



# Williams' Tell Weekly – Parent Edition

Week of Feb. 05 - 09 , 2024

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.

The Dr. G.W. Williams SS

### Administrative Team

Melissa Schmidt, Principal  
Erin Gray, VP (A-Le)  
Andrew Gazaneo, VP (Li-Z)

### Contact Us

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### Phone Extensions:

Reception 0  
Attendance 1  
Guidance 3  
Staff Directory 4

### Office Hours

7:45 am - 3:45 pm

### Daily Schedule

Period 1 8:20-9:40

Period 2 9:45-11:00

Period 3 11:05-12:20

Period 4 12:25-1:40

Period 5 1:45-3:00

School Website: <http://drgwilliams.ss.yrdsb.ca/>  
Email: [dr.g.w.williams.ss@yrdsb.ca](mailto:dr.g.w.williams.ss@yrdsb.ca)

Social Media: [@drgwilliams](#) (Instagram & Twitter)  
Attendance: [drgwilliamss.attendance@yrdsb.ca](mailto:drgwilliamss.attendance@yrdsb.ca)

<b>Feb 05</b>	Semester 2 begins
<b>Feb 06</b>	Boys Varsity Hockey Playoffs 12:15-4:15pm
<b>Feb 07</b>	Semester 2 School Showdown - Student Council (see info below) Grade 8 IB Course Selection Evening
<b>Feb 08</b>	Williams Invitational Festival of Bands 3-9pm, in cafeteria Junior Girls Volleyball Home Game, 3:30-5:00pm
<b>Feb 09</b>	Safe and Caring Schools - Assemblies (p1 - grades 9 and 10, p2 - grades 11 and 12) Health and Safety visit DECA Provincials at Sheraton in Toronto SHSM - Customer Service & Negotiations

### Upcoming

<b>Feb 12</b>	Junior Girls Volleyball Game at Dr. JM Denison, 2:15-5:00pm
<b>Feb 13</b>	Report Cards e-distributions Picture Retakes
<b>Feb 14</b>	Report Cards e-distributions SHSM - CPR & First Aid
<b>Feb 15</b>	Report Card e- distributions SHSM - CPR & First Aid Chinese Cultural Center of Toronto Trip, 7am-2:30pm
<b>Feb 16</b>	

To support your family planning, the 2023-2024 YRDSB School Year Calendar is available on the [YRDSB website](#). Additionally, all dates for school events are continually updated on our Google calendar on our [school website](#) and all confirmed events have been updated for 2023-2024 on our website now.

### Message from the Principal

As we begin the 2nd semester we are excited to introduce a few new faces to the team at Williams. We welcome Ms. Erin Gray as our new Vice Principal. She will be supporting students in the first part of the alpha (Last names A-Le). We have also added a few new teachers: Mr. Drew Brown, Construction; Ms. Steph Cross, Business; Ms. Michele deVries, Visual Arts; and Mr. Stefan Porfirio, English.

Later this month I encourage families to participate in our School Council meeting on Wednesday February 21 at 7pm to hear from the YRDSB Planning Department regarding the boundary review taking place in anticipation of our school relocation in September 2025.

Thank you for your ongoing support of our efforts to ensure students are in class and gaining the best benefits from the materials presented by their teachers. As part of our school improvement planning our teachers are focusing on equitable assessment practices that ensure students see themselves in the curriculum and develop a strong sense of belonging. Their regular, punctual attendance in class will support these efforts and ensure their success long term!

Take care,  
Melissa Schmidt

### Message from Our Trustee, Melanie Wright

As we start the second semester and second half of the school year, I want to take this opportunity to share some updates about upcoming dates, events and initiatives taking place across our system with you. I also want to thank everyone who contributes to building a strong educational community in York Region District School Board - the students, families, staff members and community partners who come together in support of student learning, achievement and well-being.

