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Parent Newsletter: February 5th - 19th, 2021

Administration

Principal:
Sheri Epstein

Vice-Principal:
Barbara Caravella

Vice-Principal:
Todd Taylor

A Message from your Administrators

Dear Westmount Families and Community Members,

This is my first message since the new year so let me first take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very Happy New Year! May 2021 be a better year than the one before, allowing all of us to return to a new normal, keeping what worked best from our old reality but incorporating all the wonderful things we have learned we need and do not need during this pandemic.

STAY CONNECTED



twitter



Instagram



I am so happy that we are going back to in-person learning on February 16, with our adaptive model of Face 2 Face learning in the morning and fully online classes. Woo Hoo! We need to be back in school – all of us! I can’t wait to see the students – I have missed them so much! I will be standing outside on February 16th and February 17th and I will be jumping for joy, singing and dancing (and clearly I will be embarrassing myself as well) when the students are entering the building. We all need a little more routine, a little more structure and speaking for myself, less sweatpants!

I believe the motto for this school year needs to be “change and adapt and pivot and adapt” because that is what we have all been doing since March of 2020. I am so proud of every single member of the WCI community. Our staff, both teaching and non-teaching, continue to work very hard each day to ensure that our students are well looked after. Everyone has put in their best effort to make sure that students are provided with interesting lessons, have an opportunity to interact with each other, and feel a sense of community and connection to WCI, while learning and being prepared for their next grade or their next adventure. Our students, oh my goodness, I cannot even put into words how proud I am of them. They have truly gone the extra mile. They keep putting one foot in front of the next, even though it is very hard. We know that online learning is not ideal, and yet the students keep trying. They are present online every day, actively learning, participating in class discussions, completing assessments and with very few complaints. The resiliency of our children is wonderful, heart-warming and truly commendable. Then of course, there is all of you! The parents, guardians, and families who support our students and I cannot thank you enough as well. You have been kind, understanding, caring and supportive of all of us as well. This pandemic SUCKS!! But, we have proven that when we come together for the common goal of raising our wonderful students we do an A+ job!

Please check our website regularly for updates

NEWS & EVENTS

PARENTS

SCHOOL CALENDAR

GUIDANCE

Message from your Administrators

Now, we have Semester II underway. The students are once again off and running with new courses. It has been a challenge to re-timetable the school twice since the original 2020-2021 timetable was created last spring, but we have done our best to have the best possible timetable for the students. Most of our students are very happy with their timetables and for those who would like to request a change, Guidance has sent out the link to a google form. The guidance counsellors will be working on timetable change requests over the next few days and they will do their best to accommodate every request. Please understand though that our classes are very full and we have to work within the rules set out by both the YRDSB and the Ministry of Education.

I do want to share with all of you important attendance information. Everyone had the opportunity to make the best choice for their own student/family for second semester in December, with a second opportunity to switch between the Secondary Virtual School and the adaptive model at WCI. When we shared the second semester survey with students/families we were very clear that if a student/family is selecting to remain at WCI for the adaptive model, the expectation is that students will be coming to school regularly on assigned cohort days. Attendance is not optional for Semester II. So, here are few things to keep in mind:

- During the morning Face 2 Face block the only students being marked present are those who are expected to be at school. Those who are supposed to be at home (not their cohort day) will not have their attendance taken.
- Once a student reaches 10 absences in a course the appropriate alpha Vice Principal will be in touch with the student/family to better understand why the student is not attending class.
- Once a student reaches 15 absences in a course we receive an “error” report from our data base, the student will be referred to the social worker for absenteeism and we are able to remove the course from a student’s timetable for non-attendance
- All tests/assessments that are planned for the Face 2 Face block will only be written in person. If a student, has to miss a test due to illness (or another legitimate reason and approved by a parent) the teacher and student will make arrangements for the student to make up that assessment once the student is better/back at school. Depending on the length of the assessment it may be done during the morning block or the student might stay at school and write it once the class is over at 11:10 am. All “make up” tests will be written in the main office under admin supervision.

We will be taking extra health & safety precautions once we do return to Face 2 Face learning. All staff will be wearing triple-layer masks and face shields/goggles at all times when in the building. We are asking all students to wear triple-layer masks if they can. There will be extra cleaning happening in the building – our amazing caretaking staff will be cleaning around the clock and all high touch surfaces will be cleaned multiple times throughout the day. We are going to have more supervision in the hallways before 8:40 and at 11:10 to ensure that students are not standing too close together. In addition, all staff and students will have to complete a “symptoms check form” each morning before entering. More details about all of these measures and new cohort information will be sent to you shortly.

Please remember we have done really well at WCI and at all YRDSB schools. Although there have been some positive cases we know there has been no transmission in any school. All cases were acquired outside of school and we have taken all of the necessary precautions when this occurred. Our staff and students have been amazing and we have proven that wearing masks, keeping a bit of physical distance and washing/sanitizing hands regularly works! Let’s keep it up Westmount Wolves!

