

## **A. Purpose of Survey**

In light of concerns raised by Hamilton Police, staff, and community members about sightlines and playground access at Earl Kitchener elementary school, Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) conducted a survey to gather more input on the issue. This survey gathered feedback on the playground procedures, both before and after school, as well as any general safety concerns at the school.

HWDSB asked members of the Earl Kitchener school community to respond to the survey either online or through paper copies available in the main office.

Parents/guardians/caregivers and school staff received a letter asking for their participation in the survey. The letter was sent home with the oldest or only child in each family and staff members received the letter in their mailboxes at school. Each letter contained a unique code to be entered in order to access the survey.

## **B. Respondent Characteristics**

The survey was available from January 30<sup>th</sup> to February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015 and garnered a total of 194 responses which were all submitted online. Thirty-one (31) responses were deleted because invalid codes were entered, no codes were entered, or valid codes were entered multiple times. As a result, **163** responses were analyzed and reported on in this report.

## **C. Limitations of the Survey Results**

Some limitations of the survey results are noteworthy. First, it is unknown how many parents/guardians/caregivers and staff members completed the survey because respondents were not asked to identify their role in the school community. This decision was made to protect the identity of respondents. Therefore it is unclear whether the responses summarized accurately reflect the opinions of Earl Kitchener staff members and parents/guardians/caregivers. Second, in order to ensure the anonymity of respondents, the survey software used could not prevent the entry of codes multiple times to access the survey. If a code was used multiple times, all responses linked to that code were deleted except for the first response recorded. Third, in order to ensure the anonymity of respondents, the survey software also could not prevent the entry of invalid codes or the entry of no code to access the survey. Any responses that were not linked to a valid code were deleted. It is therefore recommended that the results summarized herein are interpreted within the bounds of these limitations.

## **D. Summary of Findings**

Members of the Earl Kitchener school community were invited to provide feedback on the school playground procedures, both before and after school, as well as any general safety concerns at the school. Following is a summary of the feedback received.

**Question 1: In your opinion, what procedure should be put in place to keep students safe in the morning before the bell?**

	% of respondents
Keep the playground completely closed to everyone but students and school staff.	11.3% (n=18)
Parents/guardians/caregivers are welcome on the playground until 8:35am, at which point, parents/ guardians/caregivers will move to the sidewalk outside of the playground. Parents/guardians/caregivers can observe their children from there.	22.6% (n=36)
Designate a specific location on the playground for parents/guardians/caregivers to wait until the bell rings and students enter the school. Parents/guardians/caregivers will then leave the playground area.	21.4% (n=34)
<b>Other, please describe</b>	<b>44.7% (n=71)</b>

Other Comments <sup>1</sup>	N
Keep things the same	45
Parents should be allowed on the playground	16
Parents move to playground area away from lines at bell time	10
Ensure teachers are supervising students	7
Special consideration is needed for parents with young students	7
Children are not unsafe	4
Parents on playground can prevent future incidents	4
Designate a separate entrance for FDK students	3
Designate an enclosed area for FDK students who need to be supervised	3
Parents on playground builds community	3
Use option #3 above as a second choice	3

The majority of respondents (44.7%) provided ‘other’ suggestions when asked to comment on the procedure that should be put in place to keep students safe in the morning before the bell. Of these ‘other’ comments, many respondents advocated for keeping procedures the same as they currently are, allowing parents on the playground, and having parents move to an area of the playground away from the lines at bell time.

<sup>1</sup> For all summaries of open-ended responses, only themes that were recorded 3 times or more for each question were included.

