

*September 1, 2023*

Dear families,

We are excited to welcome students back to class for the 2023-24 school year.

We know that the past few years have been challenging, and we are thrilled to see students, staff and families again. Each new year is a new opportunity for students to reach their full potential, make new connections and learn and grow with their school community. A friendly reminder that the first day of school will be Wednesday, September 6, 2023. We are looking forward to welcoming students back on the 6th! We also invite families to keep up with communications from HWDSB by subscribing to email updates or following HWDSB on social media or @Hillcrest\_HWDSB on Twitter. Check out the HWDSB Back-to-School page for general information about the start of school. If you have school-specific questions, please reach out at 905-549-3076 or [hillcrest@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:hillcrest@hwdsb.on.ca).

Here are some important points to remember as students prepare for the start of the school year:

### **Supporting a Positive Return to School**

HWDSB will continue to offer a wide variety of mental health supports for students. This is especially important during the return to school, which can be stressful for some students. See some supportive tips in our recent We Help Update on our blog. 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 3.0 is a series of lessons and activities for elementary students which address needs that have arisen in the past few years. Watch for details in the days ahead.

### **Elementary Remote Learning**

Elementary families interested in switching between in-person and remote learning will have an opportunity to register students starting Monday, August 28. The 2023-24 Remote Learning Registration form is now available on Parent Portal and will close at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, September 6. 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 entire 2023-24 school year. Students will begin attending their new classes when the re-organization process takes place in early October.

### **Transportation**

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 Wednesday, 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.

### **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.

### **First Days of Kindergarten**

Kindergarten families should have received an email once their Parent Portal account was created. If you have not received your email, please contact your child's school. Before this weekend, every new Kindergarten family should be notified by their school team when their child's Kindergarten orientation visit is scheduled on Wednesday, September 6. All Kindergarten students will begin their first full day on Thursday, 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.

### **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.

We know the return to school can be stressful but we are here to support every student's back-to-school experience. If you think your child might struggle with school, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

C. Blunsdon  
Principal  
Hillcrest Elementary School