



ALEXANDER MACKENZIE HIGH SCHOOL

School Start-Up Package 2023-2024

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Welcome From the Principal

Dear Families,

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all our new and returning families. We hope that the summer was enjoyable and relaxing, and that you and your family are excited to see your student return to school with all the promise that the new school year brings.

For those of you arriving at AMHS for the first time, please know that we look forward to working with you as we continue to enhance our learning community together. Parents and families play a vital role in supporting their children's efforts at school, and we invite parents and guardians to be strong partners in the educational process.

Every September, schools across York Region District School Board send home a variety of forms for parents, guardians and students, which cover a wide range of important information to support success at school. In order to ensure that these forms reach home and are read, the signatures of a parent or guardian and/or student are required. This year, this process is occurring digitally. After reading this handbook and the signature forms with your child, kindly sign as indicated and submit the forms online

We have a dedicated staff with a strong commitment to student learning, achievement and well-being. We are committed to supporting our students' transition back to school and to providing a learning environment where everyone feels safe, valued, welcome and respected. There are some important things we want to share at the start of the school year:

- This **start-up package** includes important information about our school, and I encourage you to review it.
- The [Guide to the School Year](#) has been moved online. We encourage families to review this webpage as it includes important information you may need to access throughout the school year. You can use the translation feature on the website to translate this content. It is available at <https://www2.yrdsb.ca/school-year-guide>.
- Each year we ask families to complete **important start-up forms**. You will receive an email in the coming weeks with a link to the online forms. Please review and complete the forms. If you prefer to receive and complete a paper copy, please let us know.

Krista Luks
Principal
Alexander Mackenzie High School

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Information Package and Form Checklist

The package includes important information about the school. Please review this information. Start-up forms will be sent to families electronically by the School Board. Instructions on how to access the Start-up forms will be provided by email. If Parents/ Guardians would prefer a paper copy of the forms, please have your student come to the main office to pick up a package. If families choose to complete a paper copy of the forms, please return the completed forms to the Main Office. **Please, fill out the forms and return them by September 18, 2023.**

Required Forms

These forms will be sent by email and must be completed.

- School Start-Up Permissions Form
- Student Personal Information Consent Form

Additional Forms

These programs or opportunities are optional. These forms will be sent by email and must be completed only if you or your child wish to participate.

- Request for Faith Accommodations Form
- School Council Nomination Form

Contact Information

For Ministry and Board compliance purposes, **please ensure that the school has your up-to-date contact and emergency information.** Please contact your school's main office to review or update your information, including:

- address, work or home numbers or other contact information
- emergency contacts and telephone numbers
- changes in custody agreements
- medical alert or changes in health condition (e.g., allergies, medications)

If your child has a medical condition that requires emergency intervention, an essential routine health care plan, or any of the following medical conditions: [Anaphylaxis](#), [Asthma](#), [Diabetes](#) or [Seizures](#) you must contact your child's school to ensure all information is up-to-date and accurate.

Our School

School Day Organization:

Schedule	Start	End
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Period 1 (75 min)	8:30 AM	9:50 AM
Travel Time	9:50 AM	9:55 AM
Period 2 (75 min)	9:55 AM	11:10 AM
Travel Time	11:10 AM	11:15 AM
Period 3 (75 min)	11:15 AM	12:30 PM
Travel Time	12:30 PM	12:35 PM
Period 4 (75 min)	12:35 PM	1:50 PM
Travel Time	1:50 PM	1:55 PM
Period 5 (75 min)	1:55 PM	3:10 PM

*Please note that students could be assigned a “lunch period” in any period of the day.

**The majority of students will find their “lunch period” (as per their course timetable) assigned in Periods 2, 3 or 4.

Additional Information

You can find information on topics covered in this package and more in the **Guide to the School Year** on the board website at www.yrdsb.ca/familyresources.

Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality contribute to student success and achievement. Attendance and punctuality are related to developing character traits such as respect, initiative, responsibility and integrity, and are linked to learning skills such as work habits and initiative. Students demonstrate commitment, respect, initiative and responsibility when they are in class and on time, all the time. The less class time students miss, the more likely they will succeed academically. Students are expected to be on time for every class. Punctuality shows respect and consideration for others. Being late for class inconveniences and disrupts your classmates and teachers.

Attendance & Punctuality Procedure

- To be considered punctual at the start of the day, students are expected to be in their Period 1 class by 8:30 a.m., every day. (*For every period start time thereafter, please refer to the school day schedule on Page 2.)
- If students are less than 15 minutes late to class, they should proceed directly to class.

