



# George L. Armstrong Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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[www.hwdsb.on.ca/georgelarmstrong](http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/georgelarmstrong)

September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022

Dear GLA families,

We are excited to welcome students back to class, both 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**. For kindergarten families, please see the **First Days of Kindergarten** section below for information.

## 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



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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.

## Transportation

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](http://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.

## First Days of Kindergarten

All children new to kindergarten will be invited for a short visit with a caregiver on Tuesday, September 6. Families should have been contacted with their new to kindergarten visit times. The first day of kindergarten classes will be Wednesday, September 7.

## 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.



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Here are some important reminders specific to George L. Armstrong School:

Parent access to school	<p>We are happy to be able to have volunteers back in our schools to assist in classrooms, at nutrition break and during educational excursions. If you are interested in volunteering please contact the office for the volunteer forms and police check requirements.</p> <p>If you need to come to the school, we ask that you use the buzzer at the East 19<sup>th</sup> entrance.</p>
Parent communication with school	Agendas will be arriving shortly and are a great way for back and forth communication between home and school.
Bus loading and unloading	School buses will load and unload on East 18th.
Parking near the school	Active transportation (walk/bike) is encouraged to reduce the amount of traffic at the start/end of the day. Parents driving their children to school are encouraged to park at a location near to the school and walk. It is important to obey the signage as the Bylaw Officers do ticket cars parked in no parking areas around the school property. The parking lots are reserved for staff.
Entry and exit for students	<p>When students enter the school yard, they are to proceed directly to the pavement area. With it being busy before and after school on our pavement area there are to be no balls or equipment used during these times. Upon dismissal, students must leave school property in a timely fashion as the pavement is only supervised from 3:00 to 3:15 pm.</p> <p>Primary classes on the first floor will line up for morning entry. Classes located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor will use a gradual entry when the bell rings at 8:40 am.</p> <p>Kindergarten students will arrive and will be dismissed directly to parents from their outdoor designated class location on East 19th. Please wait outside of the fenced area.</p> <p>Students who arrive at school late will need to ring the buzzer at the East 19th door in order to be let in and then proceed directly to the office to check in.</p>
Student belongings	At the discretion of teachers, lockers/hooks and cubbies will be used. We ask that labels or names be written on clothing. There is a lost and found bin located outside the office.
Nutrition breaks	Students eat in their classrooms at their workspace area.



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	<p>Due to allergies there is to be NO sharing of food or beverages. We try to encourage a litterless lunch and ask students to bring any leftover food home so that families can see what is being left and plan accordingly.</p> <p>Students in the Inverness primary hall (gr. 1-3) and third floor (gr. 3-5) will eat first and then go out outside.</p> <p>Students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor gr. (5-8) will go outside first and then eat after.</p> <p>For the first few weeks our grade 7 &amp; 8 students will not be permitted to go out for lunch as we want to build up a sense of community and create expectations regarding what it means to represent GLA out in our community. More information will be shared with students in these classes next week.</p>
Hydration stations	Water fountains are available; however, we do encourage students to use the Hydration Station to fill their own labelled water bottle. Please send the water bottle full for the start of the day to avoid long lines in the morning.
Nutrition programs	All Nutrition Programs are 'Grab and Go'. Foods will arrive pre-packaged. Food is delivered in bins to each classroom and will be distributed by staff who will be wearing masks and gloves.
Items from home	<p>Students may bring items that they require for the school day. This should be limited to lunches, water bottles, school supplies and items for medical needs.</p> <p>We ask that all personal items such as stuffed animals and cards be left at home.</p>

We are excited to see everyone on Tuesday and look forward to an amazing school year!

Sincerely,

Joanne Hall  
 Principal