



September 27 – October 1

Gatestone Elementary School 2021-2022

Monday, September 27	Day 4	
Tuesday, September 28	Day 5	
Wednesday, September 29	Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">6PM School Council Meeting on MS Teams All families welcome. Please e-mail gatestone@hwdsb.on.ca for the link to join our meeting.
Thursday, September 30	Day 2	Orange Shirt Day – Honour children whose lives were lost and the survivors of Residential Schools.
Friday, October 1	Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Students receive class placement that will begin October 4th (Please review School Reorganization details below)

Community Updates

Orange Shirt Day and National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

On Thursday we wear orange to honour the story of Phyllis Webstad, who in the early 1970s had her orange shirt taken away on her first day at the St. Joseph Mission Residential School in British Columbia. The orange shirt is symbolic of how Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their homes, families and communities to attend state and church-led schools that stripped them of their culture, language and identity. We encourage you to wear orange this Thursday to honour the children whose lives were lost and the survivors of Residential Schools.

Beginning in May, 2021, 215 bodies were uncovered at the Kamloops Indian Residential School, and since then, over 6,100 bodies in unmarked graves have been unearthed.

Indigenous families and communities have known this truth for a long time, as reflected in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report, many children went to Residential Schools, never to come home. We denounce the acts of racism that have occurred in the past and that still occur in Canada against Indigenous Peoples and communities.

<https://hwdsb.tv/media/orange-shirt-day-video/>

Gatestone School Reorganization – First Day October 4th

Each fall, HWDSB reviews elementary student enrolment in schools, and reorganizes staffing if actual enrolment differs from the spring projections. It is normal for student enrolment to fluctuate from spring to fall.

This year, the fall reorganization is more widespread due to the in-person/remote option for students. The ongoing need to meet provincial class size requirements and adhere to public health measures when examining appropriate distancing in our classrooms are also a factor.

Specifically, at our school, the reorganization will mean an increase in combined classes across Grades 1-8 to adhere to provincial class sizes and public health measures. A combined class has 2 Grade levels (e.g., 3/4 or 4/5). The majority of the school organization is made up of combined classes this year. It is likely your child may be in a combined class.

There will be limited impact in our Kindergarten classes and Grade 7-8 classes for the reorganization, however, our Grades 1-6 classes will be affected.

Given the many protocols the school must adhere to when building classes during this reorganization, the school will not be taking parent or caregiver requests for specific classes or teachers. When working on student placements, classroom environments

and matching students up with some peer groups will be considered. The school will do their best to minimize class changes as well. Keeping many students that were already together in the same class will be our priority. Students will also learn to make new friendships in their classes with support from our educators.

Combined Classes – Parent Information

Why do you have classes of combined grades?

Most classes of combined grades are created to accommodate students in a school where it is not possible to create only single-grade classes and to adhere to provincial class sizes. For example, if there are thirty Grade 2 students, thirty Grade 3 students, and three teachers, the only way to organize the children into smaller classes is to combine some students from both grades in one class. Some schools, however, choose to create classes of combined grades, so that their students have the opportunity to gain the academic and socio-emotional benefits associated with such classes.

What are the benefits of placement in a class of combined grades?

There are many socio-emotional benefits for students who are in classes with students of various ages. For example, in such classes, peer interactions have been shown to be very positive; students have opportunities for greater development of social skills and cooperation skills; and students often develop a feeling of comfort and security, a positive self-concept, and a sense of satisfaction with their achievements. There are also significant opportunities for development of leadership skills and for learning from peers. In studies measuring academic achievement, students in classes of combined grades were found to perform as well as students in single grade classes.

Why was my child chosen to be in a class of combined grades?

When placing students in all classes, educators consider a variety of factors, including number of students, students' interests, strengths, needs, learning styles, motivation, work habits, emotional development, and linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds.

The amount of time for an individual student is not determined by the organization of classrooms by grade. In all classrooms, teachers employ a number of instructional strategies to address the needs of all students. On a daily basis, teachers work with large groups, small groups, and individual students.

