



Dr. J. M. Denison Secondary School



School Start-Up Package 2021-2022

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Inspire Learning!

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Welcome From the Principal

Dear Families/Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to all our new and returning families. I hope you all had a safe, healthy and enjoyable summer. Our caring, professional and dedicated school team has been working hard to prepare to welcome your children back to school. The building is in excellent shape with new lighting and ceilings on the first floor, a revamped library, updated cafeteria and painting of some classrooms and learning spaces. Further, the caretakers who take pride in their work have ensured the building is clean and ready to receive students.

We recognize that the pandemic and school closures affected students and families in different ways, and will prioritize the health, safety and well-being of your child(ren) as we support them in transitioning back to school.

- This start-up package includes important information about our school, and I encourage you to review it.
- Families will also receive the [Guide to the 2021-2022 School Year](#) which includes important Board information.
- If you have not had an opportunity to review the [school reopening information](#) on the Board website, I encourage you to do so.

We know many families have questions about what to expect this school year. Information and resources, including frequently asked questions, are available and continue to be updated at www.yrdsb.ca/school-reopening.

Each year, we ask families to complete some **important forms** to indicate that they have reviewed and understand school and Board policies, and to indicate permissions. We are pleased to let you know that families will be able to complete this information online this year for their children. You will receive an email from the school board. Please take the time to review and complete the forms. If you prefer to receive and complete a paper copy, please let us know.

There are a few upcoming dates I would like to highlight, including: Thursday, September 9 is for Grade 9 students only, and Friday, September 10, 2021 is when all grades (9-12) will attend. On Friday, students will follow their Week 2 schedule of Periods 2 and 4 as per their timetable.

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 supporting our students' transition back to school, and to providing a learning environment where everyone feels safe, valued, welcome and respected.

We value the relationship we have with families, and look forward to speaking and 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 connect with you.

There are many ways to stay connected with what's happening in our school. Visit our [school website](#) for up-to-date information about events. We will use Inform (email), TeachAssist, SchoolCashOnLine, ebulletins, the school sign and paper hardcopies to share opportunities, programs and key information throughout the year. You can also find updated information about the Board at www.yrdsb.ca and Twitter @YRDSB.

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

Sincerely,

Alex Corry, Principal;
Dr. J.M. Denison Secondary School

Information Package and Form Checklist

This package includes important information about the school. Please review this information. You will also receive **an email with a number of forms** that you need to complete for each child. If you prefer to receive a paper copy, or if you do not receive the forms, please contact the school office.

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
- ☐ School Council Nomination Form
- ☐ Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) Consent 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 2021-2022

Homeroom:	8:30 a.m. - 8:35 a.m.
Block One Periods 1 or 3 (150 min):	8:35 a.m. - 11:05 a.m.
Travel time (5 min):	11:05 a.m. - 11:10 a.m.
Lunch (65 min):	11:10 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Travel time (5 min):	12:15 p.m. - 12:20 p.m.
Block Two Periods 2 or 4 (150 min):	12:20 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.

NOTE: The schedule includes 5-minute travel time before and after lunch which will be needed with a return to a regular 4-block structure. At this time, we plan to begin with a 2 block day and will consider lunch to be scheduled from 11:05 AM to 12:20 PM.

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Principal: Alex Corry

Vice-Principals: Elissa D'Souza (A-L) Alex Wright (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.

COVID-19

The health and safety of students, staff members and their families continues to be our top priority. York Region District School Board continues to work closely with York Region Public Health and to follow their direction in implementing health and safety measures and recommendations. It is essential that we all continue to practice health and safety measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Families will receive information from the school board about health and safety measures that are in place in our schools. **It is also important to note that some information in this package may be subject to change to ensure we are adhering to health and safety guidelines.**

You can also visit www.yrdsb.ca/school-reopening for more information, including community and mental health resources, frequently asked questions and more.

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.

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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 (west side) of Denison by the entrance to the track. Students should not arrive more than 15 minutes before the start of the school day.

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/Families 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 the east side 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.

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, the 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

A positive school climate and a safe learning and teaching environment are essential if students are to succeed in school. A positive school climate means everyone feels they are safe, welcome and respected. The Code of Student Conduct sets standards of behaviour for students and members of the school community that support a caring and safe 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 applies whether on school property, on school buses, at school-related events or activities, before and/or after school programs, or in other circumstances that could have an impact on the school climate.

To enhance caring and safe 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.

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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.

Communication between School and Home

Parents/Guardians/Families are our most important partners in educating children. We communicate with you in a variety of ways throughout the year. **It is important that the school has your correct contact information. Please contact the school if your contact information has changed/changes throughout the school year.**

Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL)

Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) impacts how schools, staff and school councils communicate electronically to families. 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/families. 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.

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Texts

Families can now receive text messages in emergency situations only - to communicate COVID-19 school closures 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 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
- Instagram @yrdsb.schools
- Twitter @YRDSB
- YouTube channel YRDSBMedia
- the Board app YRDSB Mobile
- TuneIn YRDSB, the Board's podcast, available on most podcast platforms

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/families, 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)/families.

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. 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)

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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 direction for academic and career planning, personal support, 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 families 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

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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.

School Council

As parents/guardians/families, 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/families, 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.

Technology Use

All students and their parents/guardians/families are expected to read the [Use of Technology Agreement](#) (in the Guide to the School Year or available on the Board website). 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, maintain network integrity and forward the schools blended learning program.

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.

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Through Google Suite, students have access to a Google Suite Gmail. This Gmail access is customized for appropriate age levels. Students younger than Grade 6 cannot send or receive emails outside of the YRDSB Google Suite. 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 to support 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. 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.

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/families, 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.

Student Threat-Risk Assessment Protocol: Fair Notice and Process

Threat-Risk 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 Threat-Risk 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, parents/guardians/families, students, and community members must report all threatening situations to

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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-Risk Assessment Protocol?

- Ensure the safety of students, staff, parents/guardians/families, 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-Risk 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 principal who will activate the Threat-Risk 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/families.

Who is a member of a Threat-Risk Assessment team?

Each school will have staff trained in the Threat-Risk Assessment protocol. A multi-disciplinary Threat-Risk 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.

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Is parental/guardian/family 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-Risk 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/families consent to intervene. However, we do make every effort to contact parental/guardian/families to apprise you of your child's situation and the assistance provided. Parental/guardian/families 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 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.