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- If a student has to leave during the day, they need to have a written note AND sign out through the Main Office.
- If students are consistently late, teachers will contact home. Referrals to the Administration may follow.
- Students are expected to attend classes when a supply teacher is present.
- Students, parents, and staff have a role to play in ensuring that students attend classes regularly and punctually. Each role is described below.
- Any discrepancies in the attendance record should be discussed with the classroom teacher.

Attendance support staff are responsible for:

- receiving and processing attendance-related reports
- monitoring students' lates and absences in conjunction with the school
- recording parent contact in relation to absences, lates and signing-out
- following up with students with invalid absences

Students are responsible for:

- attending class on a daily basis, and taking an active part in the learning process
- completing assignments to the best of their ability
- submitting work on time - when an assignment is marked and returned, it may not be appropriate for a late submission of the same assignment
- discussing in advance with the teacher any difficulty in meeting a due date in order to make alternate arrangements
- planning with a teacher to complete any missed assignments or tests
- demonstrating sufficient evidence of achievement
- demonstrating academic honesty at all times
- communicating to parents/guardians due dates and timelines for assignments and tests
- notifying teachers of planned absences (sports, field trips, holidays, appointments, etc.)

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- helping their child be successful by actively monitoring their child's progress
- communicating with their child about school assignments and due dates
- communicating with teachers and the school about their child's progress
- contacting the school if a student is absent
- ensuring that students are available to write examinations during the designated exam period - students cannot be exempted from examinations for family holidays or employment; and
- providing appropriate documentation for extenuating circumstances, such as illness, court appearance, or bereavement.

Teachers are responsible for:

- reviewing attendance and punctuality policy with students
- recording, monitoring and reporting students' attendance to the office
- keeping accurate attendance records

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- following up where there are attendance issues (e.g. parental contact, detentions, office referral, etc.)
- implementing strategies to assist students in improving their attendance, e.g., counseling students, communicating with students and parents, making referrals to administrators for further actions – attendance counseling, etc.; and
- implementing consequences to assist students in improving their attendance, e.g. detention, withdrawal from extra-curricular activities, etc.

Reporting Attendance

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students aged 18 and older and students who have declared their independence must report all absences, late arrivals and/or changes to departure plans to the school in a timely manner. Where possible, notify the school in advance by calling the school and leaving a message on the answering machine at 905-884-0554 ext 412 or emailing the school's attendance address at alexandermackenziehs.attendance@yrdsb.ca.

Under the Education Act, students are expected to be at school every day, unless they are unable to attend by reason of sickness, unavoidable cause (illness, bereavement, court appearance, etc), holy day or other authorized by the Administration of the school. Absences are to be both validated and authorized. All absences require authorization by a parent/guardian. Truancies are invalid absences during instructional time and are strictly unacceptable. These will be monitored and dealt with accordingly by both teachers and administration.

The school will contact the homes of students with unexplained absences. If a message is received, parents should contact the Attendance Office before 8:30 a.m. the next school day. If any test or assignment is missed because of an invalid absence, the student may receive a zero and may forfeit the right to make it up.

Late Arrival or Early Leaving – Signing In and/or Out

Students who need to leave school before 3:10 p.m. for any reason (doctor's appointment, etc.) must sign out at the Main Office. A note should be presented for all pre-arranged absences. Should a note not be presented, a telephone call will be made to obtain verbal consent to sign the student out of school. Without parental/guardian consent the student will be required to remain in school. Students who sign in late for a class must attend the class that day, regardless of the amount of class-time remaining.

Notes for all students must provide the following information:

- Current date
- Date(s) absent
- Reason for absence

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- Current Daytime Phone number
- Parent/Guardian signature (or, signature of student if the student is 18 years or older).

If a student is unable to attend school and will miss more than two school days, homework may be requested from teachers. Teachers require 24 hours to complete homework requests. If a student is absent due to a prolonged illness, a medical note is required.

Students who have been signed out of classes by a parent or guardian cannot remain on school property.

Students Who Are 18 Years Of Age Or Older

Students who are 18 years of age or older are expected to follow the attendance procedures as outlined. Furthermore they will have five sign out privileges per semester. Administrator approval must be obtained for additional sign-outs.

Consequences for Poor Attendance

In general, the consequences of truancy are significant in both the short-term and long-term. Truancy is often symptomatic of students in need of additional support. School consequences may be assigned as a result of the following:

- Failure to attend classes on time;
- Failure to validate any absence; and
- Failure to follow the process for validating absences.

