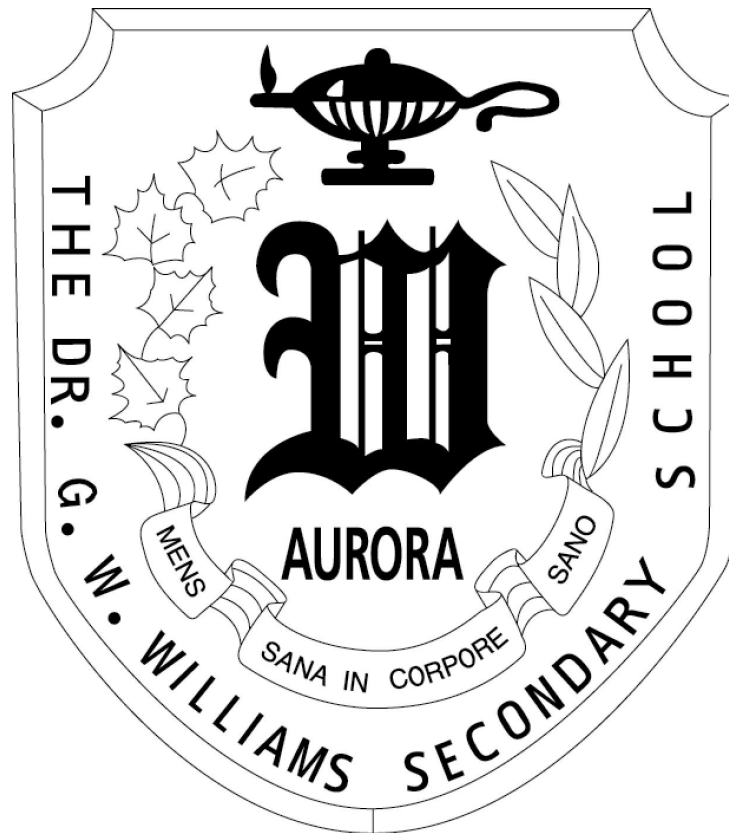


The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School Parent/Guardian Start Up Guide



2023 - 2024

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Information Package and Form Checklist

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

Complete forms by Friday, September 15, 2023.

Required Forms

A link to these forms will be sent by email and must be completed.

- School Start-Up Permissions Form
- Student Personal Information Consent Form

Additional Forms

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

- Request for Faith Accommodations Form
- School Council Nomination Form

Our School

Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School is a community school as well as a regional IB school and a regional Community Class school. Our school mission 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.

Our school aims to develop students who demonstrate responsibility, empathy, respect, initiative, fairness, courage, integrity, optimism, honesty, and perseverance.

School Day Organization

Our school has a five period day schedule. Students in grades 9 to 11 will have 4 courses scheduled each semester. Students in Grade 12 will have at least 3 courses scheduled each semester with at least one period for lunch and one period designated a spare period.

Period	Time	Lunch
Period 1	8:25-9:40	
Period 2	9:45-11:00	Grade 12
Period 3	11:05 -12:20	Grade 9, 11, 12
Period 4	12:25 – 1:40	Grade 10, 11, 12
Period 5	1:45 – 3:00	

Office Hours: 7:45 a.m. - 4:00 p. m.

Leadership Team (Subject Head/Assistant Head)

Alternative Education	N. Joshi
Business Studies & Computer Science	M. Kauffeldt
Cooperative Education	R. Casagrande
English	A. Borenstein
Family Studies and Social Sciences	L. Shillum
Geography	S. Vaillant
Guidance and Career Studies	S. Durbacz
History , Economics, Law, and Philosophy	J. Rass
Library	A. Buono
Mathematics	B. MacIntosh
Modern Languages & ESL	E. Draper
Physical and Health Education	K. Julyan
Science	H. Park, K. Almeida
Special Education	S. Peredo
Technological Studies	M. Byam
Visual Arts	S. Ieraci
Office Administrative Support	M. McKie
Caretaking	R. Renshaw
Student Success Teacher	M. Brennan
IB Coordinator	H. King

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.

Accident Insurance

Student accident insurance provides coverage for injuries due to accidents not covered by government or private health plans (e.g. the cost of expensive dental work as a result of an accident). It is strongly recommended that parents/guardians of students involved in athletics purchase this insurance.

