



Dundana Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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August 31, 2022

Dear Dundana families,

We are excited to welcome students back to class – in person and remote learning – for the 2022-23 school year.

We know that the past two years have been challenging, and we are thrilled to see students, staff and families again. Each new year is a great new opportunity.

A friendly reminder that the first day of school for Grades 1 to 5 students will be **Tuesday, September 6, 2022**. Our entry time is 8:55 a.m. and dismissal is at 3:15 p.m. Our JK and SK students will start their school adventure on **Wednesday, September 7, 2022** with our newest students (JK) coming for short visits on the 6th.

We invite families to keep up with communications from HWDSB and Dundana School by [subscribing to email updates](#). Regular updates on our school website are the main way to communicate school news (e.g. upcoming special days or events), health and safety updates (e.g. positive COVID case notification) and celebrate the wonderful work our students and educators are doing.

Here are some important points to remember as students prepare for the start of the school year:

Supporting a Positive Return to School

HWDSB will continue to offer a wide variety of mental health supports for students, knowing that the pandemic has impacted student well-being. This is especially important during the return to school, which can be stressful for some students. See some supportive tips on our [recent web post](#). Explore our [We Help web page](#) for more evidence-based and timely school-based mental health services and supports.

Across HWDSB, we are also reintroducing a welcoming, inclusive initiative to help students as they return to school. Reimagining Wellness 2.0 is a series of activities and lessons which address needs arising during the pandemic. Watch for details in the days ahead.

COVID-19

Most health and safety guidance from the province is unchanged from the end of the 2021-22 school year, but here are some items we want to bring to your attention:

- It is still recommended that staff, students and visitors continue to self-screen every day before attending school using the [COVID-19 school and childcare screening tool](#). We no longer verify student screening results in schools. Please stay home if you have COVID-19 symptoms or are waiting for test results after experiencing symptoms.



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- HWDSB is a mask-friendly environment. We continue to support the wearing of masks in schools, administrative buildings and buses, as an effective public health measure. We will continue to offer free masks for students and visitors to our schools. Although masks are not required, our schools, offices and buses are respectful, welcoming and inclusive environments where individuals can choose to wear or not to wear a mask.
- HEPA filter units are installed in every occupied kindergarten class, in all occupied learning spaces without mechanical ventilation, and in mechanically ventilated learning spaces without MERV-13 level filters. HWDSB will continue to deploy HEPA filter units in learning spaces in a manner that maximizes their benefit. We will continue to publicly communicate ventilation measures on our [website](#).

Elementary Remote Learning and Transitions

Elementary families interested in switching between in-person and remote learning will have an opportunity to register their student starting Monday, August 29. The Remote Learning Registration (2022/2023) form will be available on the Parent Portal from 8:00 a.m. on Monday, August 29, and will close at 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7. Families can complete this form if they wish to:

- transition from in-person to remote learning, or
- transition from remote learning back to in-person

Families selecting a new learning option will be choosing this for their student for the full 2022-2023 school year. Students will begin attending their new classes when the re-organization process in early October takes place. Only families looking to switch their learning options are required to complete this form.

Please contact our school if you have difficulty accessing the Remote Learning Registration (2022/2023) on the Parent Portal under the “Remote Learning” section.

Transportation

We have been supporting HWSTS, our local transportation consortium, as they adopt a new platform for their Parent Portal. If your child qualifies for transportation, **please follow the steps listed to access your child(ren)’s information via the online portal**. Please keep in mind that last minute changes sometimes do occur and that it is important to re-check the information prior to sending your child(ren) to their assigned pickup location on September 6, 2022. Go to www.hamiltonschoolbus.ca and click on the “Parent’s Portal” on the Home page, OR “Bus Stop Finder” on the landing page. [Learn more](#).

Bus contactors will continue with regular cleaning routines, to ensure that students and drivers have a sanitary environment. Masks are optional but encouraged while riding the bus.

If your child is not eligible for bus transportation (not sure? Check here:

<https://hwsts.mybusplanner.ca/TransportationEligibility>) we will share more information in October on the website about applying for Courtesy Transportation. In the meantime, families will need to make other arrangements for drop off and pick up for their non-eligible children.



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Communication with the School and Addressing a Concern

Students and families with classroom concerns are encouraged to contact their student's classroom teacher. School-wide concerns can be addressed by the principal. [Addressing a Concern \(PDF\)](#). Our grade 1 to 5 students will have an agenda to help facilitate communication between families and the teacher. Kindergarten students will have an important bag to similarly assist with information sharing. Encourage your child to get into the routine of carrying and sharing this item with you and their educators daily.

Right to Disconnect

Healthy work-life boundaries, including the ability for all employees to disconnect from work after hours, is an important part of maintaining one's health and well-being. HWDSB has implemented a [Right to Disconnect Procedure](#) to support educators, administrators and other HWDSB staff. While all urgent communication will continue to be shared after hours, please note that families communicating with educators and administrators may receive a delay in response to all non-emergency inquiries received after hours.

What Does My Child Need to Bring to School?

Back to school shopping can be exciting, but awfully expensive for families. The only items that your child should have is a backpack, lunch bag (for our two nutrition breaks) and indoor shoes. Anything beyond that is parental discretion. Once classes begin, teachers may suggest some other items that can augment your child's learning experience, but are not required. A reminder, though, that we do go outside in all sorts of weather, so please make sure your child comes prepared to be comfortable outside, be it raining, snowing or hot and sunny! Waterproof outdoor boots/shoes, umbrella, and dressing in layers should help your child adjust to indoor and outdoor learning comfortably. If you can also label as many of your child's personal items as possible, this is VERY helpful in reuniting items with families. Note: we do have a lost and found bin in our front foyer that you are welcome to search. It gets emptied and donated once every six weeks or so.

Nutrition Breaks at School

Dundana School has two nutrition breaks in our school day. First break is 10:35 to 11:15 and second break is 12:55 to 1:35. During that time, students will go outside to play for 20 minutes then have 20 minutes to eat in their classroom (note: kindergarten classes may go outside at an alternative time). Student lunches need to be independently accessed and opened by students. Our school is nut-safe, meaning we ask families to not send products with nuts in them. In the coming weeks, additional food restrictions may be added as we learn more about our current students' food allergies. If your child has an anaphylactic food (or other) allergy, or another medical condition we should know about, please contact the office for the initial paperwork.



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Umbrella Before and After School Care

Dundana is fortunate to have a large before and after school care program provided by Umbrella from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. on school days. If you are looking for care or have questions about this program, please go to: <https://www.umbrellafamily.com/home/centres/dundana/>

Devices at School

At times, students may use school devices (e.g. ipads) to engage in learning under the direction of their educators. Devices are not to be used without the direction and supervision of the educators, and are not to be used at all during non-instructional times. If a family wants a student to bring a personal device such as a cell phone, please note that it is not to be used during school hours without the educator's knowledge or direction. Students also assume all responsibility for their personal devices against loss or damage. Media consent forms will be made available to families via the Parent Portal in the coming days.

Change of Family Information

If you have any changes in phone numbers, address, custody arrangements or emergency contacts, please let the office know via email to dundana@hwdsb.on.ca or by calling 905.628.2622.