

THORNHILL S.S. PARENT PAMPHLET

167 Dudley Ave., Thornhill, ON, L3T 2E5
905-889-5453



***Developing literate students of
character is our number one
priority.***

(2014)

This item is adapted from the Parent Handbook,
The Dr G. W. Williams Secondary School, YRDSB

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Thornhill Secondary School, a community of approximately 1100 students, 70 teachers, and other staff members. At first, the school may seem a bit confusing to both students and parents*, but you will find that there are many people willing to help smooth the way. Students make friends quickly and become confident and secure with the school's routines, expectations and procedures.

The item is intended to familiarize you with how the school works so that you can help your child make the most of the Thornhill experience. This pamphlet, in conjunction with the Student Agenda Book, the school website, the weekly e-bulletin, and the school newsletter (Paw Prints) *should* provide answers to the most commonly asked questions; however, please feel free to contact school administrators, teaching and support staff or other parents to ask for assistance. Visit the school website often to keep informed of upcoming events.

We look forward to having your family be part of the Thornhill Secondary School community and we hope that the time here will be enriching and rewarding for both you and your child.

* References to "parents" also include guardians.

Parents play a vital role in the development and education of their children and in the success of schools.

Parents are the most important influence in a child's life outside of school. Long after direct learning from parents in a child's early years gives way to formal education, parents continue to play a key role in student success through the attitudes they help to shape and the direct supports they provide.

Research clearly indicates that good schools become better schools when there is a strong connection with parents as part of the learning community. The positive results of a genuine partnership between parents and schools include improved student achievement, reduced absenteeism, better behaviour, and restored confidence among parents in their children's schooling.

Ontario Ministry of
Education

WANTED: YOUR E-MAIL...FOR SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS!

Parents are invited to supply a current e-mail address for one parent/guardian. E-mail information is kept confidential and used solely by the school for the purpose of keeping all parents informed about school activities, events, et cetera.

**Parent e-mail addresses should be sent to
thornhill.ss@yrdsb.ca**

SCHOOL HOLIDAYS

- ❖ Labour Day – First Monday in September
- ❖ The first day of Classes takes place the first Tuesday in September
- ❖ Thanksgiving Day – Second Monday in October
- ❖ Winter Break – Two weeks beginning in late December to the beginning of January
- ❖ Family Day - Third Monday in February
- ❖ Mid-Winter Break – One week in March
- ❖ Good Friday in March or April
- ❖ Easter Monday in March or April
- ❖ Victoria Day - Third Monday in May

York Region District School Board (YRDSB) School Year Calendar

For a calendar of Holidays and Observances and for more details about the school year, visit: www.yrdsb.ca

Daily Schedule – Regular Timetable

Period One (1)	8:50 – 10:05am
Home Room	10:05-10:10am
Period Two (2)	10:15 – 11:30am
Period Three (3)	3A: 11:35am - 12:15pm 3B: 12:15 - 12:50pm 3C: 12:55 - 1:30pm
Period Four (4)	1:35-2:50pm



SCHOOL COUNCIL

School Councils ensure that parents have a voice in their children's education.

Created by provincial statute and regulation, the purpose of School Councils is to improve student achievement and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents.

The Thornhill School Council succeeds by encouraging the active participation of parents of Thornhill students, and serving as a communication and information channel between the school and community. This is important, because parental involvement is one of the most significant factors contributing to student success.

All parents of Thornhill students are always welcome to attend School Council meetings. Attend a meeting and check us out!

For meeting dates, please check the school website or the Student Agenda Book. We look forward to your participation.



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

1. *Q. How can I best support my child's learning and development as a high school student?*
 - A. Show interest and stay involved in your child's school-life. Stay in touch with your child's teachers. Attend school events and participate in the School Council. Support your child in developing personal management skills, effective study habits, reading skills, setting appropriate study goals, and in mapping their post-secondary destination. Stay informed about issues that teenagers face. Encourage your child's involvement in extra-curricular activities. Hold reasonably high expectations for your child and be sure to celebrate your child's successes.

2. *Q. What if my child is having a problem at school?*
 - A. If your child is having a problem, speak first with your child's teacher. If the problem cannot be resolved, then you may speak with the Subject Head, the Vice-Principal, or the Principal. It is recommended that you make an appointment to ensure that the individuals with whom you wish to speak are available to meet with you.

