



George L. Armstrong Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

460 Concession Street
Hamilton, Ontario L9A 1C3
Phone: 905.385.5337
Fax: 905.385.8996

EMAIL: georgelarmstrong@hwdsb.on.ca
PRINCIPAL: D. Barlow
VICE-PRINCIPAL: V. Swan
www.hwdsb.on.ca/georgelarmstrong

August 30, 2024

Dear George L. Armstrong Families,

As the 2024-25 school year quickly approaches, we are excited to welcome students back to class on Tuesday, September 3rd, 2024 (JK and SK students start on Wednesday September 4th).

Beginning the new school year can be a time of excitement, nervousness and energy for students, staff and families alike, but the start of the school year at GLA is also a time of new beginnings filled with opportunities for all students to experience a sense of belonging, engage in dynamic learning and reach their full potential.

We are excited to share that many spaces at GLA are getting a renovation update. Contractors have been working throughout the summer to renovate the large gym, Learning Commons (Library), Music Room, Science room, corridors, and washrooms. There continues to be some finishing touches to these areas. We will continue to have renovations to our small gym, stage, and Art room throughout the fall. We are excited to have our students and staff utilize these updated spaces.

We extend our gratitude to our caretaking staff who have been working very hard to prepare our school for the start of the school year. Our school is looking great!

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the following Long Term Occasional (LTO) staff members to GLA:

Kindergarten Prep - C. Silverglen

J/I Core French – E. Abradjian

Class 5/6A – K. Veitch

Class 4A – A. Biebert

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To help GLA families prepare for their child(ren)'s return to the classroom, we would like to share the following information:

GLA Bell Times

Entry Bell	8:40 am
Period 1	8:40 – 9:20
Period 2	9:20 – 10:00
Period 3	10:00 – 10:40
First Nutrition Break	10:40 – 11:20
Period 4	11:20 – 11:50
Period 5	11:50 – 12:20
Period 6	12:20 – 1:00
Second Nutrition Break	1:00 – 1:40
Period 7	1:40 – 2:20
Period 8	2:20 – 3:00
Dismissal	3:00 pm

Transportation

Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) provides students with safe and secure transportation for eligible students by HWSTS. This may take the form of traditional school buses, school purpose vans or Hamilton Street Railway transit. For more information, visit HWDSB's [Transportation webpage](#). If your child qualifies for transportation, please remember to re-check information prior to sending your child(ren) to their assigned pickup location on Tuesday, September 3, 2024, as changes can occur.

School buses will load and unload on East 18th Street.

Courtesy Transportation

There is no courtesy transportation for the first month of school. Each year, courtesy seats may be granted, if there is space on an existing bus run. They are administered through an application process. Requests for courtesy transportation must be submitted to the school, by the parent/guardian each year using the Courtesy Transportation Request Form. Requests are assessed in October, once all eligible students are assigned and operational issues are resolved.

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Commencement of Kindergarten

A very warm welcome awaits our Kindergarten students and their parents/caregivers. Scheduled for Tuesday September 3rd, all new Kindergarten students have been invited for a brief visit with their parent/caregiver. There is no school on Tuesday for returning Kindergarten Year 2 (SK) students. Kindergarten classes officially commence on Wednesday September 4th.

Visiting the School

Should you need to visit the school premises, we kindly ask that you use the buzzer located at the East 19th entrance. All visitors to the school must report to the main office.

Encouraging Active Transportation

We highly encourage walking and biking as active transportation methods, minimizing traffic congestion during drop-off and pick-up times. Parents who choose to drive are encouraged to drop off students near the school, abiding by parking regulations, as the school parking lot is reserved for staff.

Student Entry and Exit

Upon arrival, students are to proceed directly to the designated pavement area, as staff supervision is concentrated there. The park and field are unsupervised areas. Please note that staff supervision commences at 8:25 am. For morning entry, students on the first and third floor will line up, while students on the second floor will use a gradual entry when the bell rings at 8:40 a.m. Students must leave the school premises promptly after dismissal, as supervision on the pavement area is available only from 3:00 to 3:15 pm. Specific grade levels have designated entry points and procedures.

Additionally, it is extremely important for students to arrive on time as it creates a sense of calm, decreases interruptions in the class and promotes a team atmosphere as classes enter the school together.

Kindergarten Arrangements

Kindergarten students will be directed to designated outdoor class locations on East 19th for arrival and dismissal. Parents are kindly requested to wait outside the fenced area.

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Late Arrival Protocol

Students arriving late should ring the buzzer at the East 19th door for entry and proceed directly to the office for check-in.

Student Medical Concerns

Please contact our school to update any health information regarding your child. We will be sending home information as well to update the specific Plan of Care for some children. Throughout the year, please let us know if your contact information changes so we have current information in the case of an emergency.

