



Williams' Tell Weekly – Parent Edition

Week of: January 11-15, 2021

Trait of the Month: **Optimism**

The mission of The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School is to develop literate students who are innovative, well-rounded lifelong learners and critical thinkers. We aim to foster caring global citizens who maintain inclusive and respectful interactions with others.

School Website: <http://drgwwilliams.ss.yrdsb.ca/>

Social Media: @drgwwilliams ([Instagram](#) & [Twitter](#))

All students online until January 25, 2021

Message from the Principal

Happy New Year!! We hope that everyone was able to enjoy some time together over the holidays and that you found some creative ways to spend the time during lockdown in the winter months.

We have had another transition in our learning this week and I am pleased that both students and teachers have worked together to effectively navigate the new normal. With the announcement of elementary students remaining home until January 25th I ask that students and families support our classroom teachers that also have young children at home during this time. We really want to have our teachers in the classrooms at the end of the semester (rather than have them take leaves and put occasional teachers in their place) and know that it is a careful balancing act offering synchronous learning all day when they have really young ones in their own homes. Thank you in advance for your support and understanding as our teachers work hard to make this all work.

Our focus in the coming weeks is increasing our support for students who may be struggling to demonstrate the expectations and earn credits thus far in the semester. As the semester draws to a close, teachers, SERTs, Student Success and/or Guidance will be reaching out again to all of those students with courses in jeopardy to create a plan for maximum success with the time remaining in the semester. Given there are no exams this year, teachers will be teaching right up to January 29th which means there is still 3 weeks for students to demonstrate their overall learning in each course.

Admin and Guidance are also busy working on timetabling and staffing for Semester 2. We hope to have timetables for students sometime the week of January 22. We are not certain that teachers will be finalized by that point but we hope to provide students with the timetable of their courses that week. This coming semester all courses will be cohorted randomly at the beginning of the semester. We will continue to review the cohorting to support students living in the same household where possible prior to finalizing schedules. As you can likely appreciate, this is a massive undertaking and we are unable to take requests for cohorting. We will follow the same structure so that Cohort A has a section number of 01-49 and Cohort B has a section number greater than 50 (mostly 71, 72, 73, etc.). A detailed letter will be provided via email for all families when the timetables are ready in TeachAssist.

Thanks again for your ongoing support during this semester as we work hard to support our students in such challenging circumstances. Although case numbers are currently up, I feel that there is a light at the end of the tunnel and we can remain hopeful as we look to the future.

Notices

Revised School Screening Checklist

Every day, parents/guardians and students over 18 are responsible for reviewing and adhering to the checklist from York Region Public Health. This checklist has been recently updated to reflect the Ontario government's revised [COVID-19 Screening Tool for Children in Schools](#) and Child Care.

Please note that the new screening guide applies to children only and the adult screening has not changed. Thank you for working with us to protect the health and safety of students, staff and families and to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Math Enrichment Opportunities

Due to the adaptive model we are following this year, we cannot offer the typical array of math contests and math club enrichment opportunities at Williams. However, thanks to some accommodations made by Universities, it is possible that our students can still participate in some of these activities. To best communicate these opportunities, we have created a "Math Club" Google Classroom that contains links to enrichment opportunities as well as all the information (and relevant links) we currently have with regard to the contests we normally participate in. We will not be running an actual Math Club through the classroom, but we will continue to update it with any pertinent information and/or links throughout the school year. The Math Club Classroom is open to any Williams students who would like to join. Please use the join code: cxwtmf4

Literacy Corner

Hello Parents!

My name is Zahra Murad, and I am the Literacy teacher at Williams. In this bi-weekly segment, I will bring you some simple literacy challenges you can engage with your students at home, to help strengthen their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills!

Literacy Challenge: Synonyms Game - Would a rose, by any other name, actually smell as sweet?

What: This short activity challenges students to expand their vocabulary, carefully consider their word choices when writing, and develop their analytic capabilities!

How:

1. Write a short persuasive paragraph. Try to use language that will help you convince another person of your point of view. You can write about anything you want, or you can use the prompt: **Do you believe extraterrestrial life exists?**
2. Trade your paragraph with your parent. Each of you should ask yourself: what is the tone and style of this paragraph?
3. Highlight all the keywords in your paragraph - what are the most important nouns and verbs? Do you use any descriptive words (adjectives or adverbs) that are important?
4. Use a [thesaurus](#) to look up synonyms and replace all your keywords.
5. Trade your paragraphs again. Has the meaning and tone of your paragraph changed? Which did you prefer?

Why: Literacy is a 21st century power that all students should cultivate. Having control over the words we speak, and how we put them together, can boost our confidence, demonstrate our knowledge and authority, and make us more persuasive. This activity helps to:

- a. Build and expand vocabulary;

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Staff Directory	4

- b. Demonstrate the importance of word choice to making meaning and to creating the impression that your student wants to convey through their writing;
- c. Practice developing and maintaining control over their use of language.

All of these elements will help your student increase and hone their powers of literacy!

Guidance

Community Services

- Changes have been made to the Community Involvement Graduation Requirements. Information on requirements and eligibility can be found on the Grade 12 Google Classroom.

