



Welcome Back! September 6 - 9

Gatestone Elementary School 2022-2023

Friday, September 2, 2022.

Dear Gatestone families,

*Gatestone staff is excited to welcome back students to Gatestone Elementary. We are looking forward to a **BRIGHT** school year and hoping everyone is feeling refreshed and ready to learn after a wonderful warm summer. We are excited to welcome students back to class – in person and remote learning – for the 2022-23 school year.*

We know that the past two years have been challenging, and we are thrilled to see students, staff and families again. Each new year is a great new opportunity.

*A friendly reminder that the first day of school will be **Tuesday, September 6, 2022.***

We know that many families remain concerned about safety, and we are too. We continue to take COVID-19 precautions, such as doing daily [COVID-19 school and child care screening](#) and staying home when sick or instructed within the screening tool.

As we move through the pandemic, we will continue to update families on important developments. We know that families may have a lot of questions.

Please reach out to our school if you have any questions.

Supporting a Positive Return to School

HWDSB will continue to offer a wide variety of mental health supports for students, knowing that the pandemic has impacted student well-being. This is especially important during the return to school, which can be stressful for some students. See some supportive tips on our [recent web post](#). Explore our [We Help web page](#) for more evidence-based and timely school-based mental health services and supports.

Across HWDSB, we are also reintroducing a welcoming, inclusive initiative to help students as they return to school. Reimagining Wellness 2.0 is a series of activities and lessons which address needs arising during the pandemic. Watch for details in the days ahead.

COVID-19

Most health and safety guidance from the province is unchanged from the end of the 2021-22 school year, but here are some items we want to bring to your attention:

- It is still recommended that staff, students and visitors continue to self-screen every day before attending school using the [COVID-19 school and childcare screening tool](#). We no longer verify student screening results in schools. Please stay home if you have COVID-19 symptoms or are waiting for test results after experiencing symptoms.
- HWDSB is a mask-friendly environment. We continue to support the wearing of masks in schools, administrative buildings and buses, as an effective public health measure. We will continue to offer free masks for students and visitors to our schools. Although masks are not required, our schools, offices and buses are respectful, welcoming and inclusive environments where individuals can choose to wear or not to wear a mask.
- HEPA filter units are installed in every occupied kindergarten class, in all occupied learning spaces without mechanical ventilation, and in mechanically ventilated learning spaces without MERV-13 level filters. HWDSB will continue to deploy HEPA filter units in learning spaces in a manner that maximizes their benefit. We will continue to publicly communicate ventilation measures on our [website](#).

Elementary Remote Learning and Transitions

Elementary families interested in switching between in-person and remote learning will have an opportunity to register their student starting Monday, August 29. The Remote Learning Registration (2022/2023) form will be available on the Parent Portal from 8:00 a.m. on Monday, August 29, and will close at 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, September 7. Families can complete this form if they wish to:

- transition from in-person to remote learning, or
- transition from remote learning back to in-person

Families selecting a new learning option will be choosing this for their student for the full 2022-2023 school year. Students will begin attending their new classes when the re-organization process in early October takes place. Only families looking to switch their learning options are required to complete this form.

Please contact our school if you have difficulty accessing the Remote Learning Registration (2022/2023) on the Parent Portal under the “Remote Learning” section.

Hamilton Student Transportation System

Responsibility for getting to and from school rests primarily with the student and parents or guardians. The Education Act states that a board may provide transportation for pupils enrolled in schools operated by the Board. Transportation to and from school provided to students is a privilege and not a right. The HWSTS Member Boards' Transportation Policies set out the terms and conditions under which the Boards may provide transportation. To check if your child is eligible for busing, please visit <https://hwsts.mybusplanner.ca/TransportationEligibility> .

We have been supporting HWSTS, our local transportation consortium, as they adopt a new platform for their Parent Portal. If your child qualifies for transportation, **please follow the steps listed to access your child(ren)'s information via the online portal**. Please keep in mind that last minute changes sometimes do occur and that it is important to re-check the information prior to sending your child(ren) to their assigned pickup location on September 6, 2022. Go to www.hamiltonschoolbus.ca and click on the "Parent's Portal" on the Home page, OR "Bus Stop Finder" on the landing page. [Learn more](#).

Bus contactors will continue with regular cleaning routines, to ensure that students and drivers have a sanitary environment. Masks are optional but encouraged while riding the bus.

Device Return

Students who still have a device from last year are asked to bring it to their educator on the first day of school. Please label the device with your child's name.

Addressing a Concern

Students and families with classroom concerns are encouraged to contact their student's classroom teacher. School-wide concerns can be addressed by the principal. [Addressing a Concern \(PDF\)](#).