**Question 2: In your opinion, what procedure should be put in place to keep students safe during afternoon dismissal?**

	% of respondents
Keep the playground completely closed to everyone but students and school staff. Parents/guardians/caregivers will wait outside the playground on the sidewalk for their children.	3.7% (n=6)
<b>Parents/guardians/caregivers can enter the playground to a designated point, allowing space for staff to dismiss students. Students will remain with school staff until the student acknowledges that they see their parent/guardian/caregiver.</b>	<b>50.9% (n=82)</b>
Designate a location on the playground for parents/guardians/caregivers to wait for their children to be dismissed when the bell rings. Students meet parents/guardians/caregivers at this location.	15.5% (n=25)
Other, please describe	29.8% (n=48)

Other Comments <sup>2</sup>	N
Keep things the same	37
Teacher to parent hand off of students is necessary at dismissal	6
Parents should be allowed on the playground	5
Special consideration is needed for parents with young students	5
Children are not unsafe	4
Parents move to playground area away from lines at dismissal	4
Parents on playground builds community	3
Parents waiting outside the fence will block sidewalks and is a safety concern	3
Teacher parent hand off for all students would take too long	3

The majority of respondents (50.9%) suggested that at dismissal *parents/guardians/caregivers can enter the playground to a designated point, allowing space for staff to dismiss students. Students will remain with school staff until the student acknowledges that they see their parent/guardian/caregiver.*

The majority of ‘other’ comments advocated for keeping the afternoon dismissal procedures the same as they currently are.

<sup>2</sup> For all summaries of open-ended responses, only themes that were recorded 3 times or more for each question were included.

**Question 3: Please indicate whether any of the following are a concern for you about safety at Earl Kitchener. (Choose as many as apply).**

	% of respondents
<b>Supervision on the playground (i.e., teacher student ratio)</b>	<b>49.7% (n=81)</b>
Financial constraints to supervision	28.8% (n=47)
Parent/guardian/caregiver presence on the playground	26.4% (n=43)
School communication about issues/events	23.9% (n=39)
Drop off procedures	23.3% (n=38)
I don't have any concerns about safety at Earl Kitchener	21.5% (n=35)
Security in the school	16.0% (n=26)
Pick up procedures	13.5% (n=22)
Other (please specify)	32.5% (n=53)

Other Comments <sup>3</sup>	N
Lack of supervision during nutrition breaks	15
No designated drop off and pick up areas for parents who drive	6
Parents on the playground	6
Overreactions from some to make safety changes that are not needed	5
Ensure teachers are supervising students	3
Installing higher fence took the risk away	3

Almost half of all respondents (49.7%) indicated that *supervision on the playground (i.e., teacher student ratio)* is a safety concern at Earl Kitchener, followed by *financial constraints to supervision* (28.8%), and *parent/guardian/caregiver presence on the playground* (26.4%).

In the 'other' comments, fifteen (15) respondents indicated that a lack of supervision during nutrition breaks is a safety concern.

<sup>3</sup> For all summaries of open-ended responses, only themes that were recorded 3 times or more for each question were included.

**Question 4: Please feel free to provide any additional comments and suggestions in the space provided.<sup>4</sup>**

	N
Parents should not be allowed on the playground	22
Keep playground closed to everyone except staff, students and FDK parents	19
School is overcrowded	17
Special consideration is needed for parents with young students	15
Overreactions from some to make safety changes that are not needed	14
Parents on playground builds community	13
Community should be welcome on the playground	12
Installing higher fence took the risk away	10
Children are not unsafe	9
Incident did not occur at pick up or drop off	9
Parents on playground can prevent future incidents	6
Keep things the same	5
No designated drop off and pick up areas for parents who drive	5
EK should not be treated any different than other schools in the system	4
Options need to include opportunity for communication between parent and teacher on the playground	4
Parents move to playground area away from lines at bell and dismissal	4
Designate an enclosed area for FDK students who need to be supervised	3
Have students enter and be dismissed from school at different times	3
Parents should be allowed on the playground	3

Respondents reiterated many of the same suggestions and concerns from the previous questions. Overall, some respondents believe that parents should not be on the playground or should stay in designated areas on the playground, whereas others believe that things should stay the same and having parents on the playground helps with the safety of all students.

<sup>4</sup> For all summaries of open-ended responses, only themes that were recorded 3 times or more for each question were included.