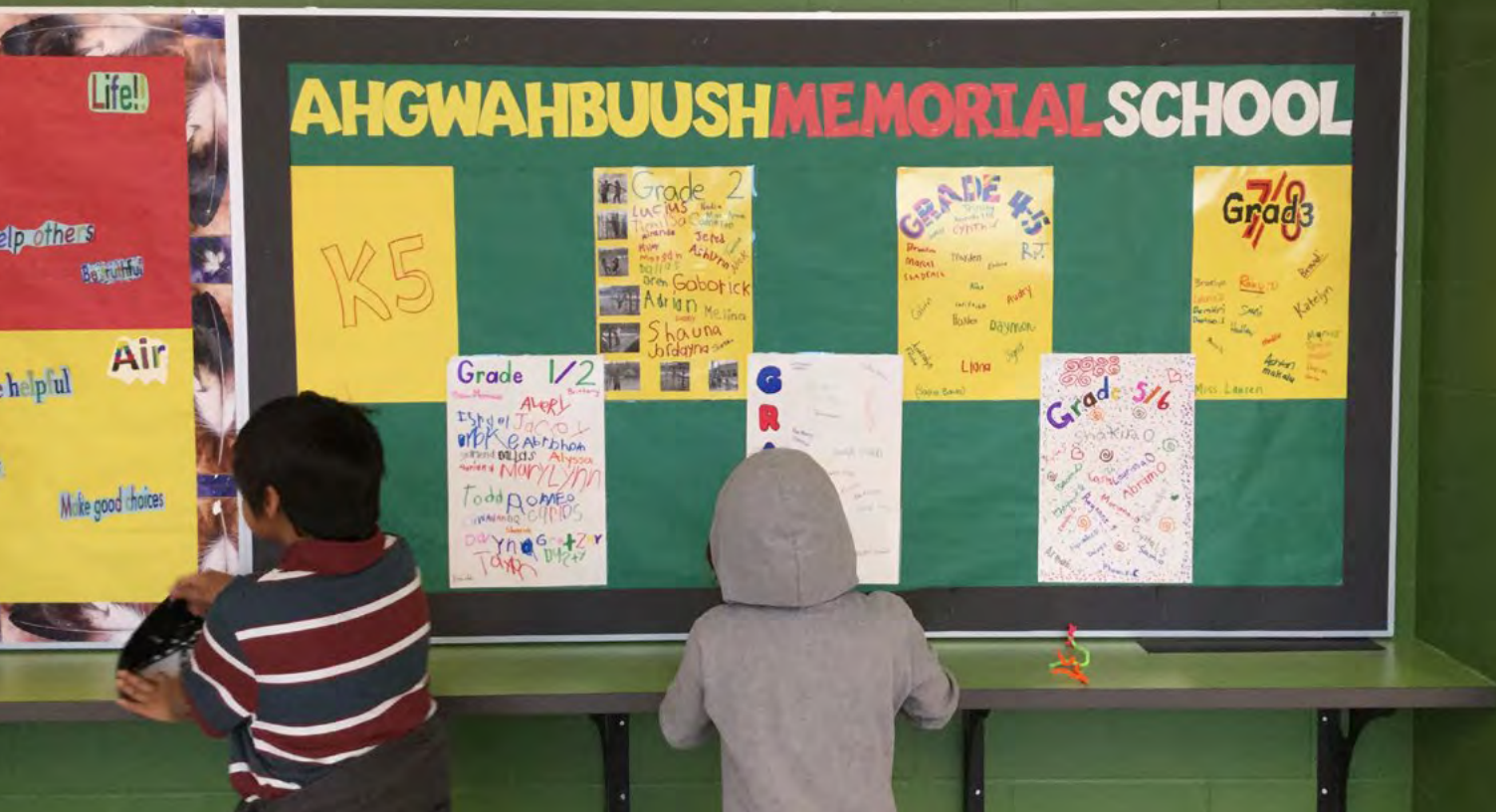
The school has a zero tolerance policy for bullying, which includes most teasing. School dress is casual: clean clothes but no suits, jeans are acceptable. Children love their teachers and parents are generally very supportive of teacher requests.



## Additional Responsibilities

Yard duty, a willingness to help out with community events and Grade 8 fundraising initiatives.





## School Facilities



We have been in our new building for several years now. It is a treat to teach in a bright space with access to a Smart Board to help with lessons. Our gym is large and can be split in two for smaller classes. We have a fully functional kitchen to provide nutritious breakfasts and snacks to our students. Our schoolyard has climbers and slides, and many different spaces for running and playing.