3. *Q. How should my child dress for school?*
 - A. All members of the Thornhill community are expected to dress for work. Our Dress Code requires all students, staff and visitors to wear clothing appropriate for a respectful workplace and learning environment (see Student Agenda Book).

4. Q. *What happens when my child breaks the school's code of behaviour?*
A. The consequences for violating the code of conduct are dependent on the type of behaviour. Progressive discipline is applied. Please refer to Student Agenda Book for more information.
5. Q. *What do I do when my child is sick or needs to be absent from school?*
A. You should contact the school on each occasion.
6. Q. *What happens if my child is late or absent?*
A. Please refer to the Attendance Policy in the accompanying Guidelines.
7. Q. *What should I do when my child has repeated absences?*
A. It is important to keep the subject-teachers and Attendance Secretary informed about your child's absences. Please note that where absences are frequent, the school may request that you arrange for the intervention of a certified service provider (medical doctor, social worker, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.) and that this professional provide documentation to support your child's absence. Keep in mind that students are expected to accumulate 110 hours of course-work in each class.
8. Q. *If my child has missed work due to illness, what happens?*
A. If a student is absent, homework can be arranged but teachers require have 24 hours notice to prepare the work. Work for many courses is also posted on Moodle. Please refer to the Assessment and Evaluation Policy in the Student Agenda Book for additional information.
9. Q. *What can I do if I have a concern about the actions of a teacher?*
A. The majority of situations that arise can be resolved through a discussion with the teacher by the student and/or parent. If you are still concerned, or feel it is needful, you can contact the Vice-Principal or the Principal to discuss the issue.
10. Q. *How can I keep up to date on special events, dates and trips?*
A. There are several ways in which information is communicated to parents. These include: The weekly bulletin, the school newsletter, the school website (www.yrdsb.ca/schools/thornhill.ss), the school sign, emails, letters from the school and occasional notices in the local newspaper.
11. Q. *How will my child find out about joining clubs and teams in the school?*
A. Opportunities to join clubs and teams are announced during the morning exercises. In addition, a copy of the morning announcements is across from the gym entrance. Students may wish to speak with the Peer Mentors, the Students' Council or Thornhill Athletic Council (TAC) to get more information.
12. Q. *How can I obtain assistance with course selection or get more information about certain programs?*
A. Information regarding courses, course selection and programs can be found on the school website www.yrdsb.ca/schools/thornhill.ss and by selecting the

Guidance tab. If you are unable to find answers to your question, you may speak with one of the Guidance Counsellors.

13. Q. *Will I need to purchase textbooks for my child?*
- A. Textbooks are loaned to students for each semester. Students bring their own general school supplies. Students are required to pay for textbooks which are lost or damaged.
14. Q. *How can I find out who my child's teachers are?*
- A. There are many ways to access this information: check your child's timetable; contact the school office; speak with your child's Guidance Counsellor or Vice-Principal. By the end of the first month of each semester, teachers will make initial contact with parents via letters, phone calls, emails or other communication tools.
15. Q. *When I sign my child out of a class, can s/he remain on school property?*
- A. The school is obliged to supervise all students on school property. Students who are signed-out of classes cannot remain on the premises.
16. Q. *When does school registration take place?*
- A. School registration usually occurs at the end of August for all grades. Students will have the opportunity to pick up their time-tables, to sit for their student-card photograph, and to purchase items such as: combination lock; yearbook; student card; and physical education uniform. Please follow up with your child to ensure that s/he does register and that their receipt is kept in a safe place for future reference. More information about school registration is found in the welcome School Newsletter for Grade 9's, and in the regular School Newsletter that is distributed at the end of the academic year.
17. Q. *What can I do if my family is financially challenged and cannot afford to pay a certain charge or fee?*
- A. The school can make accommodation, or work out an alternative payment plan with you, so that your child is able to participate fully in school activities. Contact your child's Guidance Counselor or Vice-Principal. For further on the Ministry of Education's Fees Policy and Guidelines, please go to www.edu.gov.on.ca.



COMMUNICATION

What Are the Channels of Communication?

