



# Dundana Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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## September, 2020 Dundana Newsletter

### Message from the Principal

*Our typical September start up newsletter rather quickly became a protocols and procedures update. So, now that we have those in order, I wanted to provide a more traditional September information.*

School is now officially in session and it is wonderful to have so many of our students back with us in person. The staff and I are very proud of how well students are adjusting to all of the new procedures and are getting into the classroom routines. Our educators have jumped into instruction in all of our traditional subject areas, as well as adding a few new areas.

Our new mathematics curriculum has many similarities to our previous curriculum, but one significant difference is specific expectations and student learning supporting Social Emotional Learning (SEL) through mathematics. For the last few years, Dundana educators have used problem solving in mathematics and science to promote and encourage resiliency. These new SEL expectations will augment those efforts throughout the grades. To see more information about the new mathematics curriculum, please see:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/new-math-curriculum-grades-1-8>

Another new addition to our studies this year are Ministry and Board-based resources that develop a community of care. Six modules will be explored throughout the year in our classes supporting physical, emotional and mental health and well being. Classes are currently exploring lessons in the first module, which is called Mental and Physical Health and Wellness. Many of these lessons focus on skills associated with our new reality: helping students understand the importance of hand washing, mask wearing, dealing with overwhelming feelings, etc. We know some students are struggling to understand all of the changes in their world. These lessons are intended to help open communication within a class and to help educators support students and families.

Within our instructional day, educators are trying out adjusted strategies to teach and assess their students. Physical distancing guidelines mean adapting how we teach and support students as well. As always, educators are being creative to find new ways to meet student need. Individually and collectively, we will also be learning more about how to make meaningful but safe adjustments to instruction from our board's program department. Please know that this is a process that we are constantly working and reflecting on; teaching and learning with these new parameters is a big adjustment for all of us.

### Upcoming Events

- Terry Fox Run – we may not be able to hold a full-school run due to distancing restrictions, but we are not about to forgo this important event entirely. Students will be learning about the Terry Fox legacy in their classes and will participate in the run during their PE classes. Families are welcome to donate directly to the Terry Fox foundation. More information will be coming out on the website soon.
- Orange Shirt Day – on Wednesday, September 30, Dundana School staff and students will participate in the Orange Shirt day event. This day is intended to recognize and create awareness of the individual, family and community inter-generational impacts of Indian Residential Schools. (source: [orangeshirtday.org](http://orangeshirtday.org)). We encourage students to wear an orange clothing item in support of our conversations in the school that day.



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## Some Common Questions This Year

This school year is a very different one for all of us. A very sincere thank you to all of our families who have worked with your child(ren) to instill new and difficult habits like mask wearing and physical distancing. Below are some common questions and answers that we are receiving from families:

### *When are you getting more bike racks?*

It is amazing to see so many of our families and students riding bikes to school! We've put out a variety of requests to get approved bike racks but they seem to be one of the pandemic shortages. I'm still working on getting more, but in the meantime, families and students have done a good job securing bikes to our surrounding fences safely.

### *Are students 2 m apart in the classroom?*

HWDSB protocols, approved by public health, have student desks 1 m apart. Throughout the day, staff remind students to physically distance from others and we do our best to keep students from different cohorts (classes) separated. Entry and dismissal are the most difficult times to maintain physical distance, which is why we require students to be masked during these transition times and why we ask non-staff adults to remain on the grass area instead of on our playground blacktop or kindergarten pen areas. We do ask that family members wear masks when on school property and work on physically distancing from non family members while here.

### *Will I be contacted if a student in my child's class is sent home?*

We will be taking our direction from Public Health about when to contact families, who to contact, and what information to share. Daily reports are made by Mrs. Keery Bishop to the Ministry of Education, and to HWDSB about student and staff absences and illnesses. When warranted, Public Health is then consulted and advise on next steps. Whole school, whole class or individual communication will be driven by their direction.

### *Can I volunteer in the school?*

At the moment, Public Health and the HWDSB has been working on strictly limiting the people in our schools as much as we can. Volunteers are not permitted at this time at Dundana.

### *How can I pick up my child early/ send my child in late?*

We ask all families to use the attendance management system to record any lates, early pick ups or absences. If you need direction about how to use this system, please contact Mrs. Bentley in the main office at 905.628.2622. **It is very important that you do not rely on notes to the teacher and/or calls into the school office for attendance issues.** If you are dropping off students late, please bring them to the front door. The office will then admit the students only and send them to their classes. We ask that family members remain outside. If you are picking up a student early, please buzz the front door and let us know who you are waiting for. We will then call them from class and have them brought to the front door to you. HWDSB messaging earlier this fall did also request that families try their best to reduce the number of disruptions to the school day for our students wherever possible.