



Balaclava Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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October 2024 Balaclava School Newsletter

Principal's Message

I hope the process to start the school year has gone smoothly for you and your family. The return to early bus rides, making lunches and doing homework can be quite an adjustment after summer. Often, a new school year will mean new opportunities for problem solving for a child. How do I make new friends? How do I adjust to the expectations of my new educators? What will I do when the learning gets difficult?

As parents/guardians and caring adults, it is our instinct to keep our children away from as much distress and discomfort as we can. However, mental distress isn't always a bad thing. School, like many other aspects of life, is comprised of environmental/external stressors that require an individual to adapt to a challenge, which causes mental distress. This process of mental distress is part of good mental health and the basis of the development of resiliency. With time, the successful adaptation to the environmental stressor actually decreases ongoing mental distress. Coaching, empathetic listening, and encouragement are all processes adults can engage in to support a child in mental distress, but allowing young people to avoid it altogether can have negative impacts on their development of resiliency. What does that mean for interactions with our children and students? At school, we try to consistently provide the messaging that we can do hard things. That we can make mistakes, and mistakes are ok, and we can keep trying. That not all learning or interactions or experiences are fun and enjoyable but they can all be important. We celebrate achievement, yes, but we also celebrate trial and error, effort, and learning from our mistakes.

As areas of mental distress arise for your child over the course of the year, consider coaching them through it instead of alleviating it completely. Reach out to your child's educator(s) to ensure they are aware of that struggle so they can also coach and celebrate.

For more information about HWDSB's We Help strategy and mental health supports for students and families, please go to: <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/elementary/supports/mental-health-and-well-being/treatment/>

Weekly Updates

To ensure everyone in the school community is kept up-to-date on school events and activities, weekly updates from the Balaclava Home and School Association (Thursdays) and Balaclava School (Fridays) are being posted on the school website. To ensure you don't miss an update, we encourage all Balaclava families to subscribe. Just go to: <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/balaclava/> and click on the subscribe button to receive links to the updates directly to your email.

School Council

A school council plays an important role in advocating for our students, advising the principal and collaborating to improve school life for students. On September 23, a group of parent volunteers were elected to form our school council for the 2024 – 2025 school year. Your School Council Chair for this

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year is Jennifer Lowe. School council information will be posted throughout the year on the Balaclava website on the School Council page. If you would like to discuss any school council information or initiatives, please contact balaclavaSC@hwdsb.on.ca or kkeerybi@hwdsb.on.ca. All parents and guardians are welcome to attend any School Council meeting. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 18 at 6 p.m.

School Photo Day

Edge Imaging will be at Balaclava to complete School Photo day on **Wednesday October 16th**. Bring your smiles!

Balaclava Spirit Wear

Balaclava Spirit Wear will be on sale from October 3 until October 18th, with delivery to the school in mid-November. An electronic flyer and ordering information will be sent to all families. All funds raised from the sale of spirit wear will be used to augment the school's emergency excursions fund for students.

School Sports

Congratulations to our Boys' Senior, Boys' Junior, Girls' Senior and Girls' Junior Three Pitch Teams for their sportsmanship and efforts at their recent tournaments. A big thank you to all of the parents and guardians who transported students to and from the tournaments and cheered our players on. Thank you as well to our coaches Mr. Nicks, Mrs. Nelligan and Mr. Ansty. Way to go, Bobcats! October will see our students competing in Cross Country (gr 3-8), Swim Team (gr 3-5), Junior Girls and Boys Volleyball (gr 7) and Senior Girls and Boys Volleyball (gr 8). Good luck to all of our competitors.

School Calendar

Oct 3	Meet the Teacher, 5:30-6:30, school playground
Oct 3	Scholastic Book Fair, 5:00-7:00, school library
Oct 9	Cross Country Meet, Grade 3-8 team
Oct 14	Thanksgiving, no school
Oct 15, 22, 29	Home and School Pizza Days
Oct 16	School Photo Day
Oct 17, 31	Home and School Sub Days
Oct 24	Home and School Booster Juice Days
Nov 1	PA Day, no school