If.....	Contact the.....	By.....
Your child is absent from school	Attendance Secretary	Phone or note
Your child is to be absent for an extended period (3 days or more)	Attendance Secretary and/or The Vice-Principal	Phone or note
You are requesting work for your child while s/he is absent	Guidance Office	Phone, note or e-mail
You wish to drop off an item for your child to pick up	School Receptionist (in the Front Office)	Phone
You want to discuss your child's preparation for the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test	Literacy Lead Teacher	Phone or e-mail
You wish to discuss course selection, time-table, graduation requirements or welfare issues	Guidance Counsellor	Phone, note or e-mail
You want to review your child's behaviour and/or academic progress in a particular subject or course	Subject Teacher, the Guidance Counsellor, or the Student Success Teacher	Phone, note or e-mail
You desire to discuss your child's behaviour and personal welfare	Guidance Counsellor	Phone, note or e-mail
You wish to discuss your child's overall academic progress	Student Success Teacher or the Vice-Principal	Phone, note or e-mail
You would like to discuss any aspect of the school	Vice-Principal or Principal	Phone, note or e-mail
You wish to be added to the school's email contact list	School Receptionist (in the Front Office)	Phone or e-mail
You wish to solve an issue with a staff member	Staff Member and/or Subject-Head and/or an Administrator	Phone, note or e-mail

School Phone: 905-889-5453

Please request to speak with the individual of your choice, or follow the automated prompts on the school's phone system.

Email: thornhill.ss@yrdsb.ca



ATTENDANCE

At Thornhill S.S., we recognize that 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 instruction for each course and a mark over 50%. Please refer to the Attendance Policy in the School Guidelines. You may contact the Attendance Office at 905-889-5453 x303.

STUDENT SUCCESS

Every secondary school in the York Region District School Board has a full-time Student Success Teacher who acts as a student advocate and mentor for those students who may experience challenges as they transition from elementary to secondary school. Student Success transition support may include connection to a caring teacher/mentor, timetabling for success, ongoing monitoring and support, and Education and Career Pathways Planning.

For additional information about the Student Success Program, please visit the Student Success website at www.yrdsb.ca. You will find the link to Student Success on the home page in the resources for parents and students, or you may contact your Secondary School Principal or Vice-Principal.

At Thornhill, Student Success support is offered through the staff in Room 109.

STUDENT WELL-BEING

How do we ensure the health of all of our students?

We promote active, healthy life choices among our student population. Our students are encouraged to consider those members of our school community who have life threatening allergies to nut products. Nut or nut products should not be brought to school. Also, some staff and students are sensitive to powerful chemical-based scents. Use of strong perfumes and deodorants should be avoided.

Parents are required to inform the school (in writing) of any special health concerns of their children - particularly for emergency situations. A Medical Care Plan Form must be completed and is posted in the Main Office for staff awareness. It is up to the parent or the student to pick up a form from the Main Office.

Please inform the school if your son or daughter requires certain medication to be administered on a daily basis. The medication can be stored in the Main Office, if necessary. The school is not permitted to dispense medication without written parent permission. Written instructions from the physician are required for all requests to administer prescription medication.

Clubs and Teams

Students and staff participate in an extensive array of co-curricular activities available at T.S.S. Students are encouraged to join the groups that interest them most and thus broaden their high school experience. Check the clubs or teams that are listed on our school website and on the Student Announcement board for more information. The TAC also posts information for all students regarding up-coming events and team activities.

Nutrition

The Ontario government is committed to making each school a healthy environment that enhances student learning and success, and enhances students' social and emotional well-being. Policy/Program Memorandum No. 150 (effective September 1, 2011) sets out nutrition standards for food and beverages sold in publicly funded schools in Ontario. The standards apply to all food and beverages sold in all venues (e.g., cafeterias, vending machines, tuck shops), through all programs (e.g., catered lunch programs), and at all events (e.g., bake sales, sports events). For more information, visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/150.html>.

Aramark, the catering company hired by the YRDSB, offers many healthy foods in our cafeteria. The menu changes periodically to suit the needs of all students. There are hot and cold entrees. Students may use the cafeteria at non-instructional times only (before school, at lunch-time or while on a designated study period).