February is Black History Month. In addition to a number of [events taking place](#) within the school board and local community, the school board is once again Celebrating Black Excellence through its Black Voices campaign. [Black Voices](#) aims to centre and celebrate the Black members of our YRDSB community and share their voices. For families looking to learn more about school board and community events and programs for Black students and families, you can [subscribe to the Centre for Black Student Excellence mailing list](#) to receive regular updates.

Later this month, we will also recognize the [Lunar New Year](#) and wish all students, staff and community celebrating Lunar New Year a happy and joyful celebration.

While we have seen milder winter weather this year, I also want to remind families that we have protocols in place for [severe weather](#) and school transportation cancellation in the case of inclement weather, and want to ensure families are aware. You can find more information on the Board website. We also continue to encourage families to use active school travel all year round, including during the winter months. Early in February, we will be celebrating [Winter Walk Day](#), and be sharing tips as well as the benefits and joys of winter walking.

This month, students in Grades 5-12 will have an opportunity to vote in the [Student Trustee Elections](#). I want to congratulate and thank all of the students in Grade 10 and 11 who applied for this position. Student Trustees play an important role representing student voice at the Board meetings, and we greatly value their voice and contributions. Students who are eligible to vote will receive information in their GAPPs accounts about how to vote. This is a great opportunity to participate in the democratic process and to have their say about who will represent their voice in the next school year.

Kindergarten and French Immersion registration opened in January for fall 2024. For students looking at course selection in secondary school, there are lots of great resources available at [www.yrdsb.ca/experience-yrdsb](http://www.yrdsb.ca/experience-yrdsb) that let students learn more about courses, programs and opportunities that relate to their interests.

Families in the Aurora area can look forward to the opening of a [new school](#) proposed to open in September 2024. If you live in the boundary area, you can expect to receive information about next steps and an update on the [naming process](#).

You can also stay up-to-date with what's happening around the Board by visiting our [newsroom](#) - some of the latest stories feature schools in our area - or by listening to the Board's award-winning [podcast Tune In YRDSB](#), including recent and upcoming episodes on what to expect in Kindergarten, how Student Trustees represent student voice, Tamil Heritage Month, Hindu Heritage Month and more.

As the governing body of the York Region District School Board, trustees are required to establish an annual Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP) to guide system direction for a four-year period. The MYSP is a reflection of emergent priorities identified by our educational communities. Over the coming months, we will be conducting extensive consultations with YRDSB students, staff, families and community members to collect input and feedback to develop our revised MYSP. We look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you for all that you do to partner with us in building a strong publicly funded education system that delivers a high-quality education for your children. You can learn more about my role as a school trustee and [how you can reach me](#) on the Board website [www.yrdsb.ca](http://www.yrdsb.ca).

### School Notices

**OSSTF District 16 invites you to participate in the Human Rights Day Poster Competition 2024!** The competition is open to all YRDSB students in grades 9 to 12, with \$300 awarded to the winner. Applications and posters must be uploaded to the Google Form by 3:30pm on Friday, March 29, 2024. For further details, please see your teacher or a member of the Guidance Department. [2024 Human Rights Poster Competition](#)

### **Washrooms and Hallways**

We continue to hear from students that they sometimes feel unsafe in the washrooms due to the number of students loitering in the washrooms and sometimes engaging in vaping. The staff at Williams regularly enter washrooms to ensure that students are not loitering and are using the washrooms for the purposes intended. It is important for students to remember that washrooms are 'public' spaces and that their individual privacy in the stall is expected but that staff are free to enter the main washroom area at any time to support school safety. Even during the lunch hour students are not permitted to gather, loiter or eat in the washrooms.

Staff have been limiting washroom breaks in their classrooms to a maximum of 1 student at a time to limit opportunities for students to gather in hallways and washrooms during class time as well. Students who are found abusing their washroom privileges will find that they will need to be escorted for breaks moving forward in Semester 2.

