



Westdale Secondary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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Principal: Mr. B. Goodram
VP's: Ms. S. Beauchamp-Wyatt, Mrs. L. Schaap

Dear Students, Parents/Guardians of Westdale Secondary School:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year at Westdale Secondary School. If you are an incoming grade 9 student or a new student to our community, we welcome you to Westdale, a school with more than 90 years of history, tradition, and excellence!

Included in this letter are some key pieces of information for all of our students and families. We want to assure you that the staff at Westdale are committed to support you as you prepare for the path of your choosing.

For a full listing of school expectations, policies, and procedures, please see the Student Handbook posted on our school website <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/westdale/>

Bell Schedule:

- Westdale Secondary School is a semester school with a 5-period day. Senior (grades 11 and 12) lunch is during period 3, Junior (grades 9 and 10) lunch during Period 4.
- Students, please show respect for yourself, your teachers, and your peers by arriving on time for your classes.

Period 1	8:00 – 9:15 am
Period 2	9:20 – 10:35 am
Period 3 (Jr. classes/Sr. lunch)	10:40 – 11:55 am
Period 4 (Sr. classes/Jr. lunch)	11:55 – 1:10 pm
Period 5	1:15 - 2:30 pm

Lunch Period Expectations:

- If remaining in the building for lunch, students are to eat in the cafeteria. **There is no eating in the hallways/stairwells as this is a fire code violation.**

Grade 9 Students Specifically:

- Grade 9 Orientation will be Wednesday August 30th from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm. Please meet in the auditorium at 9:00 am. A pizza lunch will be provided. Parents or guardians, please download the Digital Tools permission form here [Digital-tools-Evaluation-Permission-Form.pdf](#) or from the school website and send it signed with your student to the orientation. Paper copies of the form will be available on site as well. School laptops will be distributed only to those students with a signed permission form. Students should also bring a lock to guarantee a locker of their choice.
- Our Student Success teacher, Annette Tonogai (atonogai@hwdsb.on.ca 905-522-1387 Ext. 3762), is always available to support all our students, but particularly to support our students transitioning into high school. Parents/Guardians, if your student is struggling, please reach out for help right away.

English as a Second Language Students (ESL):

- While we will have translators at key events, consider loading the Microsoft Translator APP on your phones as we can use this app for conversations and assemblies. For any other needs, please contact our ESL Department Head, Tracy Kuder (tkuder@hwdsb.on.ca 905-522-1387 Ext. 5747).

Student Services Information:

- 2023-2024 student timetables will be shared by HWDSB in late August.
- Grade 9 students are all automatically registered for the Grade 9 Orientation Wednesday, August 30, 2023 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Please check your email or the school website later this summer for more details and instructions for this in-person event.
- Guidance Counsellors will be available the week beginning Monday, August 28. Students can make a guidance appointment by accessing the Guidance course on the Hub and clicking on the "Book Appt" icon in the navigation bar. This platform will be made available to students beginning Thursday, August 24. Students may attend appointments in the Guidance office in-person or on MS Teams.
- **Counsellors will meet with students who meet the criteria below the week of August 28:**
 - *Student needs a timetable change based upon Summer School results*
 - *Student was unsuccessful in a course during the last school year*
 - *Student's schedule contains an error (e.g. five courses in one semester)*
 - *Student's timetable shows a SEGUI code in any period*
 - *Student is missing a pre-requisite for a course in their schedule*
 - *Student requires a change impacting post-secondary admissions or goals*
 - *New registration to Westdale Secondary School*
 - *Student who has left Westdale Secondary School deciding to return*
- **All other course changes can be made beginning Wednesday, September 6, 2023. Priority will be given to students with incomplete timetables.**
- All students must attend the courses on their timetable until they are seen by a guidance counsellor. Spaces in courses are limited and we cannot guarantee that course changes will be possible.
- Stay connected and up to date with all things school related by following these links:
 - Westdale Website: www.hwdsb.on.ca/westdale/
 - HWDSB website: www.hwdsb.on.ca
 - Twitter: @WestdaleSS
 - Instagram: @whatsupwestdalewarriors
- In late September, Guidance counsellors will be conducting an information session to support Grade 12 students with their planning for graduation and post-secondary opportunities. More information will follow in September.
- All Ontario Universities will participate in a fair-style (no presentations) university fair on the following dates:
 - October 1-2 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre
 - For more information about the virtual university fair, and virtual presentations, please use this link: <https://www.ontariouniversitiesfair.ca/>
- The Ontario College Fair is returning in-person on the following dates at the Enercare Centre in Toronto:
 - October 19 from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm
 - October 20 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
 - For more information about the virtual college fairs please use this link <https://ontariocollegefair.ca/>
- Students should check announcements in the Guidance course on the Hub for dates when various colleges and universities will be conducting presentations for Westdale students.