Message from your Administrators

Lastly, and very importantly, February is Black History Month. We have a number of activities planned throughout the month to learn about, honour and celebrate Black History/Canadian History. Our students will be learning about Black History in each of their courses through videos and a variety of resources. As well, we have an amazing school-wide “virtual” assembly on February 17 and 18, presented by Inspiration Republic. Students will learn about the history of Black Canadians, racism in Canada, microaggressions and what we all need to do to be allies and how to be anti-racist each and every day. Our amazing student spirit committee, led by Ms. Alweyn, is tweeting and instagramming a different post each day for the month of February to celebrate Black Canadians. Please check out their posts, the students have worked very hard on them.

I could not be more proud of everyone in the WCI community. We have truly come together and worked as a team, no, as a family, to support each other, to support our students and to help us all get through this very strange and difficult time in our lives. My heart is full. Keep up the good work WCI... we've got this!

If you have any questions or concerns please reach out to us.

Ms. Sheri Epstein
Principal



February 2021—Trustee Greetings

Dear families,

I hope that you and your families are healthy and doing well. I want to thank all of our students, families and staff members for their flexibility, patience and perseverance during the school closures. We understand that the pandemic is creating challenges and hardships, and we will continue to prioritize and do our very best to support the well-being, learning and achievement of our students during these difficult times.

There are resources on the Board website that students and families may find helpful, including tips for speaking with your child about COVID-19, support using technology, community and mental health resources and more at www.yrdsb.ca/school-reopening.

One of our [priorities](#) as a Board of Trustees is to Champion Equity and Inclusivity: we aim to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes to remove barriers in support of all learners.

Anti-Black Racism

We want each and every one of our students to know that they are valued, welcome, safe and respected in our schools. We know that sadly that is not the reality for some students and that incidents of anti-Black racism continue to occur in our community and our schools. These incidents cause pain, make our students feel unsafe and affect their well-being and achievement. This is not acceptable.

In the coming weeks, we will be sharing information and inviting you to participate in the *Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy: Creating anti-racist and Black affirming learning and working environments* virtual event. During this event we will be unveiling our Anti-Black Racism Strategy, which was developed in coordination with families, students, community partners, educators and members of our senior leadership team. The strategy was developed in response to continued evidence of anti-Black racism, and it will be a critical tool to support positive change in the system and to improve the experiences of Black students and staff.

A series of training sessions, webinars and opportunities for learning will also be made available. Future communication will provide registration options.

I want to thank the members of the Anti-Black Racism Committee for generously giving their time, sharing their difficult experiences and their voice. We are committed to ensuring that this strategy is more than a piece of paper and are committed to doing the work to create more equitable learning environments.

I also want to acknowledge that February is Black History Month, and while we take this opportunity to highlight and celebrate the incredible contributions made by Black Canadians, we will also be looking forward to launching our Dismantling Anti-Black Racism Strategy. We will also be continuing our [celebration of Black excellence](#) in our community and I encourage you to take the time to read the stories of some of the inspiring individuals learning and working here in York Region.

We all have a role to play in creating a community that enables everyone in it to thrive, and in doing this work, we will create a more inclusive and positive environment for *all* of our students and families.

Thank you,

David Sherman

Trustee

News From Guidance

@WCIGuidance

February 8 to 19, 2021

WELCOME
TO
GUIDANCE



YOUR GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

Support and promote students' well-being and continuous growth in three areas: personal (student) development, interpersonal development, and career development in order to help them develop resilience and realize their potential (success) as individuals and as valuable members of society.

-Ontario School Counsellors' Association

ACCESSING YOUR GUIDANCE TEAM

Please reach out to your ALPHA Counsellor by email. ***Due to the high volume of emails, please allow for 1 to 2 schools days for a reply.***

Your Counsellor will respond in the appropriate method: email, phone or on-line meeting.

Guidance Counsellors are using Zoom for virtual meetings. If a student sets up a zoom meeting we would prefer the student's camera to be on. Otherwise, a phone call would suffice.

Contact Information: Please note the change to the ALPHA allocation.

Mrs. C. Pearlstein, *Guidance Secretary*
cindy.pearlstein@yrdsb.ca

Mrs. C. Jackson
Last Name Alpha: I to N
cynthia.jackson@yrdsb.ca

Mr. R. Conte, *Head of Guidance*
Last Name Alpha: A to H
roderick.conte@yrdsb.ca

Mrs. N. Popiel
Last Name Alpha: O to Z
natasha.popiel@yrdsb.ca

GRADE 12s! APPLICATION SUBMITTED. NOW WHAT?

The deadline for Ontario university and college applications has passed. Now you patiently wait for your application to be assessed. Ensure you are checking your email regularly. Colleges and universities will acknowledge your application and send you follow-up information. Check your junk folder just in case this new unrecognized message ends up there. Carefully read and understand any message you receive from a college or university. If you have any questions, contact the college or university admissions office directly.