If your child is involved in an accident, whether at school or during non-school hours, Insuremykids protects your family from the resulting expenses, which are not normally covered under your government health and group insurance plans. For more information, visit www.insuremykids.com or call 1-800-463-5437.

Allergies/Medical Conditions

There are students and staff members in our school who have life-threatening allergies to nuts and other allergens such as other food products and chemical sensitivities to fragrances and colognes. 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 nuts or nut products to the school. Please do not use or wear chemicals such as perfumes, colognes, fragranced deodorants or body sprays at school or school events.

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 Health Care Plans.

Announcements

Important information is shared with students during the morning announcements. Students should listen attentively and respectfully during the announcements. Daily announcements are posted on the school website under New & Events, for students' reference.

Arrivals and Departures

Families who live within walking distance are encouraged to use **active travel, including walking or rolling** (cycling, scootering, skateboarding) to and from school.

Driving To School

Parents/guardians who choose to **drive their children to school** are asked to consider parking a block or two away from the school and having their child walk the rest of the way. Choosing active travel 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.

Drop Off, Pick Up and Parking

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

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.

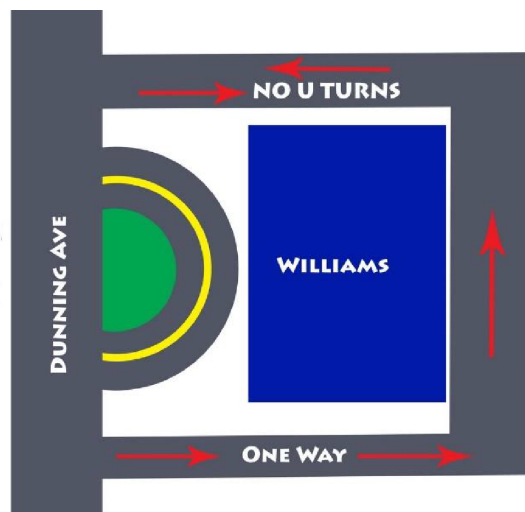
At the end of the school day, the front driveway loop is closed to regular traffic from about 2:40 to 3:15. Only school taxis and buses are to use the front driveway loop at the end of the day in order to create a safe place for our students with special needs. **Once all the school taxis and buses leave the front driveway loop around 3:15, regular traffic may use this area.**



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. **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.

Student Parking

There are parking spots, available on a first-come, first-served basis, for students in the southeast parking lot only. Please download and fill out this [parking application](#). Students are not allowed to park in other areas which are reserved for staff, Board vehicles, bus routes, and Visitors. Students must register for a parking space and display the parking permit. Vehicles and contents are left at the student's own risk. Students are not allowed to hang out or spend free time by or in parked vehicles.



Students Taking the School Bus

Parents/guardians of students who are eligible to receive school bus transportation per the Board's Transportation Policy should:

- Understand the need to make alternative arrangements for their child/children if the school bus is late.
- Refer to the Late Bus Report on the Student Transportation Services website at www.schoolbuscity.com before leaving for the bus stop in the mornings and afternoons.
- Should ensure their child(ren) arrives at the bus stop five minutes before the regularly scheduled pick-up and drop-off times (10 minutes during the first week of school).
- Ensure their child/children's safety and conduct while walking to, from and waiting at a designated bus stop.
- Know their child(ren)'s route number.
- Know their child(ren)'s bus stop location.
- Know the school and bus company phone number in the event of an emergency.

There may be rare occasions when winter weather events occur and all schools and Board locations close. For more info, please see the section on Weather Conditions in the [Guide to the School Year](#). At all times, students/families should be aware of somewhere they can go if bus services are cancelled/delayed, or if schools are forced to close due to an emergency

Students who take the school bus:

- Must line up in an orderly and safe manner
- Are not to push others to rush to get on/off the bus
- Follow the directions of the school bus driver at all times
- Must be aware that the Code of Student Conduct applies to students

while on a school bus.

More information about bus routes and times can be found at www.schoolbuscity.com.

Students Taking York Region Transit

Students who take the YRT must cross the street carefully and be aware of oncoming traffic from both directions. When waiting for the YRT, please line up in an orderly and safe manner. Do not push others or rush to get on/off the bus.