### Classes

Special Education classes are continuing to be developed at Poplar Hill. Students have the opportunity to participate in cooking programs, along with culturally related activities such as snaring rabbits, net fishing, and harvesting.

### School Events and Extracurricular Activities

Several clubs and activities are organised by teachers after school, including art, running, volleyball, floor hockey, and open gym. Teachers are welcome to organise a club based on their general interests and abilities, like reading or computers.

A number of activities are also organised to contribute to fundraising for the Grade 8 trip, such as bake sales, dances, and movie nights.

Poplar Hill is connected to Red Lake when the winter road is open. This road enables inter-community travel for events and games. It also offers the opportunity for teachers and students to make connections with people living in rural communities. Some Pikangikum residents are related to folks in neighbouring communities.





## Teacherages

Teacherages consist of one bedroom, a living room, dining room, and kitchen, which are furnished (table, chairs, pots, pans, fridge, stove, small freezer).

Modems are available at the band office. There is no charge for the internet. Internet access is generally quick and reliable. Water, heat, and hydro are included in rent, which is approximately \$600 a month, depending on whether teachers live by themselves or share a unit.

TBaytel is the best cellular provider for the area. Some teacherages are also equipped with a jack for a landline, which can be activated by contacting Bell Canada.

The school, nursing station and Northern Store are easily accessible from the teacherages on foot.







# Community Activities

## Events

During the summer, community members experience fun and games when we celebrate Treaty Days. The school year kicks off with Traditional Week, where students have the opportunity to go out on the land with their families for a week or two. During this time, they take part in traditional fall harvesting activities, which can include hunting and fishing.

When the winter weather warms up, the river near the community fills up with ice fishermen. This is a great time to enjoy the season.

## Regular Activities

A gym and multi-purpose room provide space for people to engage in fitness activities. Community groups use the gym regularly for volleyball and floor hockey. Staff uses the multi-purpose room as it hosts treadmills, bikes, and weights.

There is a hockey rink down the hill from the school. Adults and students use this regularly, even in -20 degree temperatures.

The baseball field is located by the rink and can accommodate a great game of soccer.

Each of these resources is used by community members, Choose Life programs and Right to Play.







## Community Facilities



### Health Unit

The nursing station is brand new and offers state-of-the-art equipment. Health services in the community are excellent; residents have daily or immediate access to medical care from nurses or doctors. Three nurses manage the Health Unit and a doctor visits the community every two weeks. If you need to see a health care specialist and you call in the morning, you can usually get an appointment by the end of the day.

### Groceries

The Northern Store serves as both the grocery store and the post office. Mail comes in about three times a week. Prices are higher than in the south but comparable to those in Red Lake. A loaf of bread costs about \$6, sandwich meat (e.g. ham) \$10, a 12 case of pop between \$16-20. Eggs and milk are reasonably priced. A variety of meats are available, as are frozen fruits and vegetables. The selection of fresh produce and spices are limited.

### Access to Poplar Hill

Poplar Hill can be accessed by chartered or scheduled flights. A scheduled flight is usually more affordable (\$200 from Red Lake, \$400 from Winnipeg, \$800 from Thunder Bay) but you are limited to one piece of luggage, with additional charges for a second bag, which might only be transported to Poplar Hill a day or two later, depending on the number of people on the flight.

When first moving to Poplar Hill, it can be worthwhile to charter a plane, which costs between \$1200.00 to \$1500.00, depending on the size. This allows you to bring to the community a greater quantity of non-perishable goods. It is cheaper to transport bulk purchases of toilet paper, tissue paper, canned food, cereal, etc. than to purchase them at the Northern Store. It is advisable to think through what you will need by preparing a meal plan. For example, there are 14-15 weeks from the beginning of the school year until Christmas, therefore bringing up 15 cans of something you eat once a week will carry you through until December.

### What's going on in Poplar Hill?

The best source of information for events and news is an open Facebook group. There is also a Facebook group where people buy and sell various goods, notably community members sell homemade meals, pies and pizzas.

# Get to Know Poplar Hill Community Members

## MEET JAMES SUGGASHIE, Community Elder

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### What do you like most about your community?