When the student is truant or fails to follow the process to validate an absence, a detention may be assigned by the teacher and/or administrator. If the student continues to be truant, a series of escalated consequences will be assigned which may include:

- loss of privileges
- written reflections
- withdrawal from extracurricular activities
- referral to school Attendance Counselor
- meeting with parents
- detention and/or suspension
- removal from course and/or school.

Vacation and Extended Absences

We recommend that parents not withdraw their son or daughter from school except in unavoidable circumstances. For absences greater than 3 days, students are to complete an Extended Absence Form at least ten days prior to the absence which can be picked up in the Main Office. Students are required to make prior arrangements with their teachers, to complete

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tests and assignments. Students are responsible for all missed work. The form must be signed by a parent/guardian and submitted to a Vice-Principal before departure.

Safe Arrival and Departure Program

The safety of our students is a priority. Our [safe arrivals programs and safe departures protocols](#) are in place so that we can account for the whereabouts of absent students. **Please provide the school with complete and current emergency contact information.**

1. If you have not informed the school of your child's absence in advance, the school will inform parents/guardians through the automated school attendance system when their child is identified as absent without explanation.
2. If you receive a call that your child is absent and you report back that your should be in attendance, the school will take the following steps to ensure your child is safe:
 - We will call emergency numbers on file.
 - We will speak to a sibling if one is in the school.
 - If we are still unable to get information, we may check with a friend of your child and other staff members.
 - If we are still unable to get information, we will consider your child missing and we may contact York Regional Police.

Arrivals and Departures

Families who live within walking distance are encouraged to use **active travel, including walking or rolling** (cycling, scootering, skateboarding) to and from school. Choosing [active travel](#) can improve physical and mental health and helps students start the day alert and ready to learn. It also helps to protect the environment and reduce traffic, making school zones safer for everyone.

School Bus/Taxi

For students who are eligible to **take the school bus**, more information about bus routes and times can be found at www.schoolbuscity.com.

School Bus Safety

When riding school buses, students must:

- Be at the bus stop five minutes before your scheduled pick up.
- Keep well away from the road until the bus has stopped. Do not move toward the bus until it has stopped.
- Watch for the bus driver's signal before crossing the road. Look both ways and then cross the road.
- Get on the bus safely by using the handrail and go directly to your seat.
- Stay seated while the bus is in motion.

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- Not eat or drink on the bus.
- Keep the aisle clear of books, knapsacks, lunch bags and other items.
- Keep windows closed.
- Never throw anything inside the bus or out of the window.
- Talk quietly so you do not distract the driver.
- Use respectful language.

Shouting, rough play and fighting are strictly prohibited. Students engaging in these activities will have their bus privileges suspended. We expect that all students should treat buses as an extension of the school and follow school rules and policies.

Cycling or Rolling to School

Students who use **bicycles, rollerblades, skateboards or scooters** to travel to school:

- Must wear a helmet.
- Must walk while on school property.
- Should lock bicycles on the bike rack, and store **rollerblades, skateboards or scooters** in their locker, backpack or school designated area. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

Driving to School

Parents/guardians who choose to drive their children to school are asked to consider parking a block or two away from the school and walking the rest of the way. Please be considerate and careful when using the school parking lot. Do not park in the fire zone or bus loops for any reason. Please work with us to keep our students safe.

Weather Conditions

Transportation will be cancelled by 6:00 a.m. if conditions are unsafe or are expected to deteriorate significantly by the time students are to be transported home. Schools will remain open unless otherwise stated. For more information, visit the [Student Transportation section of the Board website](#). **To find out if transportation is cancelled**, check: the @YRDSB Twitter account, the YRDSB website, school websites, the Student Transportation Services' (STS) website at www.schoolbuscity.com or hotline 1-877-330-3001, radio and television media outlets.

There may be rare occasions when unprecedented **winter weather events** occur and we need to close all schools and Board locations. For more information, please see the [Severe Weather policy and procedures](#). At all times, students and families should be aware of somewhere else they can go or someone to contact if bus services are cancelled or delayed, or if schools are forced to close due to an emergency.

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Academic Honesty

Students are expected to provide original evidence of their learning and appropriately acknowledge the work of others. Plagiarism refers to representing someone else's ideas, writing or other intellectual property as one's own. For more information, please see the [Assessment, Evaluation and Communication of Student Learning and Achievement policy](#).

Accessibility

The Board is [committed to providing accessible programs, services and environments](#) that support the four core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA): integration, equality of opportunity, dignity and independence. If you need assistance accessing Board services, speak to a staff member in the school about how they can help or support you. If you require any information or materials on the Board website in an alternative format, please contact Corporate Communications at communications@yrdsb.ca.