STUDY SKILLS

Homework Tips

- Designate a specific area for homework and studying. Any quiet place, free from household distractions, especially the TV, is suitable;
- Follow a daily schedule for homework and stick to it, the study period may be prior to supper or after, but the time should be the same minimum length every night;
- Encourage your child to record daily homework, upcoming assignments and tests in his or her Agenda Book. Look it over and discuss what happened in each class every night;
- Should parents help with homework? The answer is “yes”, if it is productive to do so. Reading directions, checking over completed math problems, proof-reading written work, asking questions to help study for a test, are examples of productive parent help. If the homework is clearly something that your child can handle independently, resist the urge to provide the answer or solution;
- To demonstrate that everyone has a job to do, use the study period for your own reading, writing, work preparation, or paying bills. This way you are on hand should there be questions or frustration. Your close proximity is often all that is needed;
- Check homework for completeness.

Studying at Home

- Studying is more than just completing homework assignments. Encourage your child to:
 - * take notes when reading a chapter;
 - * summarize in his or her own words what was read;
 - * use outlining or mapping strategies to review material;
 - * read over the day’s notes, rewriting or typing as necessary, discussing with you what was learned in class;
 - * work on an upcoming assignment or independent study unit.
- There are many methods to assist your child when preparing for tests or exams, other than just reading over notes. Suggest your child:
 - * begin reviewing the week prior to the test (record in Agenda Book ahead of time);
 - * make flash cards to review and memorize dates, vocabulary, formulas, spelling;
 - * make up questions which may appear on the test and practice answering them;
 - * use notes, previous quizzes, review sheets to help you to quiz them before the test;
 - * prepare a short, point-form summary for each chapter/unit being studied;
 - * practice, practice, practice – complete review questions, especially in Math.



Organizational Strategies

- Keep general school supplies on hand. Not only will your child need these for school, but keeping a supply of paper, pencils, pens, pencil crayons, glue, Bristol board, computer cartridges, etc. at home is useful when working on assignments and projects;
- A home dictionary and thesaurus are essential. Although definitions and synonyms may be found on-line, references are often more accessible when the books are on a shelf close to the study area;
- Help your child to organize his or her time by providing a calendar with large boxes. Homework, assignments, tests, and exams may then be transferred from the daily agenda. This also allows for discussion between you and your child about school;
- Some teens will need encouragement and possibly assistance to organize binders and/or knapsacks. Insist that binders for each course are brought home and notes are placed in them appropriately. This may need to take place weekly, or even daily. You may wish to consider purchasing a three-hole punch for this purpose.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

Health Canada www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Health Canada is the Federal department responsible for helping Canadians maintain and improve their health, while respecting individual choices and circumstances. Some listings you will find on this site are: Hazards in your Environment, Drugs not4me, Canada's Food Guide and Consumer Product Recall.

Ontario Ministry of Education www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng

This website is full of interesting topics for parents to explore like: research in education, education facts, parent engagement, safe schools and special education.

People for Education www.peopleforeducation.com

This is an independent parent-led organization, working to improve public education in Ontario's schools. Since 1997, People for Education has been providing resources and support for parents across Ontario. This is a great multi-lingual resource for all your questions including, What is the role of the Ministry of Education, school boards, schools, teachers and school councils? What are three easy steps for great parent-teacher interviews? How can I receive free tutoring for my High School student? Where can my child and I go for extra advice about making the right decision about high school courses?

ADDITIONAL WEBSITES

YRDSB Parent Information

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/Parents/Pages/default.aspx>

Character Matters

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/Programs/PositiveClimates/Pages/Character-Matters.aspx>

Cyber Bullying

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/Programs/SafeSchools/Pages/Cyber-Bullying.aspx>

Ministry of Education – Parent Information

www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents/generalinfo.html

Newcomers' Guide to Secondary School

www.settlement.org/topics.asp?section=EDUCATION:EASS:EASS_EDGUIDE

Parent Involvement www.parentinvolvement.ca/

Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment, YRDSB

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/Careers/documents/RWLEcard.pdf>

Sabrina's Law (Anaphylaxis)

www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05s07_e.htm

Special Education in the YRDSB www.yrdsb.ca/Programs/SpecEd

Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences

<http://pplace.org/publications/bulletins/English/ppbulletinv9n2.pdf>

Transcript Order Form

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/AboutUs/Departments/Transcripts/Pages/default.aspx>

YRDSB Improvement Plan

<http://www.yrdsb.ca/AboutUs/BoardPlans/Pages/Board-Improvement-Work-Plan.aspx>

TVO Parents <http://tvoparents.backend.tv.org/>