Students who use bicycles, rollerblades, skateboards or scooters to travel to school:

- Must wear a helmet.
- Must walk while on school property.
- Should lock bicycles on the bike rack.
- Must store rollerblades, skateboards or scooters in their locker.

The school is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

Academic Honesty Procedure

For a student to demonstrate evidence of his/her/their own learning and achievement, the work submitted must be entirely the student's own. For this reason, cheating and plagiarism will not be condoned. It is the responsibility of the students to be academically honest in all aspects of their school work. Students who plagiarize or cheat (for example, complete and submit tests, exams, or assignments that are not fully his/her/their own work) are being academically dishonest.

PLAGIARISM refers to representing someone else's ideas, writing or intellectual property as one's own. Any use of the work of others, whether published, unpublished or posted electronically, attributed or anonymous, must include proper acknowledgement. Plagiarism hinders learning and the development of learning skills and work habits. Forms of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the use of the following without appropriate citation or reference:

- Someone else's written and/or spoken idea, theory or opinion;
- Co-authored or collaboratively created work submitted as one's own;
- Music, drawings, designs, dance, photography, and other artistic or technical work created by someone else;
- Reproductions of tables, graphs or any other graphic element produced by someone else;
- Facts and information that are not generally known;
- An unusual or distinctive phrase, a specialized term, a computer code, or quantitative data;
- Paraphrase or summary;
- Information from the Internet;
- Work from another course for assessment in the current class;
- Research papers from the Word Wide Web (www), in whole or in part.

CHEATING is the attempt to gain an unfair advantage in an academic evaluation. Cheating can result in a misrepresentation of a student's learning or the learning of others. Forms of cheating include, but are not limited to, the following:

Copying another student's work and representing it as one's own; thereby, misleading the teacher in the assessment of a student's learning;

- Permitting another student to copy one's own work;
- Preparing work, in whole or in part, with the expectation that this work will be submitted by another student for evaluation as his/her/their own;
- Offering for sale or for gratis assignments, in whole or in part, with or without the understanding that these works could be submitted, in part or in whole, by a student for evaluation;
- Obtaining an unauthorized copy (in whole or in part, in any form) of an evaluation, such as a test or examination, at any time;
- Changing a grade/percentage/mark of an evaluation;
- Using aids, materials, and assistance which are not approved by the teacher;
- Entering without authorization into a computer file for the purpose of using, reading, changing or deleting its contents, or the unauthorized transfer, in whole or in part, of files for academic or personal gain;
- Using electronic translation tools in lieu of creating one's own work in another language.

Student Responsibilities in the Demonstration of Academic Honesty

Students at The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School are expected to exercise academic honesty at all times and to achieve with integrity. Academic honesty involves demonstrating learning through the student's own original work, thought, skill and effort. The following strategies help students to demonstrate academic honesty at all times.

- Avoid procrastination. Plan the completion of your assignments in a timely way.
- Learn how to cite sources (including a variety of print, media, and internet sources).
- Keep all research notes and sources and all versions of rough drafts of your work.
- When in doubt, cite the source.
- Develop a works cited list/bibliography as you work.
- Know the academic honesty policy. Check with your teacher to confirm what constitutes plagiarism and cheating if you are unsure.

(Students in the IB Diploma Programme are expected to be aware of and abide by the code of conduct for exams established by the IBO and the school.)

Potential Responses and Application of Consequences if a Student Engages in Academic Dishonesty

Concerns about academic dishonesty will be investigated by the school. The school will use the circumstances, knowledge of the learner, and professional judgement to determine appropriate behavioural and academic responses and/or consequences designed to maintain the dignity and self-worth of the learner and the integrity of the learning environment. (Students who are in the IB Diploma Programme are handled by the school according to the steps outlined in the IB's General Regulations: Diploma Programme.)

The responses and application of consequences for plagiarism and/or cheating may include, but are not limited to, some or all of the following:

- Engaging in conversations with parents/guardians to seek and share information about the situation;
- Using frequency, severity, mitigating factors and information gathered during the investigation;
- Completing a Timely Submission and Academic Honesty Agreement;
- Referring student to the Administration;
- Administering disciplinary actions that support student's awareness of, and accountability for, actions and impact;
- Determining ways for the student to make amends;
- Re-teaching strategies and skills to prevent future incidents;
- Having students re-do the evaluation, in part or in whole (original or alternative), depending on the circumstances;
- Deducting marks, up to and including the full value of the assignment.

