



# MALASPINA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 57 (PRINCE GEORGE)



7900 Malaspina Avenue, Prince George, B.C. V2N 4A9 • Phone: (250) 964-9874 • Fax: (250) 964-9350 • www.mala.sd57.bc.ca

Dear Parents,

On Wednesday, January 13, 2010 we received information that two adults spotted Cougar tracks in the Malaspina area. The first report indicated that Cougar tracks had been sighted in the Gladstone Park area. The second person spotted Cougar tracks approximately 1 km from the corner of Domano Blvd and Malaspina Avenue on the gravel road. As both these areas are near our school the teachers have given students safety reminders regarding cougars.

In addition, the Conservation Office was informed of the sighting. While we have not had a visit from the Conservation Officer yet, we have gone on their website and obtained the following safety tips:

## Safety Tips about Cougars

Cougars seem to be attracted to children, possibly because their high-pitched voices, small size, and erratic movements make it difficult for cougars to identify them as human and not prey.

- Talk to children and teach them what to do if they encounter a cougar.
- Encourage children to play outdoors in groups, and supervise children playing outdoors.
- Consider getting a dog for your children as an early-warning system. A dog can see, smell, and hear a cougar sooner than we can. Although dogs offer little value as a deterrent to cougars, they may distract a cougar from attacking a human.
- Consider erecting a fence around play areas.
- Keep a radio playing.
- Make sure children are home before dusk and stay inside until after dawn.
- If there have been cougar sightings, escort children to the bus stop in the early morning. Clear shrubs away around the bus stop, making an area with a nine-metre (30 foot) radius. Have a light installed as a general safety precaution.

If you meet a cougar:

- *Never approach a cougar.* Although cougars will normally avoid a confrontation, all cougars are unpredictable. Cougars feeding on a kill may be dangerous.
- *Always give a cougar an avenue of escape.*
- *Stay calm.* Talk to the cougar in a confident voice.
- *Pick all children up off the ground immediately.* Children frighten easily and their rapid movements may provoke an attack.
- *Do not run.* Try to back away from the cougar slowly. Sudden movement or flight may trigger an instinctive attack.
- *Do not turn your back on the cougar.* Face the cougar and remain upright.
- *Do all you can to enlarge your image.* Don't crouch down or try to hide. Pick up sticks or branches and wave them about.

If you have any questions, or concerns, please feel free to contact me at the school.

Sincerely,

Nevio Rossi  
Principal