



Viola Desmond Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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PRINCIPAL: Mrs. T. Morabito
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www.hwdsb.on.ca/violadesmond

Friday, September 2nd, 2022

Dear families,

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.

We also invite families to keep up with communications from HWDSB by [subscribing to email updates](#) or following HWDSB on social media or our Twitter (@ViolaD_HWDSB) and Instagram (violadesmond_hwdsb).

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

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, 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:

curiosity.

creativity.

possibility.

HWDSB



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- 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.

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 and click on the "Parent's Portal" on the Home page, OR "Bus Stop Finder" on the landing page. [Learn more](#).



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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.

First Days of Kindergarten

All children new to kindergarten and/or the school will be invited for a short visit with a caregiver on Tuesday, September 6. We will contact families to arrange visit times and share details. ***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.

We know the return to school, especially for those who had been learning remotely, can be stressful for some students. We are here to support every student. If you think your child might struggle with school, please let us know.

Sincerely,

T. Morabito
Principal
Viola Desmond School