How do teachers prepare for teaching classes of combined grades?

Teachers develop the knowledge and skills to effectively manage any classroom, including knowledge of curriculum resources and flexibility in planning. Teachers also learn about which instructional strategies work well with the students in their class while they teach, whether it is a single-grade class or a class of combined grades. As well, the Ministry of Education and the local district school board provide many professional learning opportunities for teachers on planning and instruction.

Will the child in the higher grade be sufficiently challenged?

Research has shown that there are no negative effects on academic achievement. Teachers design programs to challenge children at their appropriate academic level. In any given classroom, students have diverse needs and interests, and teachers spend a great deal of time planning a program so that it addresses this range. Along with the academic studies, students also learn to work with a cross-section of other students, reinforcing social and leadership skills. Research suggests that this is an advantage.

Walk to School

Gatestone is a “walking school”. Students live within a walking distance from the school and therefore are encouraged to walk to school with parents or peers rather than be driven by vehicle. A school bus is the exemption here.

Benefits of Walking to and from School

- Improved safety on our community streets
- Less congestion and pollution near the school
- Walking provides time for mindfulness and self-reflection
- Walking with a peer provides time for peer connection
- Exercise – feeling healthier and energized for school
- Adding more steps to your day

This week while walking to and from school with a caregiver or peer, try playing a game of scavenger hunt. Create clues of something you see and have your partner guess what the object/landmark may be.

Daily COVID-19 Screening

HWDSB COVID-19 Student Screening Checklist is to be completed daily before arriving at school. This year students will need to present proof of completed screening daily. Parents were provided with a calendar. Many are attached in your child's agenda or some form of organizer the classroom teacher uses. Please initial each day to verify your child has passed the screener. Our Grade 7 & 8 students may complete the screener electronically to show they have passed the screener.

Terry Fox Run 2021

Our annual Terry Fox Run will not be a one-day event again this year, but a weeklong celebration from October 4th to October 8th. Instead of the whole school running at the same time, staff will choose a time during that week to complete the run with their class. Leading up to their run, classes will have the opportunity to take part in a variety of different activities to learn more about this great Canadian and his cause. Below you will find information about how you can support our run this year.

Buy a t-shirt

Terry Fox Run t-shirts will be available for purchase through school cash online starting on September 13th, children are \$15.00, and adult are \$20.00. All money raised through the sale of the t-shirts will go towards our fundraising goal for this year. T-shirts can be ordered until September 23rd.

Fundraise online

This year we will once again be collecting online donations only, unfortunately we are unable to accept cash or cheques. Using the link below you will be able to make a one-time donation or set up your own fundraising page so your friends and family can help you reach your own goal. Link: <http://www.terryfox.ca/GatestonePSSStoneyCreek>

Our amazing Gatestone community has always come through for our Terry Fox Run, so we look forward to another successful fundraising event as we try to reach our goal of \$3000.00.

School Council

Our 1st School Council meeting will take place on MS Teams in the evening of September 29th at 6PM. All families are welcome.



Every school in Ontario is required to have a School Council to work collaboratively with the Principal to improve student achievement and enhance accountability of the school with parents. Information about School Councils can be found here <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/council/guide.html>.

We welcome all parents/guardians who are willing to volunteer their time to participate on School Council for the 2020-2021 school year. Typically, School Council meets in person several times throughout the year to discuss school wide interests. This year due to Public Health regulations, School Council meetings will be held virtually using MS Teams.

School Councils must hold an election to identify voting members and various positions such as School Council Chair. Elected members vote on School Council matters and represent the groups' ideas. Please note you do not have to be an elected member of School Council to attend meetings.

See the School Council attachment which includes the presentation slides from our September 15th meeting led by our council chair, Krystal Legge.

Entry and Dismissal

A friendly reminder to our parents that masks are required when on school property. We appreciate our families continuing to practice social distancing when picking up children in Grades K-3. Students enter and are dismissed through our side pathways, back gate or Kindergarten gate. Students should not be entering or exiting school grounds through our parking lot. Thank you for your support here.