Right to Disconnect

Healthy work-life boundaries, including the ability for all employees to disconnect from work after hours, is an important part of maintaining one's health and well-being. HWDSB has implemented a [Right to Disconnect Procedure](#) to support educators, administrators and other HWDSB staff. While all urgent communication will continue to be shared after hours, please note that families communicating with educators and administrators may receive a delay in response to all non-emergency inquiries received after hours.

First Day of School

Our First Day back to school begins on Tuesday, September 6, 2021 for our Grade 1-8 students and Wednesday, September 7th for all of our students in our Kindergarten program. Students that attended in-person classes last year will have received information regarding their class placement for September 2022. Families of students registered in remote last year may contact our school by phone or office e-mail. Staff will also be able to assist families on the first day of school outside on our asphalt area during entry time, 9:00AM-9:15AM.

Junior Kindergarten or New to Senior Kindergarten Transition Visits September 6

Our Junior Kindergarten and new to Senior Kindergarten students will have received an invite from their classroom teacher regarding a time for their transition visit at Gatestone on September 6th. All Kindergarten students will then begin their first day of school on September 7th. Students enter directly into their classrooms upon arrival. Families may drop their child off at our Kindergarten gate at entry time. Pick up for our Kindergarten students begins at 3:30PM.

Class Assignments for September 2022

Class placements are complete. Parents can review their child's class placement in the Parent Portal prior to the first day of school, September 6th. Due to class size caps and our school current organization, we are not able to make changes to class placements at this time. Our staff is always prepared to support learners that may feel anxious or worried about moving to a new grade, class or working with new peers or teachers. As a school community we recognize transitions can be challenging for some of our students. Staff are trained to support in these transitions and ready to help problem solve and guide when necessary.

Thank you to our Gatestone Caretaking Team!

A special thank you to our dynamite caretaking team at Gatestone! Our team has worked extra hard this summer to support summer learning sessions and prepare for our September opening!

Umbrella Child Care

Before and After care is available at Gatestone's site. Umbrella Child Care is organized through Umbrella Care only. Our main office does not manage registrations with Umbrella. Please review the link to contact Umbrella Care if you are seeking child care before and after school.

<https://www.umbrellafamily.com/home/centres/gatestone/>

School Council

Our 1st School Council first meeting and elections is scheduled for September 28th at 6PM. School Council forms are attached in this update for parents/guardians interested in joining our council this year. All families are welcome! Families do not need to be on council to attend our meetings. We encourage parent/guardian voice. Meetings will occur in-person and virtually throughout the year to accommodate families' schedules. Please see our website, School Council Page, for further details about Council.



Gatestone Staff Information 2022-2023 School Year

Staff Name	Assignment
Steve McCormack	JSA
Sharon Pauls	DECE JSA
Roseanna Cino	JSB
Krysta Tortola	DECE JSB
Kylie Schmidt	JSC
Aleksandra Rego	DECE JSC
Amanda Zona	JSD
Katie Benedict	Grade 1A
Corene O'Marra	Grade 1B
Julie McFaul	Grade 1/2A
Andrea Brown	Grade 2A
Penny Johnson	Grade 2/3A
Andrew Macnab	Grade 3A
Melissa Kuczerepa	Grade 3/4A
Melissa Bartlett	Grade 4/5A
Colleen Nash	Grade 4/5B
Michele Wunsche	Grade 68
Jennifer Taylor/Devan Sorman	Grade 5/6A
Jessica Whittle	Grade 6A
Stephanie Bass	Grade 6/7A
David Pidberezny	Grade 6/7B
Tammy Caco	Grade 7A
Laura Lamarre	Grade 7/8A
Suzy Graham	Grade 8A
Jessica Penner	Grade 8B
Leeanne Smith	Learning Commons & Coverage
Lisa Dunstall	Resource Support LRT/Pr.Coverage
Marlo Moore	Resource Support LRT/Pr. Coverage

Jamie Lamarre	Intermediate Core French
Amanda Verbeek	Junior Core French
Dan Lane	Physical Education
Jasmine Dyer	Instrumental Music Junior/Intermediate
Educational Assistants:	
Marion Blake-Foster	Educational Assistant
Katie Kersley	Educational Assistant
Petina Barnett	Educational Assistant
Cindy Kennedy	Educational Assistant
Alana Gaudin	Educational Assistant
Custodial Staff:	
Leon Plevel (Daytime Caretaker)	Caretaking Team
Lorna McQueen (Daytime Caretaker)	Caretaking Team
Nada Hrastov (Evening Caretaker)	Caretaking Team
Malgorazata Frak (Evening Caretaker)	Caretaking Team
Office Staff:	
Karen Ashton: Office Administrator	Office
Katy Mason: Office Administrator	Office
Kelly Reilly-Scott: Principal	Office
Kristy Luker: Vice-Principal	Office

