



Dr. Denison Secondary School



School Start-Up Package 2019-2020

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Inspire Learning!





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Welcome Letter from Principal

Dear Families,

A warm welcome to all our new and returning families. I hope you had a wonderful, relaxing summer and are looking forward to the new school year.

This package includes important information about our school, including a book of forms to be completed and the Guide to the 2019-2020 School Year.

We have a dedicated staff with a strong commitment to student well-being and achievement, and to promoting positive, inclusive and supportive relationships with students, families, staff and community members. We are committed to providing a learning environment where everyone feels safe, welcome and respected.

We look forward to working with you in the months ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions. We welcome the opportunity to speak with you.

I wish you all a happy, safe and successful school year.

Sincerely,

*Janet Atkinson
Principal*





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Information Package and Form Checklist

The package includes important information about the school, and a number of forms that you need to complete for each child.

Return the completed forms to your child's homeroom teacher by September 13, 2019.

Required Forms

These forms must be completed.

- Registration Verification/Office Index Card/Emergency Contact Information
- School Start-Up Permissions Form
- Student Information Consent Form

Additional Forms

These programs or opportunities are optional. These forms must be completed **only** if you or your child wish to participate.

- Consent for Information Sharing – Students at the Age of Majority Form.
- Faith Request for Curriculum Accommodations Form
- Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) Consent Form
- Volunteers in Our Schools Form



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Our School

Our focus at Dr. J.M. Denison is to provide a learning environment that will stimulate thinking, curiosity and well-being. Our collective goals have been summarized into four focus statements.

To improve student achievement and well-being we will:

- **Empower** locally and globally-minded citizens (Think globally and act locally).
- **Connect** in a safe, healthy and inclusive learning environment where we all matter and belong.
- **Build** innovative and authentic learning environments that elevate student voice, choice and leadership
- **Build** relationships that reflect our shared responsibility in students' academic and social/emotional growth, mental health and well-being.

Denison Timetable for 2019-2020

Period	Time
Homeroom	8:30 am
Period One	8:35 – 9:50 am
Period Two	9:55-11:10 am
Lunch	11:15-12:20 pm
Period Three	12:25-1:40 pm
Period Four	1:45-3:00 pm

Office Hours 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Principal Janet Atkinson

Vice-Principals Candice Mott (A-L) Michelle Godfrey (M-Z)

Additional Information

You can find information on topics covered in this package and more in the **Guide to the School Year**. A copy is provided to families and is also available on the York Region District School Board website at www.yrdsb.ca.

Allergies/Medical Conditions

There are students and staff members in our school who have life-threatening allergies to nuts, scents and other allergens. If they smell or come into contact with these foods, they may have an anaphylactic reaction.

To help create an allergen-safe environment, please refrain from bringing peanut or nut products into the building. Peanut products are not sold in school vending machines or the cafeteria. Many staff members and students are also sensitive to perfumes, colognes, aftershaves and other scented products. By choosing to use unscented personal care products, we can make our environment a better place to work and learn. For more information on helping to create an allergen-safe environment, please see the section on Allergies in the Guide to the School Year.

If your child has a serious or life-threatening allergy or medical condition, let the school know immediately and speak to the school office about completing the appropriate medical forms. All students with serious allergies are expected to carry epi-pens, if prescribed, on their person at all times.

Announcements

Important information is shared with students during the morning announcements. Students should listen attentively and respectfully during the announcements.

Arrivals and Departures

We encourage all families to use **active travel, including walking, cycling or rolling** (cycling, scootering, skateboarding) to and from school. There are bike racks for securing bicycles around the back (westside) of Denison by the entrance to the track.

Students who take the school bus will be dropped off and picked up at the front of the school. More information about bus routes and times can be found at www.schoolbuscity.com. Parents/guardians, it is important to remember your child's route number and pick-up/drop-off times.

Parents/guardians who drive their children to school, please do not park in the bus areas at the front of the school including the bus loop (near eastside of the front of the school) and bus lane. Families can drop off their children around the back of the school where there are additional entrances and parking spaces.

Choosing active travel even once or twice a week 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.



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Students who use bicycles, rollerblades, skateboards or scooters to travel to school must wear a helmet, and walk while on school property. Students should lock bicycles on the bike rack, and store rollerblades, skateboards or scooters in their locker or backpack or in the main office. Students are not permitted to take these items into classrooms, gymnasium, cafeteria or library. The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

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 section on Weather Conditions in the Guide to the School Year. At all times, students and families should be aware of somewhere else they can go if bus services are cancelled or delayed, or if schools are forced to close due to an emergency.

Code of Student Conduct

The Code of Student Conduct sets standards of behaviour for students and members of the school community. The code of conduct supports a caring and safe school environment and creates a shared understanding of expectations of behaviour.

Students are expected to follow these rules of behaviour on school property and during Board or school-sponsored events and activities. To enhance caring and safe school climates, positive student behaviour supports are provided and inappropriate behaviour is addressed using a progressive discipline approach that takes into account mitigating factors.