Accident Insurance

Student accident insurance provides coverage for injuries due to accidents not covered by government or private health plans (e.g. the cost of expensive dental work as a result of an accident). It is strongly recommended that parents/guardians of students involved in athletics purchase this insurance. If your child is involved in an accident, whether at school or during non-school hours, insuremykids® protects your family from the resulting expenses, which are not normally covered under your government health and group insurance plans. For more information, visit insuremykids.com or call 1-800-463-5437.

Allergies/Medical Conditions

There are students and staff members in our school who have life-threatening allergies to nuts and other allergens. If they smell or come into contact with these allergens, they may have an anaphylactic reaction so please refrain from bringing nuts or nut products to school. For more information on helping to create an allergen-safe environment, please see [information on allergies](#) on the Board website.

If your child has a serious or life-threatening allergy or prevalent medical condition, such as [Anaphylaxis](#), [Asthma](#), [Diabetes](#) or [Epilepsy/Seizure Disorder](#), please let the school administration know immediately and speak to the school office staff about completing the appropriate health care plans.

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Caring and Safe Schools

Every student has a right to learn in a safe, caring and supportive environment. We ask all students and families to review our [Caring and Safe Schools policy and procedures](#), which address a number of topics including:

- student progressive discipline
- bullying prevention and intervention
- student suspensions and expulsions

Students will review this important information during the Caring and Safe School Start Up presentations at the start of the school year. To enhance caring, safe, and inclusive school climates, positive student behaviour supports are provided and inappropriate behaviour is addressed using a bias-aware progressive discipline approach that takes into account mitigating factors.

We use a progressive discipline approach when inappropriate behaviour occurs. This means we consider a range of options to determine the most appropriate response to each situation to help students learn from their choices. In some cases, suspension or expulsion may be necessary. The Ontario Education Act and our Board's [Caring and Safe Schools Policy](#) outline the situations in which suspension and expulsion must be considered. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, information will be shared with the victim and families of the victim to the extent that legislation allows.

Report It

[YRDSB's online Report It](#) button lets you share information about inappropriate behaviour or incidents of hate or discrimination. It is available on the Board and school website.

Code of Conduct

A positive school climate is essential for students to succeed in school, as it promotes a safe, respectful and welcoming learning environment. The Code of Conduct sets standards of behaviour for students and members of the school community that support a caring, safe and inclusive school environment. All school members must respect and treat others fairly, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, creed, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability.

The Code of Conduct applies to all members of the school community including students, parents or guardians, school bus drivers, volunteers, school staff and community groups whether they are on York Region School Board property, in a virtual learning environment, on school buses, at school-authorized events or activities, in before- and after-school programs

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including co-curricular activities and field trips, and may be applied to any other circumstances connected to the school that may have an impact on the school climate.

A great emphasis is placed on learning both academically and socially to promote the successful graduate. The staff at AMHS strongly believes that a safe learning environment begins with the sense of safety in the classroom.

Students are expected to demonstrate behaviour that is respectful and courteous at all times. This includes demonstrating respect for each other and our communities. These expectations are outlined below in the school's Code of Conduct. The AMHS Code of Conduct is based on the "Ontario Schools: Code of Conduct" and specific regulations from The Ontario Education Act.

Responsibility of Students

The ONTARIO REGULATION 298, SECTION 23 STATES: O.Reg. 298, s. 23 (4)

A pupil shall,

- be diligent in attempting to master such studies as are part of the program in which the pupil is enrolled.
- exercise self-discipline.
- accept such discipline as would be exercised by a kind, firm judicious parent.
- attend classes punctually and regularly.
- be courteous to fellow pupils and obedient and courteous to teachers.
- be clean in person and habits.
- take such tests and examinations as are required by or under the Act or as may be directed by the Minister.
- show respect for school property.
- When a pupil returns to school after an absence, a parent of the pupil, or the pupil where the pupil is an adult, shall give the reason for the absence orally or in writing, as the principal requires.
- A pupil may be excused by the principal from attendance at school temporarily at any time at the written request of a parent of the pupil or the pupil where the pupil is an adult.
- Every pupil is responsible for his or her conduct to the principal of the school that the pupil attends:
 - on the school premises;
 - on out-of-school activities that are part of the school program; and
 - while traveling on a school bus that is owned by a board or on a bus or school bus that is under contract to a board.
- Students are expected to observe and be accountable to the Ontario Safe Schools Policy and the York Region District School Board Safe, Caring and Supportive Schools Policy.

Supporting Positive Student Behavior

- Counseling is provided by teachers, guidance counselors, special education staff, vice-principals, and the principal. Counseling is the most common technique used to

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address student behavior. Counseling may be combined with other forms of disciplinary action.