Attendance Procedures

Regular attendance is essential for academic, workplace and life success. Students demonstrate commitment, respect, initiative and responsibility when they are in class and on time, all the time. To earn a credit, a student is expected to accumulate a total of 110 hours of in-class instruction for each full-credit course, complete the exam, and achieve a mark over 50%

Parents/guardians should contact the Attendance Office to indicate when their child will be absent. 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.

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. If a student arrives late for Period 1 and before 8:40 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 and announcements to be completed 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.

Late for Class (Arriving After the Bell Rings)

Students who arrive to class after the bell has rung are considered late. Late students must go to the Attendance Office to sign in and get a Late Slip. The Late Slip must be shown to the teacher for admission to that class.

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.

Bring Your Own Device

In September of 2023 Williams will be introducing the Bring Your Own Device Program for all students where students are expected to bring their own primary devices to school each day.

What is the Bring Your Own Device Program?

- The Bring Your Own Device Program is an approach to education that revolves around improving student learning and engagement with the integration of technology into daily school life.
- Students enhance their critical thinking skills as creators with technology rather than passive consumers of technology.
- Dr. G. W. Williams students participating in the Bring Your Own Device program are required to have access to a **primary device** for education purposes. Students take ownership of their device and are not required to share with others.
- Students who cannot afford a primary device or have extenuating circumstances will work with their Vice Principal to have a long-term loan Chromebook assigned to them.

Key Benefits of Bring Your Own Device Program

- Increases collaboration within and beyond the classroom
- Provides immediate access to resources and information
- Enhances engagement and motivation
- Improves organization and planning
- Promotes self-initiated learning and increases independence
- Develops the technological know-how students will continue to need in their future endeavors

What is a *primary device*?

- Laptop
- Tablet (with a keyboard attachment)
- Chromebook

What other supports are in place for purchasing devices?

In the fall and spring there is usually an opportunity for families in need of financial support to purchase refurbished technology. More information will be provided to families in the fall and spring.

In addition, our Board partner, DELL, is offering families discounts on technology through their DELL Education Purchase Program. Please visit www.dell.ca/mop/yrdsb.

If a student requires a device for a day loan due to extenuating circumstances please book out a device through the school library. If an extended loan is required please connect with the VP for BYOD in the main office.

If you have any questions about the BYOD program please contact Susie Mitchell, Vice-Principal at susie.mitchell@yrdsb.ca. More information is provided on the school website.

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. As well, if a student's behavior impacts the well-being and safety of another student whether on or off school property or within or outside the school times it may be investigated and addressed by the school. 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.

Our Code of Student Conduct is intended to promote student achievement and well-being in a safe, supportive, caring, inclusive and respectful environment. It supports an environment which fosters effective teaching and learning. In order to maintain such an environment, the Code of Student Conduct includes the following expectations:

Students are to:

- conduct themselves with a sense of business-like purpose and commitment to education;
- display respect, co-operation, honesty, and courtesy towards students, staff, and parents;
- be responsible for the well-being of themselves and others, and be aware of the impact their behaviour has on others;
- maintain a supportive, welcoming atmosphere where each individual is treated in a fair and unbiased manner;
- do their part to keep our facilities physically neat, clean and safe;
- demonstrate pride in Williams as a composite school with high academic standards;
- allow the freedom of individual expression within a framework of respect for the rights, responsibilities, sensibilities, and property of others;
- value the cultural, racial, religious, physical, gender, and social diversity of our community.

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 are our most important partners in educating children. We communicate with you in a variety of ways throughout the year.

Bi-Weekly Parent e-Bulletin

Every other week, we will send home an electronic bulletin, to both parents/guardians listed on the index card, that will update you regarding upcoming events and celebrate events that have already occurred. Please ensure that we have a current email account on the index card. If you do not receive the bulletin, please contact the office.

Teach Assist

We will be using **Teach Assist** to book our parent's night appointments this year. If you already have an account and you know your password, then no further action is required on your part. If you forgot your password for **Teach Assist**, then you may need to reset your password.

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.