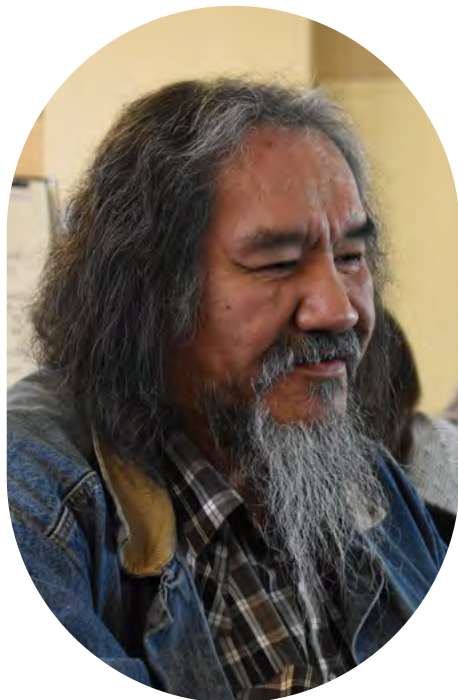
It is nice and small. There is a new school, with a gym, and new teacher residences. The school was built in the centre of the community, trying to expand around it. We have good teachers who have been here for I don't know how long - they must like it too!

### What do you like to do in the community when you have a day off?

I am involved with fishing derbies, and hunting festivals. I like to play baseball, volleyball, and hockey on the rink (but I'm too old to do that). I enjoy being with my grandkids; swimming, and skating.

### How would you describe your community to someone who had never been?

It is a good small community, right on a beautiful river system. Kids love their teachers and visitors. It is isolated, with no road access, even the roads in the community are lacking, and we experience power issues because the generator burnt down, but we're working on it. Our airport is ~4km away; someone can drive you or you can walk.



## MEET DONALD MOOSE, Education Director

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### What do you like most about your community?

It is a small, friendly place; people like it. There are many cultural activities like fishing, hunting, canoes, and bingo.

### What do you like to do in the community when you have a day off?

I run my business, a store with food and snacks. Or I leave the community to visit Winnipeg.

### How would you describe your community to someone who had never been?

It is a small community of 600 friendly people. If you're friendly, you'll meet people. You'll make friends, get invited to games, and birthday parties. We have lots of good music and good food. There are lots of fishing activities - just be careful of bears! The new church is a big part of the community.



# The Student Corner

## MEET A GRADE 3 STUDENT

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### What do you do on your days off? Why?

I like to play tag because it is fun. I play tag with my friends at the playgrounds.

### What is your favourite class or activity at school? Why?

I like to read because I like to read. My favourite book is 'Piggy and Gerald'.

### What do you like most about your community? Why?

I like outside because we can play. I like the trees, they are brown and green. Sometimes they are big and small.



## MEET CRYSTAL FAITH HOPE STRANG, A Grade 7 Student

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### What do you do on your days off? Why?

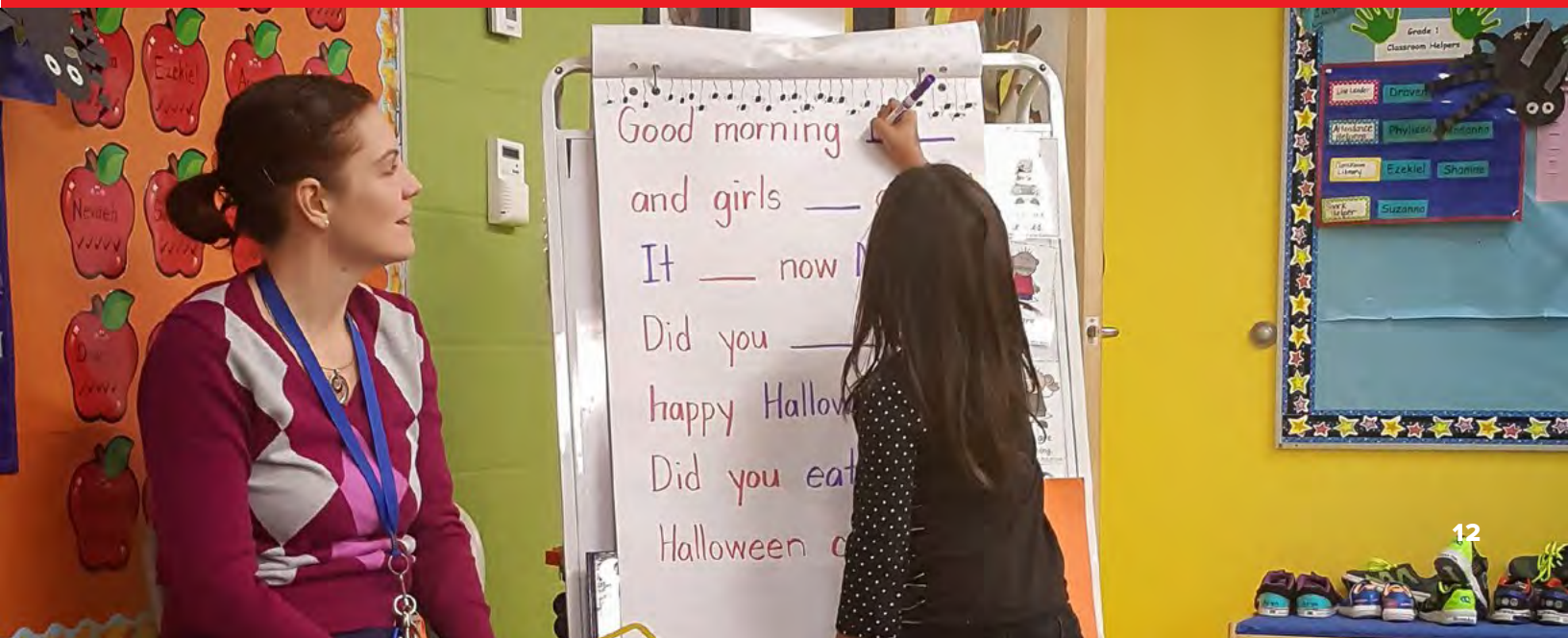
Stay inside my home or go out. When I stay inside that means I have nothing to do. When I go outside it means I have plans.