- A restorative practice is a response to wrongdoing that focuses on a healing process for those affected by inappropriate behaviour and on the opportunity for the individual to fully understand the impact of his or her actions. One of our goals at AMHS is to create a more inclusive and restorative community that supports students in developing a greater understanding of society and the contributions of each person. The aim is to resolve issues, repair the harm and restore relationships.
- Detentions are given outside of class time and are used when some form of minor deterrent is required. Students will have the time to complete assignments and examine their behaviour in order to determine the changes that must be made. Students who fail to or refuse to serve a detention face further consequences, which may include suspension.
- Students may be required to provide a written description of an incident to be used as the basis for counseling or further action.
- Staff will call home regularly regarding attendance, academic, and behavioural concerns. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers if questions/concerns arise.
- A student contract is a written agreement involving an administrator, the student and in some instances the parents. The contract is intended to correct habitual neglect of duty. The contract states that the student will agree to obey all school rules as well as to specific conditions. In general, contracts are designed to promote acceptable behaviour. The consequences of breaching the agreement are included in the document.
- An Administrator may withdraw a student's privilege of attending dances, school events or team membership for a specified period of time.
- The return of personal items confiscated during the day will be determined by the teacher and/or Administration. In some situations, a parent may be requested to come to the school to retrieve the item.
- In the case of academic, attendance, behavioural, and personal problems, students may be referred for in-school support. Referrals to social agencies may be suggested in certain circumstances. At AMHS, support staff may include contact with a Child and Youth Worker and/or the school's Social Worker.
- Police will be notified in such cases as described in the YRDSB's Caring and Safe Schools and in accordance with the YRDSB/YRP protocol.
- A restorative approach that gives the individual a chance to address the infraction by encouraging the individual to make a plan for restitution, which may include service or payment to an individual, the school, or the community.
- Suspension from school is reserved for serious or habitual offenses and is often preceded by other disciplinary measures. Serious offenses may result in suspension for the first occurrence. The purpose of the suspension is to give the student time to consider appropriate behaviour and to allow parents to counsel the student. The student is responsible for completing work missed while under suspension. While under suspension, students are not permitted on YRDSB property or allowed to participate in any school field trips, sporting events, performances, etc.

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- When a student is expelled, they are removed from AMHS. Studies will continue at an alternative location. A hearing will be held to determine further consequences. Please review Safe, Caring Schools policy #668.

The [Board Code of Conduct](#) is part of the Caring and Safe Schools Policy.

Communication between School and Home

Parents/guardians are our most important partners in educating children. We communicate with you in a variety of ways throughout the year.

Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL)

Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) prohibits sending any type of electronic message that is commercial in nature (e.g., registration fees, pizza days, field trips, fundraising, etc.) unless the recipient has provided specific and informed consent. CASL does not apply to electronic information messages or to hard copy formats. To subscribe or unsubscribe to commercial electronic messages, visit the school website or Family Resources page at www.yrdsb.ca/familyresources and, using the link provided, submit a valid email address.

Email/ Electronic Communication

To improve communication between home and school and reduce paper use, we coordinate an email distribution list. The list will be maintained and used only by school staff to communicate electronically to parents/guardians. Your email will not be sold, distributed or publicly posted. Families may receive electronic communication from the school through different platforms, such as email.

Texts

Families can now receive text messages in emergency situations only - as part of our elementary school safe arrivals program or in the rare occasion of schools being closed due to [emergency winter weather](#). Ensure your school has your correct cell phone number captured to participate. Families can opt out at any time.

Stay Connected Online

You can also stay connected online through our school website, Board news and updates through:

- www.yrdsb.ca
- Instagram [@yrdsb.schools](#)
- Twitter [@YRDSB](#)
- [YouTube channel YRDSBMedia](#)
- [TuneIn YRDSB](#), the Board's podcast, available on most podcast platforms

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- ### Consent for Information Sharing – Students at the Age of Majority

Once a student reaches the age of majority (18) all communications regarding their school matters (e.g., absences, etc.) will cease to go to the parents/guardians, as the student is deemed an adult for the purposes of the Education Act. A student may complete the [Consent for Information Sharing – Students at the Age of Majority Form](#) available through the school to provide express approval for the school to contact parent(s)/guardian(s).

Dress Code

For more information, see the [Student Dress Code Policy and Procedure](#).

Emergency Preparedness

The Board has a number of policies and procedures in place to address emergency situations if normal school operations cannot continue or where student and staff member safety may be at risk. This could include a fire, flood or acts of violence. All schools have individual plans and conduct drills throughout the year. There will be six fire, one hold and secure, and two lockdown drills annually so students become familiar with emergency preparedness procedures. These drills are important so that in the case of an actual emergency, students and staff members know what to do to be safe.