Code of Conduct

HWDSB is committed to making each one of its schools a caring place that is safe for learning. Every student deserves to feel and be safe in a school, on the school grounds, on the school bus and at school events and activities. Visit HWDSB's [Code of Conduct webpage](#) to learn about these changes.

Reducing Distractions in the Classroom

<https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/blog/reducing-distractions-classrooms-schools/>

To support reducing distractions for students, students must not use their personal electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, laptops and tablets) during the instructional day. Students are to have their devices stored out of view and powered off (or on silent mode) throughout the full school day, including nutrition breaks unless permitted by the educator. Where possible, we encourage all students to leave their devices at home.

Student Dress Guidelines

Starting in September 2024, HWDSB is sharing updated Student Dress Guidelines to help foster positive and inclusive learning environments. Developed with extensive student input and community consultation, these guidelines focus on equity, dignity, and well-being for every student. They can express themselves freely, without fear of bias or discrimination. Visit hwdsb.info/student-dress to learn more.

Managing Student Belongings and Personal Items

Lockers, hooks, and cubbies, as determined by teachers, will be utilized. We recommend labeling clothing items. A lost and found area is available outside the office.

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Personal toys, stuffed animals, game cards, and valuable items should remain at home as the school cannot be held responsible for lost or misplaced items.

Nutrition Breaks

Students will consume snacks and/or lunch within their classrooms at designated workspace areas. Due to allergy concerns, sharing of food and beverages is not permitted. We encourage minimal waste and ask that students take leftover food home. Students on the second floor will eat first and then go outside. Students on the first and third floor will go outside first and then eat.

Hydration

While water fountains are accessible, we recommend students bring labeled water bottles and use the Hydration Station for refills. Sending filled water bottles in the morning helps avoid congestion.

Nutrition Program

All nutrition programs follow a 'Grab and Go' model, with pre-packaged foods distributed by staff and student helpers to classrooms.

Nutrition Policy

Please keep in mind that we are required to follow the HWDSB Nutrition Policy. Please do not send in treats to celebrate your child's birthday, please connect with your child's teacher for alternative plans if you wish.

We are permitted to have ten school-wide nutrition exemption days which allows for greater flexibility with respect to food choices. Our first school- wide nutrition exemption day (1 out of a possible 10) will be on **Thursday, October 31st**.

Family Communication

Staying connected with your child(ren)'s schools, the Board and services matters. HWDSB offers many ways for parents and caregivers to stay connected. To learn how you can access the most up-to-date information, visit [HWDSB's Parent page](#). We also invite families to keep up with HWDSB by [subscribing to email updates](#) or following HWDSB [on social media](#).

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[Please subscribe to the GLA website to get important school information by accessing the following link Subscribe | George L. Armstrong Elementary School \(hwdsb.on.ca\)](#) You will receive an email indicating there has been information updated on our website.

SchoolMessenger

GLA and all HWDSB schools use SchoolMessenger to notify families about unexplained absences, as well as other important announcements. Families can use the free [SchoolMessenger app or website](#) to choose how they wish to receive these messages. Please contact your child(ren)'s school to provide current - or to change - your information.

Volunteer Opportunities

GLA and HWDSB values and appreciates dedicated volunteers who share their time and talents in support of healthy, positive and flourishing school communities. If you are interested in exploring volunteer opportunities like School Council at GLA, please contact the school for information about nominations and elections. Additional information about GLA School Council will be shared with our school community shortly.

Please see HWDSB's [Volunteers in Schools](#) page for more information.

Addressing Concerns

For any classroom related concerns, we encourage students and families to reach out to their respective classroom teachers. School-wide matters can be directed to the school principal.

Balancing Work and Life

Recognizing the significance of maintaining a healthy work-life equilibrium, HWDSB has established a Right to Disconnect Procedure. This ensures that educators, administrators, and other staff members can disconnect from work during non-working hours, contributing to their overall well-being. While urgent communications will persist after hours, please anticipate a delay in responses to non-urgent inquiries sent to educators and administrators.

Upcoming Dates:

Friday Sept. 20th- PA Day (no school for students)
Monday Oct. 14th- Thanksgiving (school is closed)

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At GLA we are committed to partnering with our families to ensure that your child(ren)'s school experience reflects HWDSB's values – dignity, trust, compassion and joy. We are committed to ensuring your child(ren) are celebrated for who they are, experience safe and caring school environments and are supported to achieve their own academic success and positive learning outcomes.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out at **905-385-5337** or georgelarmstrong@hwdsb.on.ca

Kind regards,

D. Barlow
Principal

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