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 to receive our commercial electronic messages, parents/guardians should visit the school website and, using the link provided, submit a valid email address.

Stay Connected Online

You can also stay connected online through our school website, Instagram @drgwilliams, Twitter feed @drgwilliams, and the Edsby app or website (<https://yrdsb.edsby.com/>). Some classrooms use Google Classroom, Moodle or TeachAssist 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
- Instagram @yrdsb.schools
- YouTube channel YRDSBMedia
- the YRDSB Mobile App
- TuneIn YRDSB, the Board's podcast

Texts

Families can now receive text messages in emergency situations only - to communicate the 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.

Community Involvement

Ontario high school students must complete a minimum of 40 hours of community involvement as a graduation requirement. Each student is required to get school approval and provide a copy of the form *prior* to completing each activity or placement. Notification and Completion of Community Involvement forms must be legible and signed by the person who supervised the activity (to verify the date and number of hours completed) in order to have the hours documented by the Guidance Department Secretary.

For liability and insurance purposes schools are required to be notified and keep documentation of community involvement activities *before* students complete their volunteer hours. Please note the list of eligible and ineligible activities:

- Students will not receive hours for extra-curricular activities, student council participation and/or events planned in their role as a school-wide elected student representative;
- Students may not volunteer at a for-profit organization;
- Students will be allowed the time required to donate blood (approximately 1 hour);
- Students may volunteer for a political organization during an election period with the exception of an YRDSB Trustee or candidate Trustee.

Concussion Protocol

The Ministry of Education has a [concussion policy \(PPM 158: School Board Policies on Concussion\)](#) for school boards that was recently updated to be consistent with [Rowan's Law](#).

If a student is suspected of having a concussion, the Student Management for Concussion Protocol form must be completed and signed by a physician prior to the student's return to school. PART ONE of the form must be submitted to the school immediately following a concussion diagnosis. At that time, a copy of the partially completed form is made and returned to the student so that further medical examinations for clearance (PART TWO and THREE) can be completed when appropriate.

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).

Contact Information

For Ministry and Board compliance purposes, **please ensure that the school has your up-to-date contact information**, including:

- telephone number
- home address
- email address
- your child's emergency contact information
- medical information, if applicable

Please contact your school's main office to review or update your information.

If your child has a medical condition that requires emergency intervention, an essential routine health care plan, or any of the following medical conditions: Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Diabetes or Seizures you must contact your child's school to ensure all information is up-to-date and accurate.

Dress Code

All staff and students at The Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School are expected to maintain an appropriate modest level of dress and good personal hygiene such as would be acceptable to a reputable employer. This helps to set the proper tone for a respectful workplace and learning environment.

Our Dress Code Policy:

- meets the requirements of the Ministry of Education, *Safe Schools Act, 2000*, subsection 302(5) that "a board shall establish policies and guidelines respecting appropriate dress for pupils in schools";
- is consistent with the Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;
- respects the rights of persons of all cultures, faiths and abilities;
- addresses issues of compliance and affordability.

The school administration will make the final decisions regarding appropriate dress. Students who fail to meet the Dress Code may be directed to do one or more of the following:

- surrender the inappropriate item(s),

- change into other clothing,
- wear clothing items provided by the school (e.g. T-shirt or shorts),
- go home to change into appropriate clothing.

Clothing and accessories must be respectful to our school community and be free of inappropriate or offensive slogans, logos, pictures and symbols. Images and text on clothing should have no relationship to weapons, drugs, alcohol, violence or gore, homophobia, racism, sexism, and/or religious intolerance.

Footwear must be worn at all times.



Head gear may be worn in school hallways and common areas as long as it does not obscure one's face. In classrooms and learning environments, this is at the discretion of the teacher.

No see-through clothing is to be worn. Ripped clothing must be appropriate and not too revealing.

No jewelry or accessories that could cause physical harm should be worn.

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.

Fire Drill/Emergency Alarm

The signal indicating that staff and students must vacate the school for a fire drill/emergency will be the continuous sounding of the fire bell. Students and staff shall proceed quickly, in an orderly manner, to the

designated exit. Students will not be allowed to go to their lockers first. Once outside, everyone must move **WELL AWAY FROM THE BUILDING AND DRIVEWAY**. Parked vehicles are off limits.