### **School Start-Up Forms**

All students and parents are **REQUIRED** to complete the school start-up forms. Please visit <https://startupforms.yrdsb.ca/> to complete these now if you haven't already done so. Thank you to more than 900 parents that have already completed this important task!! Only 500 or so to go...

### School Council Corner

Join us for our upcoming meeting on February 21st, where we'll hear from the YRDSB Planning Department regarding the boundary review underway related to our new school as well as learn about the School Improvement Planning process from the Admin Team as well as an update on the Constitution process. Your participation, even without a long-term commitment, will help you stay involved in your child's high school journey. Hope to see you at our next meeting!

### YRDSB and Community Notices

#### **Do you need a computer?**

Renewed Computer Technology (RCT) is a not-for-profit, charitable organization that empowers learners, educators and not-for-profit organizations with increased access to information and communications technology (ICT), skill development and learning opportunities, in a socially and environmentally responsible manner.

Working with York Region District School Board, they are offering affordable, renewed computer packages. Click [here](#) for more details.

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### Guidance

#### **Course Changes and Upcoming Course Selection Period**

- Students who need to make course changes for Semester 2 should meet with their guidance counsellor as soon as possible.
- Course selections for the 2024/2025 school year will open on myBlueprint / Pathway Planner on February 15th and **close on February 23rd**. In the meantime, students can map out their courses to start their planning process. Please book an appointment with a guidance counsellor if required.
  - **New OSSD Courses Offered 2024/2025**
    - ENG2P1 - Grade 10 Applied English
    - GLS1O1/GLS4O1 - Grade 9 and 12 Learning Strategies for non-identified students
    - MFM2P1 - Grade 10 Applied Math
    - SBI3C1 - Grade 11 College Biology
    - SNC2P1 - Grade 10 Applied Science
    - TDJ2O1 - Grade 10 Technological Design
    - TGG3M1/TGG4M1 - Grade 11 and 12 Communications Technology: Print & Graphic Communications (YEARBOOK)
  - **New IB Courses Offered for 2024-2025**
    - Group 3: HL Psychology
    - Group 3: HL Global Politics
    - Group 4: SL Computer Sciences
    - Group 5: HL Music
    - Group 5: HL Visual Arts

\*Please see the Guidance Google Classroom for detailed information on important announcements.

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### Attendance Procedures

#### **Extended Absences**

Planned absences of three or more consecutive school days require the completion of an "Extraordinary Absence" form at least one week in advance of the

leave. The form is available in the Attendance Office. The process includes obtaining signatures from teachers and a school administrator. It is the student's responsibility to catch up on all work missed.

Parents/guardians should contact the Attendance Office to indicate when their child will be absent and the reason for the absence. The Attendance Office can be reached at 905-727-3131 ext. 100. If the attendance secretary is busy please leave a voice message OR send an email to [drgwilliamsss.attendance@yrdsb.ca](mailto:drgwilliamsss.attendance@yrdsb.ca). If a student leaves school resulting in a late or an absence to a class period, they are to go to the attendance office to sign out.

Students are expected to be in their Period 1 classroom at the start of the day. Classes begin at 8:20 am. If a student arrives late for Period 1 and before 8:35 a.m., they are asked to report directly to their class where their homeroom teacher will let the office know the time of arrival. If the 8:20 bell has rung, students are asked to stand in the hallway for the anthem before proceeding to their period 1 class. For any other period, whenever a student arrives at school after the first scheduled class period has begun they are to report to attendance to sign in.

Students are expected to be in class by the times listed above.

Students, parents, and staff have a role to play in ensuring that students attend classes regularly and punctually. Students are responsible for:

- attending all scheduled classes, and being on time;
- being prepared for classes, and participating fully in the planned learning activities;
- reporting absences (preferably in advance), and presenting proper documentation to staff, and covering the material missed when they are absent.