Excursions/Community Walkabouts

Our outdoor spaces are learning spaces. We recognize that playing and learning in the outdoors supports cross-curricular connections as well as students' holistic well-being through the seasons. Opportunities for students to build connections to the land have meaningful, long-term, positive health implications, especially on mental health and well-being. Community walks are not field trips. They are defined as community excursions that take place off school property, which last less than one day and do not require transportation.

Family Resources

Visit www.yrdsb.ca/familyresources or click on the link from the Board's homepage to access a variety of resources for families, including start-up forms (when available), IT support for families, translation tools, links to community resources and student supports, assistance accessing online tools like Google Classroom, Edsby and School Cash Online and more. Click on the "Need Help?" link for access to tips and resources.

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Guidance

The Guidance Department offers a number of services, including support for academic and career planning, personal counseling, referrals to community resources, and support for developing study habits and life skills. For more information, contact the Guidance Department.

Homework

The Board has a homework policy that supports student learning and recognizes the importance of personal and family well-being. The amount, frequency and nature of assigned homework will vary depending on the student's strengths and needs, well-being, grade, subject and other factors. For more information about time guidelines and how parents can provide support, please see the [Board Homework Policy and Procedure](#). **For homework help**, visit the [Online Student Tools and Resources](#) page for links to homework tips and learning resources, including Mathify Homework Help.

How Can We Help You?

Most concerns can be resolved with dialogue and cooperation. We are committed to addressing concerns in a fair, equitable and timely manner. If you have a school-related question or concern, please follow these steps:

1. Arrange a meeting with your child's teacher or the appropriate school staff member.
2. If you need further assistance, the school principal or designate may be contacted to review the matter, mediate and help facilitate the process.
3. Contact the superintendent for our school if the matter remains unresolved.

You can also [contact your local trustee](#). Trustees are committed to open dialogue with the community. You are encouraged to share your views on policy issues and Board governance with your local trustee. You are also welcome to attend and observe any [public Board, Advisory or Board Committee meeting](#). Meeting information is available on the Board website.

If you have a human rights related concern and/or complaint, the first step is to engage with the school or the superintendent. If your concern and/or complaint remains unresolved, your matter can then be referred to the Board's [Human Rights Commissioner's Office](#) (HRCO), or you can contact the HRCO directly. The Independent Office of the Integrity Commissioner may also be engaged to address concerns related to trustee behaviour. Contact information can be found on the Board website, or by contacting the school. More information is available [on the Board website](#).

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Personal and School Property

The school and the Board are not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen personal items. You can reduce the risk by leaving valuable items at home. Always secure items.

Students are expected to show respect for school property and materials at all times. Students, together with their parents/guardians, are responsible for ensuring that school items are returned in good condition. Textbooks, lockers, desks and chairs should not be vandalized (e.g., writing inside school books, torn pages, holes in desks, etc.). Lost or damaged textbooks, library books or other school materials are the responsibility of the student. Restitution will be expected and outlined by each school.

Requests for Faith Accommodation

There may be circumstances where students and families request accommodation for religious beliefs in curriculum areas including the Arts and Physical Education. Accommodations may include different instruction and assessment opportunities, or full withdrawal. If you are interested in discussing an accommodation based upon your religious beliefs, speak with your child's teacher and school principal or complete the **Faith Requests for Curriculum Accommodations Form** available through the school. By providing a range of accommodations, we are building a sense of community and belonging for all students. For more information, see [Board Procedure on Equity and Inclusivity: Religious Accommodation](#).

School Council

There are [many ways you can be engaged in your child's learning](#) at home and at school. This includes getting involved with the school council. The school council provides advice on school matters and helps to strengthen the important relationship between schools, families and their communities. The council includes family members, school staff and community members.

How do I join?

At the beginning of the school year, all parents/guardians have the opportunity to become a voting member of council. If you are interested, or would like to nominate someone, fill out the **School Council Nomination Form that will be part of your start-up forms** by September 15, 2023. Elections shall occur within the first thirty days of the start of each school year. All family members (voting member or as an attendee) are encouraged to attend school council meetings.