If you are in class when you have to exit the building, please remain with your teacher and classmates at the pre-determined meeting spot outside throughout the duration of the drill or emergency. If you are on lunch or spare when the alarm sounds, please exit the building at the nearest fire exit and proceed to the edge of our main parking lot so attendance may be taken. No one may re-enter the school if the alarm is still ringing. Re-entry can occur once the signal of two rings of the school bell is given and re-entry approved by a school administrator.

Hold & Secure

In a Hold & Secure situation, York Regional Police will ask that outside doors of a school be locked as a result of occurrences in the neighbourhood. Normal school operations will continue inside the building but no one may enter or leave the building until police indicate that it is safe to do so.

Lockdown

Once you hear the announcement, *“Attention. Attention. Attention. We are in Lockdown. Follow Lockdown Procedures,”* quickly take shelter in your classroom or the nearest secure place (i.e. the server of the cafeteria). Staff and students must hide evidence that the room is occupied and sit silently. Do **NOT** respond to knocks on your door and **IGNORE** any fire alarm. At the conclusion of the Lockdown response, the all-clear signal will be given. The signal is a PA announcement: *“The building is secure.”* All other directions should be ignored.

Exam Policy

There will be one exam period consisting of five (5) days at the end of each semester. The exam schedule will be emailed to student GAPPS accounts, posted in classrooms and on the school website. Exam guidelines for students are posted in classrooms, and an individual copy is provided for each student on the 2nd page of the exam schedule. Please check both carefully.

Read the Examination Guidelines for Students posted with the exam schedule. Ensure that you have the right course code, section number, and exam date and time. Students are required to write exams as scheduled. Do not plan vacations, employment or other commitments during exam times. **The school is not able to reschedule students' exams.**

Students who miss any exam(s) or final evaluation due to illness, bereavement or court appearance must provide suitable documentation (verification) by the appropriate authority. No other reasons for absence will be accepted.

For students with suitable verification, a missed examination or final evaluation must be written on a scheduled alternative date. Students who miss an exam without suitable verification will receive a mark of ZERO for the exam.

If inclement weather occurs, the postponed exam(s) will be held on Exam Review Day.

Equity and Inclusivity

The YRDSB *Equity and Inclusivity policy* and its related procedures outline the York Region District School Board's commitment to ensuring equitable and inclusive learning and working environments that uphold and reflect the following Seven Guiding Principles of Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy:

- is a foundation of excellence;
- meets individual needs;
- identifies and eliminates barriers;
- promotes a sense of belonging;
- involves the broad community;
- builds on and enhances previous and existing initiatives;
- is demonstrated throughout the system.

We commit to a vision of mutual acceptance and inclusion that helps students to become agents of change, preparing all for a society in which diversity is recognized, respected and valued. We will assist our students to define, detect and reject all forms of discrimination which limit their potential and that of others. The Ontario Human Rights Code legislates that every person has a right to equitable treatment without discrimination because of race, ancestry, ethnic origin, faith, gender, sexual orientation, ability, citizenship, status, etc. YRDSB's Equity and Inclusive Education Policy (261.0) states that students are responsible for:

- fostering a commitment to equity and inclusivity, as outlined in this policy and its related procedures;
- using inclusive and respectful language and approaches in all interactions;
- communicating and working effectively with everyone;
- modeling the equity and inclusivity values and vision of the school;
- using "learning moments" to address non-inclusive, disrespectful, or discriminatory behaviours;
- understanding that equity and inclusive principles apply to everyone; and
- assuming responsibility for examining and taking steps to modify behaviours that are inconsistent with equity and inclusive principles.

Together we can create a positive learning environment that is safe, supportive, equitable and inclusive for all members of our school community. All staff working with students have a duty to respond to incidents of disrespectful and harmful behavior (such as racist, sexist, or homophobic slurs).

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 Faith 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.

Respectful Learning Environment and Workplace

It is the policy of the York Region District School Board that all persons are entitled to learn and work in an environment that promotes human rights and equity of opportunity, free from discrimination and harassment based on race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, or disability. In this school:

- we treat all individuals with dignity and respect;
- we respect the values, language, culture, faith, gender and ideas of all individuals;
- we value and respect diversity;
- we encourage the expression of different viewpoints;
- we have the right to our own beliefs; no one should take this right away;
- we focus on understanding a variety of personal values and beliefs, not on judging them;
- we communicate in respectful, inclusive, open, honest, and supportive ways; and
- we will not accept any form of discrimination, harassment or hurtful behaviour, including the use of language which would reflect negatively on another group.