Scholarships and Bursaries

- Please check the graduation class of 2021 for the most recent updates to Scholarships and Bursaries information.

Night School

- Night School e-learning registration is open for fall 2021. Courses are free for Ontario residents with Canadian Status. For more information visit: <http://ow.ly/s3kt30razeA>

RTC Computer Purchase Program

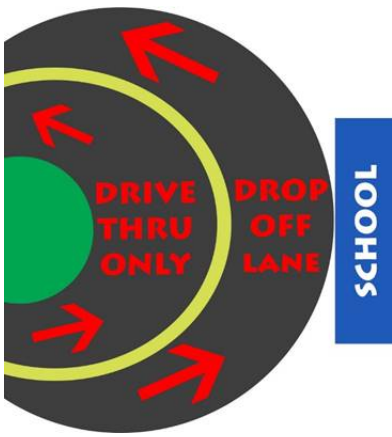
Once again we are pleased to offer this to our Williams families. Please see the attached flyer below for more information on accessing this program.

FLYER

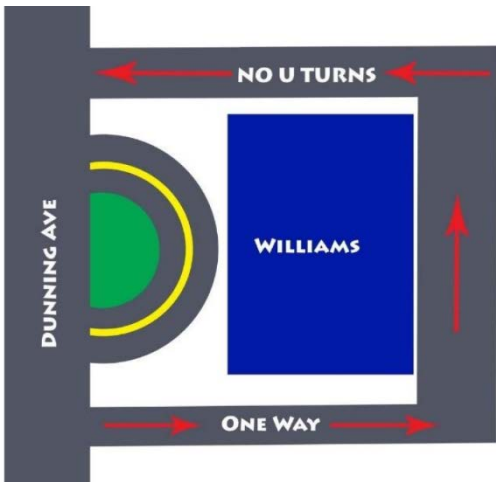
Driveway and Parking Lot

The safety of all students must be everyone’s first priority. Please follow the procedures below.

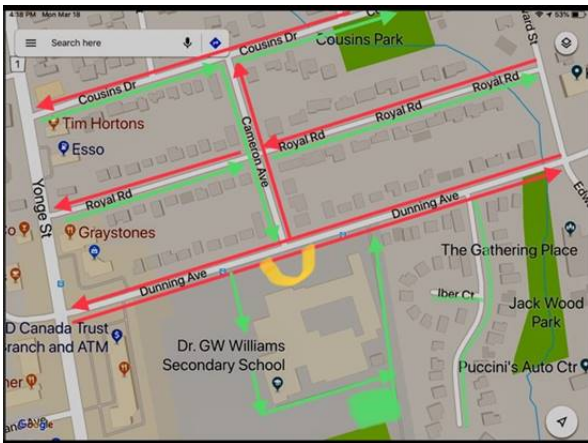
At the end of the school day, the front driveway loop is closed to regular traffic from about 10:40 to 11:00. Only school taxis and buses are to use the front driveway loop at the end of the day in order to create a safe place for our students with special needs. Once all the school taxis and buses leave the front driveway loop around 11:00, regular traffic may use this area. To support our efforts to ensure physical distancing, we ask that you make arrangements to meet your students at the nearest exit from their classroom (in one of the parking lots) or off school property (down the street, around the corner, etc.). Please see the maps below to support your efforts.



There is one-way traffic in our front driveway loop. In the front driveway loop, drop off/pick up students on the right side; drive through only on the left side. For safety reasons, do not drop off/pick up students on the left side.



There is one-way traffic in the west entrance and on the south (back) side of the school. It is two-way traffic on the east side of the school, however, during the end of morning pick-up time you will have noticed the admin directing all vehicles to enter the west lot ONLY so that we have a constant flow out of the east lot. This adjustment has made a significant positive impact on safety for all and makes it easier and less stressful for everyone. When you are able to enter the east lot, do not make U-turns anywhere in the east parking lot from Dunning Avenue to the south parking lot. Making a U-turn in this area creates an unsafe condition for pedestrians and other vehicles. If you need to turn around, please pull into a parking spot and carefully back out.



Please note that Dunning Avenue is a **no stopping zone**. This is noted by the signage along the street and on the map above you can see the red arrows on both sides of the street. Our School Council previously worked with local by-law officials to identify areas within the neighbourhood that parents can pick up their students. Please note the arrows in green and red to support the effective flow of traffic in the area.

Thank you for your cooperation with this!

School Calendar for 2020-2021

The Ministry of Education has approved the school calendar for 2020-2021. For Williams, some important dates and holidays are:

- Winter Break – Monday December 21, 2020 January 1, 2021
- Family Day – Monday, February 15, 2021
- March Break – Monday, March 15, 2021 to Friday March 19, 2021
- Good Friday – Friday, April 2, 2021
- Easter Monday – Monday, April 5, 2021
- Victoria Day – Monday, May 24, 2021

PA Days for Williams (but not necessarily for elementary schools in our area) are:

- Monday February 15, 2021
- Friday May 7, 2021
- Tuesday June 29, 2021

School Council Meetings for 2020-2021

- Monday January 18, 2021
- Tuesday March 23, 2021
- Monday May 17, 2021