Gatestone Bell Times 2022-2023

9:00AM-9:15AM	School Grounds Open (Supervision 15min)
9:15AM-11:15AM	Block 1
11:15AM-11:55AM	Gr. 6-8 outside (20min) inside to eat (20min) Gr. 1-5 inside to eat (20min) outside (20min)
11:55AM-1:35PM	Block 2
1:35PM -2:15PM	Gr. 6-8 outside (20min) inside to eat (20min) Gr. 1-5 inside to eat (20min) outside (20min) <i>***Students requiring to eat at home for lunch may leave with parent permission (form must be completed in portal) during second break. Students should only be leaving the school in special circumstances. Parents should be communicating the plan with main office. Students are required to sign out with parent permission.</i>
2:15PM-3:35PM	Block 3
3:35PM-3:55PM	Dismissal (Supervision 15min)

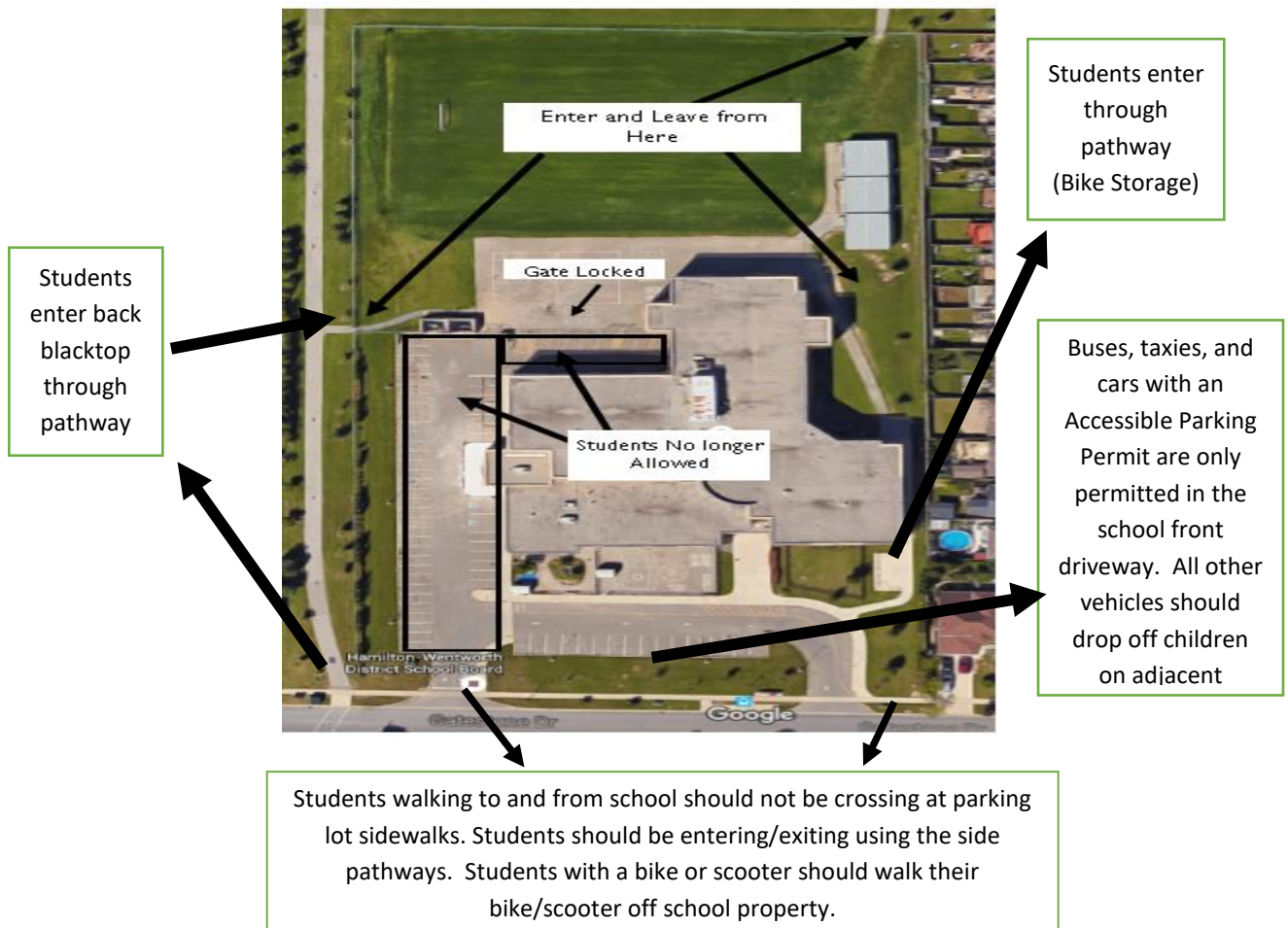
Entry & Dismissal Time - Traffic Flow at Gatestone