Absences must be both valid and authorized by a parent. Examples of valid reasons include illness, bereavement, medical appointments, court appearance, etc. If no phone call, e-mail, or note is received by the school, the absence will be considered "truant". Truancies are unacceptable.

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

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 or emailing the school's attendance address.

If a student is unable to attend school and will miss more than two school days, homework may be requested from the Guidance Department and picked up at the school. Teachers require 24 hours to complete homework requests. If a student is absent due to a prolonged illness, he/she may be required to provide a medical note.

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### School Calendar for 2023-2024

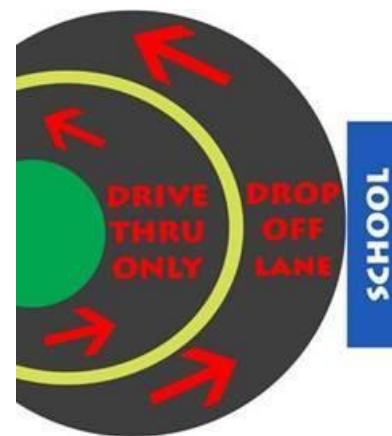
- Please use this [link](#)

### Website Resources for Families and Students

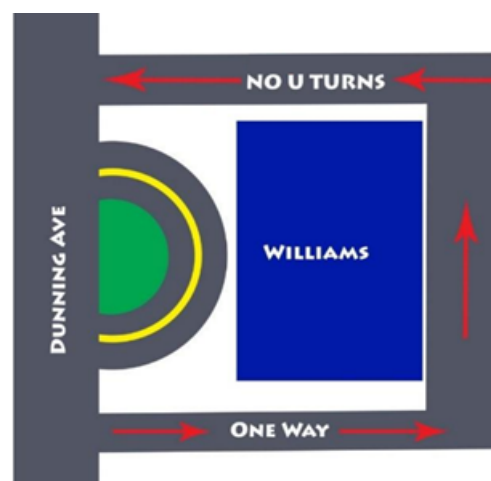
[Resources](#) for students and families on the YRDSB board website, including quick access to online tools, learning platforms and resources, community support, and translation tools.

### Driveway and Parking Lot

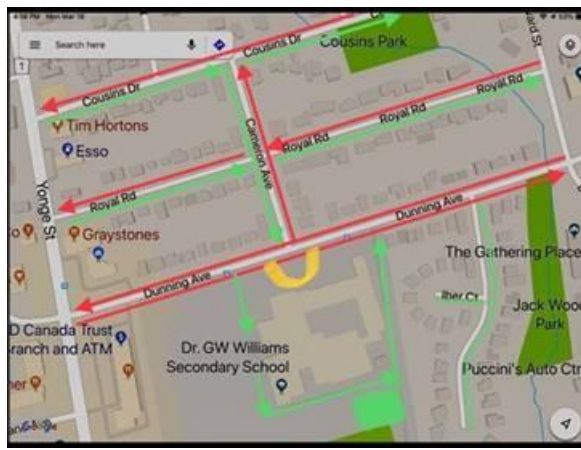
**At the end of the school day, the front driveway loop is closed to regular traffic from about 2:50 to 3:10 pm.** Only school taxis and buses are to use the front driveway loop at the end of the day in order to create a safe place for our students with special needs. Once all the school taxis and buses leave the front driveway loop around 3:10, regular traffic may use this area. To support our efforts to ensure physical distance, 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.



If you **MUST** come to the school, enter via the West lot (beside the track, closest to Yonge Street) and drive around the school to meet your child. **DO NOT** block the driveway waiting. 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 the day pick-up time you will notice the admin directing all vehicles to enter the west lot ONLY so that we have a constant flow out of the east lot.** This makes 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.

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

- Friday, February 2, 2024
- Monday, May 6, 2024
- Thursday, June 27, 2024
- Friday, June 28, 2024

**School Council Meetings for 2023-2024**

- Wednesday February 21, 2024
- Monday April 15, 2024
- Tuesday May 21, 2024