### What do you like most about your community? Why?

Events, like Treaty Days, because I actually see adults play games (they win it for the prize).

### What do you like about your favourite teacher(s)? Why?

I don't have a favourite teacher, to me, they are all equal for being my favourite.









# Around the Community



①

Sunset

②

Dogsledding

③

Northern Store

④

Vehicles leaving on the ice road

⑤

Right To Play program



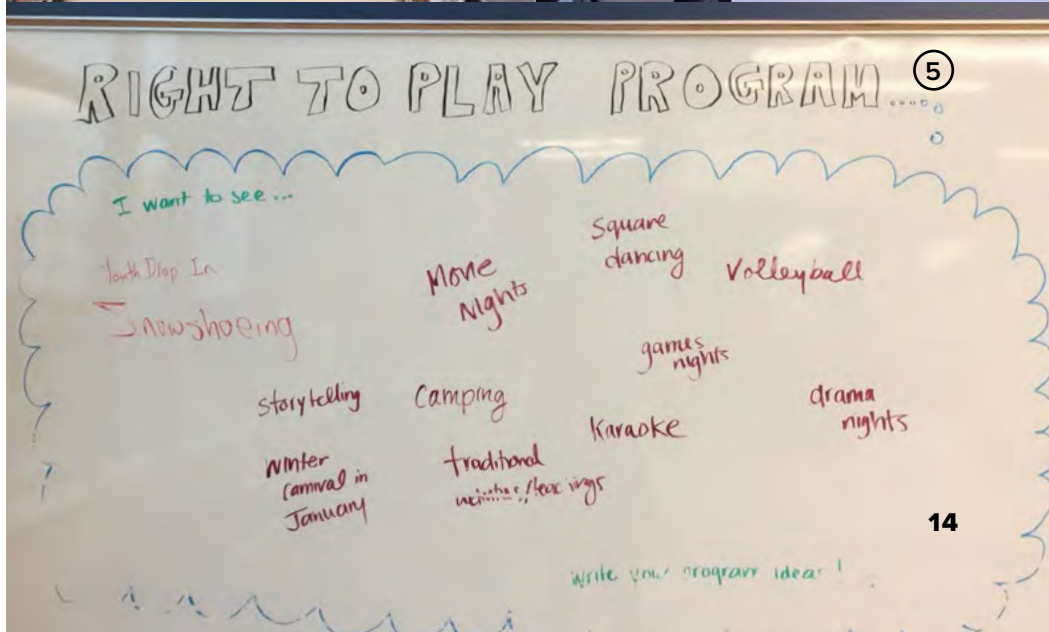
②



③



④



# Quick Facts

**Community Name**  
Poplar Hill First Nation

**Tribal Council**  
Keewaytinook Okimakanak

**Provincial Territorial Organization (PTO)**  
Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

## Population On-Reserve



**500**

## Language Spoken



**Algonkian  
(Ojibway)  
and English**

## Treaty



**Treaty 5**

## Average Yearly Temperature



**-19.8°C 18.3°C**  
January July

## Access



**Year-round**



**Jan - Mar**





## Poplar Hill Directory

**Poplar Hill Hotel**  
(807) 772-1029

**Address (for deliveries)**  
PO Box 23  
23 Main Street  
Poplar Hill, ON  
POV 3E0







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