IPads / Laptops:

- Students new to the HWDSB (grades 10-12) will be receiving an iPad for the year, in the first few weeks of September. Grade 9 students will be receiving a laptop device (as of September 2023) to support their learning. Many teachers are incorporating lesson plans and activities that are supported by technology as well as posting course materials, assignments and information on the Hub (online class learning platform).

Assessment and Evaluation:

- Students are assessed and evaluated on the Overall Expectations of the Ontario Curriculum. The report card represents a student's achievement of Overall Curriculum Expectations as demonstrated to that point in time. Determining a report card grade will involve a teacher's professional judgement and interpretation of products, conversations, and observations. Evidence of the most consistent level of achievement of the Overall Expectations will also be utilized. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment and/or test will not be assessed on that assignment and/or test and will be required to demonstrate that expectation in an alternative manner. Please note that cheating on an exam will result in a zero on that component of the course.

Exams:

- When planning family vacations please avoid semester-end dates in January and June as culminating activities and final exams occur during these times. Please Note: If there is an extenuating circumstance, (e.g., summer work contract or training camp) a discussion needs to occur with the administration of the school well in advance of the date and documentation verifying the circumstances must be provided.

Parent Portal:

- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to sign up for Parent Portal: A web-based attendance-tracking system that will enable parents to track attendance, view marks, and assist with the selection of courses. Parent Portal is also where parents can update student information and access documents such as the Media Consent Agreement. Parents with their photo I.D. can drop into the Student Services office starting in October from 8:00 to 3:00 to sign up.

SafeArrival Attendance Reporting:

- With SafeArrival, families report a student absence in one of three ways:
 1. Using the SafeArrival website, <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca/>. The first time you use the website, select Sign Up to create your account. Select Attendance then Report an Absence.
 2. Using your mobile device, download and install the SchoolMessenger app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store (or from links at go.schoolmessenger.ca). The first time you use the app, select Sign Up to create your account. Select Attendance then Report an Absence.
 3. Call toll-free 1-844-506-4350 to report an absence using the automated phone system. Using this method does not require setting up an account. These options are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can report a future absence any time.
- Please note: As always, parents are expected to report absences as soon as possible – and then you will not receive notification about unexplained absences. Calls for unexplained absences will be made home after 6 pm. If you have questions, please speak with our office staff. Find more resources on SafeArrival at <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/secondary/supports/safearrival/>.

Prevalent Medical Health Conditions:

- If your student has a life-threatening prevalent medical condition such as, epilepsy, asthma, diabetes and/or anaphylaxis, or a non-life-threatening medical condition that requires an emergency response, please contact the office so a plan of care can be put in place for your student. If your youth already has a plan in place, please call the school to discuss how to complete the renewal form.

School Council:

- Westdale School Council meets monthly and meetings are generally held the last Tuesday of each month. Our first meeting is Tuesday, September 26th at 6:00 pm. Details on location will be messaged to the community shortly.

Stay up to date:

- A great way to stay aware of happenings at Westdale is to look at and subscribe to our website which is updated regularly at www.hwdsb.on.ca/westdale ; even better, follow us on X (@WestdaleSS) and Instagram (whatsupwestdalewarriors) for additional sharing of school events and student/school celebrations. Additionally, important dates and events are displayed on our digital sign in front of the school.

I am honoured to serve the Westdale community as Principal. I am looking forward to supporting the ongoing work of our amazing staff as we nurture learning environments that honour the unique experiences, interests, and talents of our students. As a staff, we are committed to providing the conditions for all our students to, as our school moto highlights, “Each Reach for the Stars in Their Own Way”.

To our students, I encourage you to get involved, do your best in every activity you engage in, and demonstrate respect. Please know that there is always someone here to help you: Teachers, Educational Assistants, Guidance Counsellors, our Social Worker, our Grad Coach, Office Staff, and our Principal/Vice-Principal Team. I can’t wait to welcome our 1500 plus Westdale students that make this school such an exciting place to be. Please enjoy the rest of your summer and stay safe!

Sincerely,

Mr. B. Goodram
Principal