

January 2025

Dear Parents/Guardians/Caregivers:

It is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome back after the holiday season! I hope each of you had a chance to recharge, spend time with loved ones, and reflect on the many things we have to be grateful for.

A Busy End to the Year: December Highlights

As we wrapped up an eventful end to 2024, we extend heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated teachers, educators, office staff, and caretakers who made the magic happen for our students. Here is a summary of the incredible activities and events that took place during late November and December:

OSSLT Testing A new approach to OSSLT testing was successfully organized and completed, including support for previously eligible students. Grade 10 English classes played a significant role in preparing students for the test, while various classrooms adapted to accommodate testing needs. Student Success staff also contributed to ensuring a smooth process.

Winter Formal The Winter Formal at Liuna Station was a spectacular evening. Students enjoyed dressing up and dancing with friends. Many staff members supervised the event, creating a safe and memorable experience for everyone.

Winter Concert Our Winter Concert showcased a variety of musical talent, including performances by singing and instrumental groups such as the Jazz Band, Drum Corps, and Junior and Senior Bands. The evening also featured a successful raffle and door prizes as part of a community fundraiser. It was a wonderful night of music and celebration.

Health and Safety Walks Health and Safety walks were conducted to ensure clean and safe learning environments. The collective efforts of staff, admin and caretaking teams made these inspections successful.

SHSM and Tech Excursions Several SHSM Navigations to Tech sites and Colleges supported students exploring Workplace, Trades, and Apprenticeship pathways. Guidance and Tech Department staff worked together to coordinate and chaperone these informative trips.

Drama Excursion Students attended a performance of *Wicked* as part of a drama excursion. The show was a great experience, with more exciting opportunities planned for next year.

Annual Reviews and IPRCs Students with Individual Education Plans were supported through Navigation Meetings to post-secondary sites and also took part in IPRC meetings. Learning Resource staff worked diligently to assist families and ensure all necessary preparations and supports were put in place.

Winter Sports and Clubs With great thanks and gratitude to our DVSS coaches and supervisors, our winter sports and clubs are thriving, with various activities now in full swing, including:

- **Sr. Boys Water Polo**, finishing in second place in the City Championships!
- **Jr. and Sr. Girls Volleyball**
- **Girls Varsity Hockey**
- **Jr. and Sr. Boys Basketball**
- **Swim Team**
- **Reach for the Top**
- **Robotics Club**, including participation in the FIRST Tech Challenge at the University of Waterloo in February!
- **DECA Team**, heading to the Provincial Competition at Toronto in February!

Our students are fortunate to have such incredible support and dedication from staff as they pursue their passions and talents.

As our first semester is nearing the end, I want to share some important highlights of what to expect over the next month...

Cocoa and Crunch

We had a very successful Cocoa and Crunch yesterday! More than a hundred students joined our Student Success and Learning Resource staff in classrooms at lunch to learn more about what to expect with exams and culminating evaluations. Students were able to ask questions and get helpful advice from senior student mentors. It was a great event, and we are thankful to the staff and students that supported our new Gryphons to set them up for success!

Gr 9 EQAO

New this year, the Ministry has stated that student EQAO results will represent 10% of their grade 9 math mark. The full exam has 2 component parts: session 1 and session 2 to complete. In order to prepare our students, all grade 9 students will have a chance to complete a practice test on Wednesday January 15th during their regularly scheduled math class with the assistance of their teacher. Students are also welcome to carry out more practice tests on their own time (at home) and can ask their math teacher for assistance if needed to get them started. The formal EQAO exam that is submitted to the Ministry for marking will take place over 2 dates, one test session written on each day as follows:

Tuesday January 21st -Period 1 and 3 classes will go to their regularly scheduled math class to complete the first test session. Students are able to have extra time if needed. **OR**

Wednesday January 22nd - period 2 and 4 classes will go to their regularly scheduled math class to complete the first test session. Students are able to have extra time if needed.

The second exam session will be completed during their regularly scheduled exam day starting at 8:05am.

Quiet Week:

As we ease back into the routine of school life, I want to remind everyone that Quiet Week begins this Thursday, January 16th. During Quiet Week, students are expected to attend all regular classes to work towards completing their final lessons and to prepare for their culminating activities or exams. This is a vital time to focus, seek support from teachers, and ensure a strong finish to the semester. Students will also have the opportunity to access room 2015 during their lunch period starting on Thursday January 16th – 22nd to have a quiet space to study with the support of Student Success staff.

Exam Days:

"Exam Days" will continue to be scheduled each semester; however, many classes won't be running formal exams. Instead, some classes will have culminating tasks, activities, projects, or reflections (to name a few) that will be held during the "Exam Day"/Final Evaluation schedule.

It is important to note that ALL students are expected to attend their designated "Exam Day" for each of their courses, including Co-Op. Attendance will be taken, and "Exam Day" evaluations will be worth marks toward a student's report card. Students are required to stay for 75 minutes on the exam day; however, some courses may require more time spent at school depending on the task.

Students, please ask your individual teachers how long, and what type of task you need to prepare for each day. In all cases, students who require additional time to complete their tasks on "Exam Day" will be provided with extra time.

Bussing will continue to run regular hours for each Exam Day. Students are welcome to make their own personal alternate arrangements (outside of the school bus schedule) to be picked up earlier in the day following their "Exam" timeslot if they prefer. Alternatively, students are able to remain in the cafeteria following their exams to prepare/study for future exams with teacher supervision. Attendance is only taken for the exam period.

Exam Schedule:

All Exams are run from 8:05am - 9:20am

***(some evaluations will be longer, please reach out to your teacher for specifics)**

Period 1 Class "Exam" - Thursday January 23rd

Period 2 Class "Exam" - Friday January 24th

Period 3 Class "Exam" - Monday January 27th

Period 4 Class "Exam" - Tuesday January 28th

Make Up Day "Exam" - Wednesday January 29th (*i.e.* snow day postponements written today)

*If a snow day occurs, the snow day exam will be moved to the 'Make Up Day'...it will not bump the next day exam to a day further down the schedule in sequence.

I want to wish all our students well as they finish up their semester strong!

Other Important Dates:

- January 30th** – PD day, no school for students
- January 31st** – First day of Semester 2. Student schedules will be sent to them electronically. Parents/Guardian will be able to see schedules in Parent Portal.
- February 5th** - Course Selections open to choose courses for next year in *myBluePrint*
- February 11th** -Semester 2 Photo Day
- February 17th** -Family Day, no school for staff or students
- February 21st** -Last day to submit course selections for next year in *myBluePrint*
- February 25th** -Proposed Vaccine Clinic. More details will be shared from Public Health when available
- February 28th** -PD day, no school for students
- March 7th** -Last day of school before start of March Break (March 10-14)
- March 17th** -First day back at school following March Break
- June 26th** -**SAVE THE DATE!** **Commencement for all grade 12s** at the Convention Centre Starting at 4pm. More details to follow soon!

As always, please don't hesitate to reach out to the school if you have any questions or concerns. Our office staff will be more than happy to assist you or to direct your call.

Sincerely,

Kim Collier (she/her)
Principal

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