Code of Student Conduct

It is important that all students are able to learn, grow and achieve their goals while at Dr. J.M. Denison. We encourage exploration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity and cultivating curiosity. We are also aware that at times student behaviour needs to be checked in order to ensure a respectful, inclusive and productive learning environment. As such, we will hold students accountable for their words and actions. Our focus is to repair harm, take ownership for choices and impact, learn and grow from digressions and correct disrespectful, discriminatory and unproductive behaviour. Restitution and appropriate disciplinary consequences will occur before being welcomed back to the Denison community of learners.

The Board Code of Student Conduct is part of the Caring and Safe Schools Policy.

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 Caring and Safe Schools Policy outline the situations in which suspension and expulsion must be considered. These infractions are also outlined in the Guide to the School Year. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, information will be shared with the victim and parents/guardians of the victim to the extent that legislation allows.





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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) impacts how schools, staff and school councils communicate electronically to parents. CASL prohibits the sending of 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 and, using the link provided, submit a valid email address.

Email

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. Please ensure that we have your correct and current email address and you will receive a weekly update email from the school which includes timely announcements, upcoming events and a summary of your child's weekly attendance.

Stay Connected Online

You can also stay connected online through our school website and Twitter feed @DDenisonss. Some classrooms also have google classrooms, blogs, Twitter feeds, YouTube channels or Instagram accounts to help you stay connected. Your child's teacher will provide more information.

In addition, you can follow Board news and updates through:

- www.yrdsb.ca
- Twitter @YRDSB
- YouTube channel YRDSBMedia
- the Board app YRDSB Mobile

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).





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Dress Code

We understand that clothing is a form of self-expression. We want everyone to dress comfortably, respectfully and mindfully.

Please ensure that clothing that you wear to school displays respectful language and graphics. There should be no references to drugs, alcohol, smoking, sex, racism, etc. We want to ensure that you open yourself up to the social situations that school can present so please do not wear anything that covers your face like masks. This excludes any clothing worn in accordance with religious practice, tradition or significance to a faith group.

When making clothing choices for school, we ask students to respect that school is a place for diverse learners.

Emergency Information

Office staff should be notified as soon as possible if any of the following information changes:

- 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)

Emergency Preparedness

The Board has a number of policies and procedures in place to address emergency situations when 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

Teachers may take classes on walks around the community to support classroom programs. As well, many physical education classes and other activities are held outdoors, weather permitting. You will be informed whenever school vehicles are used for longer trips.

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 the development of study habits and life skills. For more information, contact the Guidance Department.

Homework

The Ministry of Education defines homework as “work that students do at home to practise skills, consolidate knowledge and skills, and /or prepare for the next class.”

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 Guide to the School Year and the Board Homework Policy and Procedure.

How Can We Help You?

Most concerns can be resolved with dialogue and cooperation. 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.

We are committed to addressing concerns in a fair, equitable and timely manner.

If you have a human rights related concern and/or complaint, the first step is to engage with the school or the superintendent. Following a review of the matter, a determination is made on whether or not it is to be referred to the Board’s Human Rights Commissioner’s Office. 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 in the Guide to the School Year and on the Board website.

Requests for Religious 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 the 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.



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School Council

As parents/guardians, 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. Contact school office staff for more information.

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 Information Consent Form** and see the section on Student Personal Information in the Guide to the School Year 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.

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 can support collaboration, learning and productivity. Camera and/or video functions on mobile devices are not permitted for use on 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.

Check with the school's main office to find out if students may bring electronic devices into the classroom, use them in school, or if they must leave these items in their backpacks/lockers. There are exceptions for students who need specific devices as per their Individual Education Plan, such as voice recorders and other mobile technology. The use of these tools is managed by Board staff.

At no time may electronic devices be used in washrooms or changerooms. Students are responsible for the care and security of their personal devices. The school is not responsible for any damage, loss or theft.

Visitors

Visitors, including parents/guardians, must:

- Use the main entrance to the school.
- Check in at the main office upon arrival.

The office staff will get important messages and materials to your child.

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.

Student Threat Assessment and Intervention: Fair Notice and Process

Threat Assessment and Intervention

Schools continue to be among the safest places in our community. 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 Assessment and Intervention 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, parents/guardians, 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 Student Threat Assessment and Intervention 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 Student Threat Assessment and Intervention Protocol?

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

- Serious violence or violence with intent to harm or kill
- Verbal/written threats to kill/harm others
- The use of technology to communicate threats to harm/kill others or cause serious property damage
- Possession of weapons (including replicas)
- Bomb threats (making and/or detonating explosive devices)
- Fire setting
- Sexual intimidation or assault
- Ongoing issues with bullying and/or harassment
- Gang-related intimidation and violence



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- Hate incidents motivated by factors including, but not limited to, race, culture, religion, and/or sexual orientation

What happens when a threatening situations is reported?

All threatening behaviours by a student shall be reported to the principal who will activate the Student Threat Assessment and Intervention 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 Student Threat Assessment and Intervention team?

Each school will have staff trained in the Student Threat Assessment and Intervention protocol. A multi-disciplinary Student Threat Assessment and Intervention 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 Student Threat Assessment Intervention protocol is part of our strategy to create a safe, secure and supportive school environment for everyone.

If you have any questions, please contact your school administrator.