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. Elections shall occur within the first thirty days of the start of each school year. **School Council Nomination Forms** are due by September 15, 2023.

Search of School Property

At the start of each school year, school administrators will advise all members of the school community via grade meetings, announcements and information contained in this School Start-Up Package that:

- The school administrator has the right to search school property, such as lockers and desks, without notice to, or permission from, any person.
- Police may from time-to-time be invited onto school premises to conduct a search. These searches may be conducted without notice to, or permission from, any member of the school community other than the school Principal.

Significant Faith Days (YRDSB Diamond Days)

In keeping with the Board's Faith Days Policy, internally scheduled events such as field trips, school concerts, conferences, meetings, workshops, other professional events, co-curricular activities such as sports practices, rehearsals, and exams/tests/quizzes/ presentations and so on will not be scheduled on these dates referred to as 'Diamond Days' in the YRDSB.

The dates listed below are some faith holidays of particular significance to members of the major faith communities in our Board. We affirm and value equally the faith diversity in our schools, therefore, events such as

field trips, school concerts, conferences, meetings, workshops, other professional events, co-curricular activities and exams/tests will not be scheduled on these dates:

2023-2024	Faith Day	Faith
September 16-17, 2023	Rosh Hashanah ²	Judaism
September 25, 2023	Yom Kippur ²	Judaism
November 12, 2023	Diwali	Hinduism
December 25, 2023	Christmas	Christianity (Western)
January 7, 2024	Christmas	Christianity (Eastern)
February 10, 2024	Lunar New Year	Buddhism
March 29, 2024	Good Friday	Christianity (Western)
April 10, 2024	Eid-ul-Fitr ^{1 2}	Islam
April 14, 2024	Vaisakhi	Sikhism
April 23, 2024	Pesach/Passover ²	Judaism
April 20, 2024	Ridvan	Baha'i
April 14, 2024	Vaisakhi	Sikhism
May 3, 2024	Holy Friday	Christianity (Eastern)
June 17, 2024	Ed-ul-Adha ^{1 2}	Islam

¹ Dates are subject to the sighting of the moon each month and may vary for different members of the Islamic faith

² All Jewish and Islamic Holy Days commence on the preceding evening at sunset.

Please note that in addition to the above listed dates, we will take reasonable steps to accommodate students and staff members of a faith group for whom the Board's and the school's operations or requirements create undue hardship and interfere with their ability to exercise their religious beliefs and practices.

Smoking/Vaping

In accordance with Board Policy and Provincial legislation, there will be no smoking or vaping allowed on school property or at school-related events. This includes cigarettes, e-cigarettes and vapourizers ('vapes'). Students caught smoking or vaping will be subject to disciplinary actions ranging from a discussion with VP and phone call to parents/guardians, to the Region of York Public Health assessing a fine and/or a suspension from school.

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.

Summer School/Night School

Registration and information for all continuing education courses is available on www.yrdsb.ca. Our Guidance Department will answer questions students and parents/guardians may have and will assist with final registration steps.

Surveillance

Please be aware that surveillance cameras are positioned in many areas of the school to enhance security both inside and outside of the building.

Telephone Calls

The office staff will call parents on a student's behalf in cases of medical emergency. In the event of an emergency, contact the office and your student will be contacted in class. Please do not text or call your child directly during class time as this interrupts the learning.

Textbooks

The York Region Board of Education has supplied textbooks on a loan basis. While they are in a student's possession, the student is financially responsible for them. At the end of the semester, it is each student's responsibility to ensure that **all materials** signed out to them are returned to subject teachers.

Technology Use

All students and their parents/guardians 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 and network integrity. 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.

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 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. 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 supports 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-Risk Assessment Protocol: 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 Threat 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, 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 Threat Assessment 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 Threat 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 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.

Who is a member of a Threat Assessment team?

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

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 Threat 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 consent to intervene. However, we do make every effort to contact parents/ guardians to apprise you of your child's situation and the assistance provided. Parents/guardians 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.