Significant Faith Days

York Region is rich in culture and diverse in religious beliefs and practices based on faith. The dates listed below are some faith holidays of particular significance to members of the major faith communities in our Board. We affirm and value equally the faith diversity in our schools, therefore, events such as field trips, school concerts, conferences, meetings, workshops, other

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professional events, co-curricular activities and exams/tests will not be scheduled on these dates:

2023-2024	Faith Day	Faith
September 16-17, 2023	Rosh Hashanah ²	Judaism
September 25, 2023	Yom Kippur ²	Judaism
November 12, 2023	Diwali	Hinduism
December 25, 2023	Christmas	Christianity (Western)
January 7, 2024	Christmas	Christianity (Eastern)
February 10, 2024	Lunar New Year	Buddhism
March 29, 2024	Good Friday	Christianity (Western)
April 10, 2024	Eid-ul-Fitr ^{1 2}	Islam
April 14, 2024	Vaisakhi	Sikhism
April 23, 2024	Pesach/Passover ²	Judaism
April 20, 2024	Ridvan	Baha'i
April 14, 2023		
May 3, 2024	Holy Friday	Christianity (Eastern)
June 17, 2024	Ed-ul-Adha ^{1 2}	Islam

¹ Dates are subject to the sighting of the moon each month and may vary for different members of the Islamic faith

² All Jewish and Islamic Holy Days commence on the preceding evening at sundown or sunset.

Please note that in addition to the above listed dates, we will take reasonable steps to accommodate students and staff members of a faith group for whom the Board's and the school's operations or requirements create undue hardship and interfere with their ability to exercise their religious beliefs and practices.

Student Personal Information

Schools routinely collect, use and release student personal information, in keeping with the Education Act and other laws. Whenever your child's personal information is collected, its use will be explained to you. Parents/guardians, please sign the **Student Personal Information Consent Form** in the start-up forms for more information. If you have any questions about your child's privacy protection, please contact the school principal or the Information Access and Privacy Office at 905-727-0022 ext. 2015.

Technology Use

All students and their parents/guardians are expected to read the [Use of Technology Agreement](#). They are also required to sign the **School Start-Up Permissions Form** to acknowledge that they have read, understand and will support the conditions/rules concerning the use of school/Board and personal technology as it supports learning. This agreement is designed to ensure a safe and supportive school environment and network integrity.

We believe the classroom is the ideal place to teach students how to use digital tools effectively and responsibly, and how to stay safe online. Google Suite for Education is one of the tools educators may use to engage students in online learning and teach students how to stay safe and be responsible using technology. Through Google Suite, students have access to a Google Suite Gmail. This Gmail access is customized for appropriate age levels. We have also put strict measures in place to prevent SPAM and block inappropriate language and websites for students using email through the Google Suite. For more information, please visit the Board website or speak to your child's teacher about the tools they are using in the classroom.

We all have a role to play in helping students to become responsible digital citizens. [Digital citizenship at home resources](#) are available on our Board website.

Use of Non-Board Electronic Devices

We recognize that learning can be enhanced by technology and we have created opportunities in our classrooms to leverage digital tools to enhance teaching, learning and communication. Each school has its own guidelines about electronic devices. At a minimum, cell phones and other personal communication devices must be turned off and kept out of sight during all instructional periods, except with the clear permission of the principal or the classroom teacher.

Discussions will take place in our classrooms throughout the year about the impact of digital footprints and how a positive attitude towards using technology supports collaboration, learning and productivity. Camera and/or video functions on mobile devices are not permitted for use on

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school property without clear permission from the principal or teacher. Infractions will be dealt with as student discipline, under Caring and Safe Schools Policy and its related procedures. At no time may electronic devices be used in washrooms or changerooms.

Check with the school's main office to find out if students may bring electronic devices into the classroom and use them in school. Students are responsible for the care and security of their personal devices. The school is not responsible for any damage, loss or theft. There are exceptions for students who need specific devices as per their Individual Education Plan, such as voice recorders and other mobile technology. Board staff manage the use of these tools.

Visitors

All visitors (including parents/guardians) must:

- Use the main entrance of the school.
- Check in at the main office when they arrive.
- Only visit classrooms or other locations within the school, with permission from the principal or their designate.
- Follow the direction of the principal at all times.

Volunteering in the School

We welcome and encourage the important role that parents/guardians and community members play in education. There are many opportunities for you to get involved at the school. For more information, contact the school office staff or review [Volunteers in Our Schools Policy and Procedure](#). If you are interested, please complete the **Volunteers in Our Schools Form** and return it to the school office.

Fair Notices

Reporting Children And Youth In Need Of Protection

All school board staff have a legal responsibility to notify a child protection agency if there are concerns for the well-being of students under the age of 16 years. Staff may report suspicions of a protection concern to a child protection agency for youth aged 16 and 17 years. Any suspicions of physical or sexual abuse, neglect or lack of care by a parent/guardian must be reported immediately to the administrator for all students under the age of 18 years. Parents/guardians will not be consulted in these situations.