Thank you to our families for working with staff and your children to ensure a safe entry and dismissal. To limit traffic on school grounds during entry and dismissal times, we are requesting parents of **children Grade 4 and up wait to receive your child at our back gates or front sidewalk (front of school)**. Supervision begins at 9:00AM prior to entry at 9:15AM. Staff are outside to support safety on our playgrounds. We ask once parents/guardians have dropped off their child, kindly move away from our playground traffic area. We have many families and students arriving at this time. The less congestion, will allow for a smoother and safer entry and dismissal.

PARKING AND DROP-OFF AREAS

Parking space is extremely limited. Although we are a walking school, parents in special circumstances needing to drop their child off by vehicle are asked to park on the streets adjacent to the school (where it is unsigned) at all times. Please do not drop your child off right across the street from the school as traffic is busy in this area. ***By-law will now enforce the lot.*** Please pay attention to the posted signs.

Students are to utilize the school sidewalks and paths, not the parking lot, to enter the back playground, and they are to follow the direction of the staff on duty in this area.



Walk to School

Gatestone is primarily a “walking school” as only a few students require transportation due to distance from the school allowing for busing eligibility. Students that live within a walking distance from the school are encouraged to walk to school with parents/guardian or peers rather than be driven by vehicle.

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.

Dogs on School Property

Our school community includes many families who are dog owners. We know it is nice to take the dog for a walk when you drop-off and/or pick-up your child at school.

We remind anyone who is walking a dog that it must be on a leash.

Individuals with dogs on a leash are asked to keep them distanced from children, staff, other parents/guardians, and other dogs. Some children may be afraid of dogs, and the behaviour of a dog can be unpredictable. Please do not bring dogs near our entry/exit zones where students are entering gated areas or lining up as these areas consist of high student traffic. We thank you for your understanding.

Service animals are exempt from this expectation according to Procedure 5.5, Student Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals.

Gatestone Home-School Communication

We are committed to providing timely, relevant information about your child and the school in a variety of ways. Here are some of our key communication strategies:

1) Direct Contact: School staff will phone home if the need arises. Please feel free to phone the school to share pertinent student information with school staff as well. Parents are welcome to phone the school in order to arrange meetings with teachers to discuss school related issues or concerns. Students also have access to school phones so please remember that use of cell phones will not be permitted during regular school hours.

2) Community Weekly Updates: Gatestone School updates are provided on the school website and through SchoolMessenger. Updates contain information regarding all areas of school life. The weekly community updates are particularly important in providing dates for upcoming events of all kinds.

3) School Website & School Messenger: A great deal of school information will be shared on our school website and through School Messenger during the coming year in regard to school events, school council, etc. A school calendar of upcoming events is also posted and updated regularly. You can subscribe to our website by clicking subscribe button on the left side of the home page screen. <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/gatestone/>. Community weekly updates will be posted on our website as well.

4) Student Agenda: Our student agenda is designed to help students to plan and organize their work at school this year. Teachers will use it as a key vehicle of communication with parents/guardians. It also provides some basic information concerning the programs, policies and procedures at Gatestone Elementary School.

5) School Sign: The school sign on the front lawn is a great source of up to date information.

6) Twitter: Follow us on Twitter for updates *@GatestoneSchool*

7) Parent Portal: HWDSB Parent Portal, is a protected parent log in space that contains important forms for families, student information (e.g, grades, schedule, homeroom teacher etc.).

GATESTONE CORE VALUES

RESPECT – REGARD AND CONSIDERATION FOR THE FEELINGS, BELIEFS, AND TRADITIONS OF OTHERS. BEING KIND TO OTHERS.

POSITIVITY – OPTOMISTIC OUTLOOK. POSITIVE INTENTIONS.

ENGAGEMENT – TRULY CARE ABOUT OUR LEARNING. FOCUSED IN THE LEARNING.

TEAMWORK – WORKING TOGETHER IN EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ACHIEVE A COMMON GOAL.

COMMUNITY – GATESTONE FAMILIES AND STAFF WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE AND MEET THE NEEDS OF GATESTONE SCHOOL. STUDENT, STAFF, AND COMMUNITY VOICE VALUED.

SAFE & SUPPORTED – SEEK TO UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER. CHOOSE TO CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER.

Recognizing the challenges families and students have faced over the past few years working and learning through a pandemic, I am excited and optimistic, welcoming a bright school year!

Looking forward to seeing everyone soon!

Kelly Reilly-Scott

Principal

Gatestone Elementary