

Thursday August 28, 2014

Dear Parents & Guardians,

I hope that you have enjoyed an amazing summer and had an opportunity to spend some quality time with family and friends.

This email is being sent to my Distribution List from last year, so I apologize to those who have graduated from Black Walnut or moved to another community. If you would like to come off this list or would like a different/additional e-mail address, please reply to me and I will take care of it. Also, if you know of new members to our school community, please forward this to us.

Below are a couple important information items for you that should help with our first day.

1. New Vice Principals: Mr. McFadden is now the Vice Principal at Parkview Public School and we will miss him and certainly wish him the best. This year we are fortunate to have two Vice Principals support the work of our team. Please introduce yourselves and welcome Mr. Blair Pike (who will be with us Monday, Wednesday, Friday) and Ms. Janice Fenwick (Tuesday and Thursday).
2. Day One Classrooms: Most of our students had a chance to meet their new teachers last year on the second last day of school. For those who are new to our school, you can call the office now to find out your class or we will help you on Tuesday morning. Below is a summary of where students should go on Tuesday morning;

Grade 1 – in the gym (parents can bring them in, but say good-bye as quickly as possible)

Grade 2-3 on playground at the south end of the yard (some 3s in portable, some in school)

Grades 4-5 on playground at north end of the yard and in front of portables where most of these students will be.

Grade 6-8 can go directly to the classes upstairs.

Kindergarten – SKs coming at 10:00 and JKs at 1:30. Go to the fenced in receiving area.

3. Bus service to the Northwest end of our boundary: As you know from the correspondence that went home in June, the temporary bus service that has been provided in this area for the past two years is no longer available. There is still some construction in this area that is a concern for us, but we are working to make this area safe for students and families.

The walking route is:

- a) cross at the north west corner of White's Hill/Cornell Centre
- b) immediately cross White's Hill south
- c) proceed along White's Hill to John Allen Cameron then go south to the school (Shady Oaks)

Here are some additional things that I am working on with YRDSB staff to create a safe situation in this area:

I am working with Sonia Sanita who is our Board's "Safe Routes to School Facilitator." We work together with you, school staff, City of Markham employees and YRDSB staff to address:

- 1.) Crossing guards at White's Hill/Cornell Centre and at Shady Oaks/John Allan Cameron
- 2.) Having a 4-way stop at Shady Oaks/John Allan Cameron
- 3.) Working on school strategies to increase the number of students walking to school which reduces traffic and is a healthy alternative. This could include strategies like the walking school bus, neighbourhood watch...
- 4.) Working with the Construction Company to make them aware of student crossing times and to increase their vigilance during these times
- 5) Student safety education

I plan to be at the White's Hill crossing on Tuesday to support our students walking this route for the first time.

4. Parking Lot Kiss & Ride: We will not be using the Kiss and Ride area of our parking lot this year. Last year there were too many unsafe driving situations, cars blocking pathways, fender benders, handicap parking spaces used by non-permitted vehicles. As we grow as a school, our staff numbers also grow and we have added 9 new staff members this year. The gate to the parking lot will be closed during entry and exit times to all non-staff vehicles except those with handicap permits.

The Kiss & Ride area this year will be the bus loop. We will have additional staff members and intermediate students here to help younger students exit vehicles, and to direct students into the kindergarten pen or school yard. **PARENTS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PARK OR EXIT THEIR VEHICLES IN THIS AREA.** It will be a quick drop off spot. If you need to exit your vehicle, you will need to park your car on the road, and walk to the school. Of course, the best solution to our traffic congestion is to walk to school, and as mentioned above, we will be working on some supportive community safe walking initiatives. Thanks for your understanding of this important student safety item.

I look forward to seeing you again or meeting you for the first time. I look forward to another prosperous and exciting year at Black Walnut Public School.

Sincerely,
Doug Wilton, Principal
Black Walnut P.S.