Student Threat-Risk Assessment Protocol: Fair Notice and Process

The well-being and safety of members of the school community are a shared responsibility. This includes preventing and responding to the risk of violence. Our Student Threat-Risk

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Assessment Protocol was developed with community partners to respond to behaviours, including actions, statements and other indicators that suggest that a student may be “at risk” of harming others. To keep school communities safe and provide support to everyone, staff, families, students, and community members must report all threatening situations to the school administrator or police as soon as possible. Note – other procedures and protocols are in place to deal with threats from adults in the school community.

What is the purpose of the Threat Assessment Protocol?

- Ensure the safety of students, staff, parents/guardians, and other members of the school community
- Ensure an effective and timely response when there is a threatening situation
- Understand the factors that contribute to a threatening situation
- Assist in the development of an intervention plan
- Promote the emotional and physical safety of everyone involved

What is a threatening situation?

A threatening situation is defined as an indication of impending harm or violent acts against someone or something. Threats may be implied, verbal, written, drawn, posted on the internet, sent electronically or by information technology of any type, made by gesture or reasonably inferred from the surrounding circumstances of events. Threats may be direct, indirect, conditional or veiled.

What behaviours activate the Threat Assessment Protocol?

The protocol will be initiated when behaviours include, but are not limited to:

- Serious violence with intent to harm or kill;
- Verbal/written threats of serious violence to harm or kill others (clear, direct and plausible);
- Use of technology to communicate threats to harm/kill others.
- Possession of weapons (including replicas);
- Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices);
- Fire setting;
- Sexual assault;
- Criminal Harassment;
- Gang-related occurrences.

What happens when a threatening situation is reported?

All threatening behaviours by a student shall be reported to the school administrator who will activate the Threat Assessment protocol. Once a threatening situation has been reported to a school administrator, interviews will be conducted. These interviews may include students, staff, family members and/or others as appropriate. This will be done to determine the level of risk, and develop an effective and timely response to the incident. After the immediate safety risk has been addressed, support and intervention plans will be developed with input from parents/guardians.

Who is a member of a Threat Assessment team?

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Each school will have staff trained in the Threat Assessment protocol. A multi-disciplinary Threat Assessment team will assess the situation and support the development of an intervention plan. The team includes a School Administrator, a School Social Worker and/or a Psychological Services staff member, a York Regional Police officer, and appropriate members of the student's circle of care.

Is parental/guardian or student consent required?

Consent is not required to respond to an emergency situation. When there is a risk that someone may be harmed, it is important that the incident be addressed as quickly and effectively as possible.

Fair Notice

Please consider this as "fair notice" to all members of the school community that any report of a threatening situation will be investigated. The Threat Assessment protocol is part of our strategy to create a safe, secure and supportive school environment for everyone.

YRDSB Student Suicide Intervention Protocol Fair Notice

York Region District School Board is committed to student well-being and mental health. YRDSB has developed a Student Suicide Intervention Protocol to help keep students safe in the event of suicidal thoughts or actions. Youth suicide is a complex, emotionally-charged and sadly real problem in Canada. It is the second leading cause of death amongst young people. It's important to recognize that those who struggle with mental health have personal strength and resilience and the potential to overcome difficulties to ultimately thrive.

The YRDSB Student Suicide Intervention Protocol is designed to address the six steps involved when responding to current and present thoughts of suicide, as well as actions related to suicide. In addition, the Protocol is governed by a set of guiding principles which are underpinned by a culturally responsive and reflective practice.

Suicide is not culturally neutral. Our cultural and ethnic backgrounds will inform how each of us understands suicide. To see all the guiding principles, see the [Student Suicide Intervention Protocol on the Board website, or request a copy through the school office.](#)

Given the urgent need to help keep students safe from suicide, each school has access to Board staff trained in suicide intervention. In the urgent situation of suicide intervention, staff trained in suicide intervention do not require parental / guardian consent to intervene. However, we do make every effort to contact parents/ guardians to apprise you of your child's situation and the assistance provided. Parents/guardians are an integral part of keeping their children safe. In the event that the intervention protocol is used, a record of the intervention will be shared with you (student consent to share information is required for those over the age of 18 years) and a copy will be created and stored in a private and confidential on-line records management system. In accordance with privacy and health records legislation, a copy will be



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retained for one year plus a day following the intervention. As per the protocol parental/guardian (student if 18 or over) consent will be sought to share the intervention plan with those members identified in the record. If you have any questions about the Student Suicide Intervention Protocol please contact your school principal.