



Dear Gatestone Families,

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board supports the [Ministerial Order](#) as an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we engage the direction to close schools.

Public schools will remain closed until May 31, 2020. As these dates come closer, this decision will be re-evaluated by the Ministry of Education based on public health advice. The closure may be extended if necessary to protect the health and safety of students, families and staff. A friendly reminder to families and students that Gatestone school property is also closed to the public during this time. This means that play structures, the school field, black top area, walkways and the school parking lot will remain closed until at least May 31, 2020.

Our educators will continue to provide distant learning. Please continue to review updates on our website for the latest news and parent resources and supports. Clicking on the ***“Phoning Your School during the Ministerial Order”*** link at the top of our Gatestone home page will take you to the following web page, <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/blog/novel-coronavirus/>. This web page contains all of the latest information families need during the school closure due to Covid 19. Staff HWDSB e-mails have also been posted on our Gatestone school website under the “Gatesone Staff page” should you need to connect with your child’s teacher during the regular school day hours (9AM-3:20PM).

Gatestone Spirit Days in May

Even though we are practicing distant learning, Gatestone Spirit Days will continue this year. We would like to add a little fun to your Friday by requesting students and families participate in our Fun Friday Spirit Days of May. We encourage you to share a picture of your child or family celebrating our Spirit Days with us. You can e-mail your picture to kreillys@hwdsb.on.ca if you are comfortable having your child or family's picture shared on our website or twitter feed @GatestoneSchool.

SPRIT DAYS OF MAY

Friday, May 8 – Creative Sock Day

Friday, May 15 – Reading with your Favourite Stuffed Toy

Friday, May 22 – Celebrate the Outdoors – Outside Activity

Friday, May 29 – Gatestone Spirit (colours, spirit wear)



2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

Requests for Specific Learning Environment for Your Children

It's understandable that although we are currently faced with school closures, September class placements are on families' minds. Gatestone Elementary School does not accept parental requests for a specific class placement. We have checked with our area schools and the majority of schools do not accept these requests either. The practice of selecting a specific teacher is contrary to all that we believe in terms of respecting all members of the Gatestone community and learning to work together.

With our current focus on grade team planning and implementation of our instructional program, all classes of the same grade will have a similar curriculum focus and delivery. Given that the curriculum will be aligned across the classes in the same grade, parents can be assured that the instructional program their child receives will be of equal caliber across the grade team. While we know that parents sometimes have a preference for a

specific teacher, we believe it is important for our students to learn how to cooperate and function in an environment with a wide range of personalities and educational philosophies, which is a life-long skill that is imperative to meeting with success in any group or workplace. For these reasons we will not accept requests naming specific teachers and/or students.

At Gatestone we have developed a comprehensive process of assigning students to classes based on combinations of students, the learning needs of each student, the balance of male/female ratios, students who present with challenges, as well as independent workers versus students who require greater teacher support. All of this information is important in developing classes that are balanced and effective and can only be done by staff who work directly, in the school, with all of the students being considered.

Another common request from parents is that their child not be placed in a “split” or a combined class. We cannot accept these requests. Split or combined classes are a reality in education today. Instruction in these classrooms is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. We take the entire student profile into account before making decisions about placement. Just because a child was in a combined class one year does not guarantee that they will not be in a combined class the following year.

Should you feel the need to share parental input into the type of learning environment that would best meet the specific needs of your child, you are welcome to share this information through e-mail to kreillys@hwdsb.on.ca. I hope this has helped you to understand the complexity of allocating classes in a fair, responsible and equitable manner and helps to assure you that great attention is given to the placement of each and every child.

Respectfully,

Kelly Reilly-Scott
Principal
kreillys@hwdsb.on.ca

Sherry Del Mastro
Vice-Principal
sdelmast@hwdsb.on.ca