[@WCIGuidance](#) #wcigrad

News From Guidance

HAPPENING NOW - Semester 2 Timetable Change Request

Timetables have been released and students have started into their semester 2 classes. Students had until noon today to request a change, and counsellors are now working overtime to facilitate any possible requests. The school has until Friday, Feb. 12 to complete the requests. **PLEASE DO NOT EMAIL OR CALL YOUR COUNSELLOR REGARDING YOUR SEMESTER 2 TIMETABLE!** This will only slowdown the entire process.

For full instruction and updates please bookmark

<https://sites.google.com/site/wcguidance/timetable-changes>

[@WCIGuidance](#) #wcitimetable

HAPPENING NOW - Course Selection for the 2021-22 School Year

It's time to pick courses for next year. The process has begun. All students were emailed instruction Friday, January 16th. The email outlines the "how to" and provides resources. All students now have access to a Course Selection Google Folder. The folder contains EVERYTHING you need to complete course selection. This folder can ONLY be accessed with a GAPPS account. Family members will need to access this information with their child. "Drop-in Zoom Workshops" for students are planned for the week of February 8th. Students may begin SUMITTING their courses as of Feb. 16. Counsellors will be available to meet with students and their family members as of February 16th

Go to <https://sites.google.com/site/wcguidance/course-selection> for detailed information and timelines.

More importantly, follow us on Twitter [@WCIGuidance](#) #wcicourseselection



Stay connected and "in the Loop"

Bookmark the [Guidance Department's website](#) It will be the "go-to" for all relevant information pertaining to school for all grades.

Now more that ever, please follow [@WCIGuidance](#), [@WCI_YRDSB](#) on Twitter for real time notifications. During this time, social media has become the most effective way of communicating information.

Spread the word. Remind friends and family of the Westmount community to follow us on Twitter.

Age of Consent Form



Once a student turns 18, all communication is automatically directed to the student and will not go to parents. If a student wishes to still have parents contacted, they need to complete the [Age of Consent Form](#).

Please email the form to westmount.ci@yrdsb.ca

Virtual Classroom Visit

Last week Ms. Wodlinger / Ms. Gibbons class got visited by some very special guest speakers who spoke with us all about their academic pathways, and what they do in their interesting jobs. Students got to meet Dr. Alexi Millman, Urology Surgeon, and Dr. Brian Wodlinger, Biomedical Engineer.



FEB. 4-12, 2021 SCHEDULE

Schedule while fully online; 75 min classes

8:40 - 9:55 AM

PERIOD 1 CLASS

10:00 - 11:15 AM

PERIOD 2 CLASS

11:15 - 12:35 PM

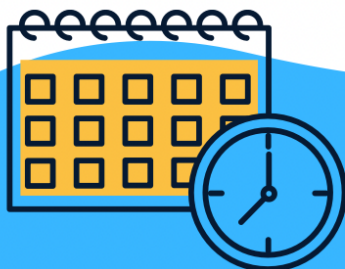
LUNCH

12:35 - 1:50 PM

PERIOD 4 CLASS

1:55 - 3:10 PM

PERIOD 5 CLASS



SET TO RETURN TO IN-PERSON ROTATIONS AFTER FAMILY DAY, ON FEBRUARY 16TH!

Virtual Workshop—York University ASD Transition Day



York University is hosting an upcoming ASD Transition Day on Friday, February 26, 2021.

This is an information day for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or a Non-Verbal Learning Disability (NVLD) and their families. It is intended for students who are in grades 10, 11 or 12 and are planning to attend a post-secondary institution (university or college). For more information, please visit their [website](#).

WCI Spirit Day Committee

With **Valentine's Day** approaching, this year the WCI Spirit Committee wanted to do something to spread a little bit of joy!

WCI students & staff can send in POSITIVE messages to be shared on our social media accounts (@wci_yrdsb) on [Instagram](#) & [Twitter](#). All in an effort to help us all feel the love as we're at home! If you have something positive you want to share, then we want to hear it! What do you say to other students or staff so that they feel the love?! Link to submit your message: <http://bit.ly/wciLOVE>

ALL RESPONSES DUE BY **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11th @ 4 PM!** We look forward to spreading the love all day on Friday, February 12th! Make sure you follow @wci_yrdsb

WCI STUDENTS & STAFF CAN SEND IN POSITIVE MESSAGES TO BE SHARED ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS (@WCI_YRDSB)

SUBMIT FROM FEB. 5-11!

MESSAGES WILL BE POSTED ON FRIDAY FEBRUARY 12TH!

SUBMIT YOUR MESSAGE @ HTTP://BIT.LY/WCILOVE

"I AM GRATEFUL TO HAVE BEEN LOVED, AND TO BE LOVED NOW AND TO BE ABLE TO LOVE. BECAUSE LOVE LIBERATES."

— MAYA ANGELOU

On February 12th, let's spread the love Wolves!