



Earl Kitchener School Elementary School

September 2024

Welcome Back!

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

On behalf of myself, our Vice Principal Ms. Ricci, and the staff of Earl Kitchener School, welcome back to what will no doubt be another great year here at EK. I can tell you that we're excited to get going and that we very much look forward to getting to know you and your children as we work together in supporting students.

Our caretaking staff has done a fantastic job of preparing this 100+ year old gem of a school over the summer and it is a massive task. Miss Kandi and Miss Heather in the office have dedicated much time and effort to communicating with families and gathering information in accordance with 'beginning of school' protocols. Teaching staff, Early Childhood Educators and Educational Assistants began preparing during the last week of August to ensure that classrooms are welcoming and safe environments for your children to learn in.

Thank you for taking the time to complete the various online forms (*Parent Portal*) and included with this 'welcome back memo' is a 'walking trip permission form' that we ask families to complete annually. Please return to your child's teacher by no later than next Friday, September 13th (and more info below).

Caregivers are a critical part of students' learning experience at school. Your child's teacher should always be your first/primary 'go to' person and please do not hesitate to make contact directly with questions or concerns about your child's education. Also, please consider subscribing to our EK website as well as the HWDSB website (*there is also now an HWDSB app available for download*) in order to receive notifications when new information is posted. Working together is the best way to support students to achieve their full potential.

Sorry in advance for a LONG initial newsletter however much to share as we kick off another year!

Upcoming dates to remember;

- **Our FIRST School Council and Home and School Association** meetings for this school year will be held the evening of Tuesday, September 17th beginning at 6:30 pm in our Learning Commons (library). Please consider joining us to learn more about what's happening here at EK. Simply reach out for details if you are interested in joining either group using either of the following email accounts:

EK School Council: earlkitchenerSC@hwdsb.on.ca

EK Home and School Association: ekhomeandschool@gmail.com

- **'Meet the Teacher'** night is **Thursday, October 3rd**. Our current plan is for a BBQ from 5:00 – 6:00 out back followed by 'Meet the Teacher' in the school from 6:00 – 7:00. We also hold a Scholastic Book Fair in the gym on this date ... please make a point to stop by and say hello!

Additional items to note...

1. Drop off, dismissal and safety! As I'm sure most are aware, morning entry and end of day dismissal can be challenging times at Earl Kitchener School given the large school population and limited space. Due to the number of students and caregivers typically at the school for 'drop off' and 'pick up', there are processes that have been established over the course of recent years that we will continue to adhere to. Specifically, this means;

- ✓ Drop off for three of our Kindergarten classes is directly at the 'K pen' gate located adjacent to Stanley Street. Two of our FDK classes enter and remain just inside the Homewood Avenue gate (teachers will clarify and communicate with families directly regarding where to drop off / pick up).
- ✓ Drop off for students in Grades 1-5 is through either gate (Stanley Street side or Homewood Street side) and we ask that **parents/guardians remain off the playground in order that children have space to play and appropriately safe supervision is possible**. Supervision is in place each morning as of 8:35 a.m. and we encourage to wait until then for entry if/where possible.
- ✓ On the playground, each class has an assigned 'spot' to line up (these are the yellow painted alphabet letters on blue painted maple leaves). Teachers have instructed students as to where they are to be once the entry bell rings.
- ✓ At end of day (dismissal), Kindergarten to Grade 3 students are released directly to caregivers on the back playground and we ask that **caregivers remain outside the fenced area until such time as staff and students are ready at which time we simply 'wave folks in'**.

Parking / stopping (drop off and pick up) ... stopping or parking in areas outside of schools each day is always a challenge. *PLEASE remember that if/where possible, walking is always your best option and if you are having to drive, be mindful of not blocking our neighbours' driveways and/or the staff parking lot.* Thank you in advance for your courtesy, respect and support.

2. At EK, with the help of dedicated parent volunteers, we have been able to provide a 'Nutritious snack' program (twice weekly), along with occasional Pizza days and 'milk' days. These will continue beginning in the not too distant future ... stay tuned for more information.

3. **Water bottles!** In addition to drinking fountains, we have filtered water filling 'hydration stations' on each floor that students can access. Consider labelling a (non-glass) water bottle with your child's name to use if you wish.

4. **Lost and found** ... we're never sure how it happens, but DAILY there are items left behind on the playground and in hallways that are added to our 'lost and found' pile. We attempt to display items regularly and yet rarely have luck in finding owners for everything and eventually things are donated. **Please add your child's name to items if/where possible in order that we can get things back to whom they belong.**

5. **Walking trip form** ... included with this newsletter is a permission form that we use ONLY for classes/students to be able to walk with their teacher in the immediate neighbourhood occasionally. This refers essentially to the areas/sidewalks that border the EK property and teachers will let families know if ever this means a walk beyond the school property.

6. **Safe Schools Policy** ... there are a few 'drills' that all schools are required to facilitate annually;

- ✓ *Fire Drills* ... three each fall and three each spring
- ✓ Lockdown Drills ... two annually and dates to be communicated
- ✓ Hold and Secure
- ✓ Shelter in place
- ✓ Evacuation (general)

7. **Birthdays, celebrations and so on** ... while there was a long-standing tradition in schools where caregivers often wanted to send in 'class treats' as part of celebrating a child's birthday, this is no longer allowable. Nutrition Policy dictates that only a handful of 'policy free' days can occur and we reserve these for occasions such as Valentine's Day, etc.

8. **Dogs onsite** ... while many of us are animal lovers it is important to note that MANY children (and adults) are quite anxious and even fearful of dogs. While City Bylaw allows for dogs to be present, even during drop off and pick up, dogs **MUST be leashed** and well-controlled by owners. My personal thought is to consider being 'back from the crowds' if you have your dog with you.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns about this, or anything else, please don't hesitate to call or make arrangements to come in and talk. Thank you for the continued help and support in making Earl Kitchener School safe and a great place to be!

Mr. Thorne, Ms. Ricci and the staff of Earl Kitchener School.