



William Armstrong Public School

School Start-Up Package 2023-2024

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***Inspire* Learning!**



Welcome

Dear Wm Armstrong Families,

Welcome to all our new and returning families. I hope you all had a safe, healthy and enjoyable summer. Our school team has been working hard to prepare to welcome your children back to school.

We have a dedicated staff with a strong commitment to student learning, achievement and well-being. We are committed to supporting our students' transition back to school and to providing a learning environment where everyone feels safe, valued, welcome and respected.

This **start-up package** includes important information about our school, and I encourage you to review it.

This year, the [Guide to the School Year](#) has been moved online. We encourage families to review this webpage as it includes important information you may need to access throughout the school year. You can use the translation feature on the website to translate this content. It is available at <https://www2.yrdsb.ca/school-year-guide>.

Each year we ask families to complete some **important forms** to indicate they have reviewed and understand school and Board policies, and to indicate permissions. Families will be able to complete this information online. You will receive an email in the coming weeks. Please take the time to review and complete the forms. If you prefer to receive and complete a paper copy, please let us know. These forms can also be found when available at www.yrdsb.ca/family-resources.

We value the relationship we have with families, and look forward to speaking and working with you in the months ahead. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions. We welcome the opportunity to connect with you.

There are many ways to stay connected with what's happening in our school. Please check Visit our school website for up-to-date information about events. You can also find updated information about the Board at www.yrdsb.ca and Twitter @YRDSB.

I wish you all a happy, safe and successful school year.

Sincerely,

Shelley Jones

Ms. S. Jones
Principal

Information Package and Form Checklist

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

Return the completed forms by September 29th

Required Forms

These forms will be sent by email from the YRDSV and must be completed asap

- School Start-Up Permissions Form
- Student 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

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.



Our School

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

School Day Organization:

Period	Times
Before school supervision	8:10-8:20
1 st Entry Bell	8:20
Instruction Begins/ Period 1	8:25-9:05
Period 2	9:05-9:25
Period 3	9:25-10:05
RECESS	10:05-10:35
Period 4	10:35-11:15
Period 5	11:15 – 11:35
Period 6	11:35 – 12:15
LUNCH	12:15 – 1:15
Period 7	1:15 – 1:55
Period 8	1:55 – 2:15
Period 9	2:15 – 2:55
Dismissal	2:55

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 call 1-800-463-5437.



Class Placements

Due to late registrations and enrolments, there may be staffing changes and class reorganization during the first few weeks of school. We do our best to keep these changes to a minimum and to support students during any transitions.

Agenda/Handbook

Please make sure you read the beginning pages of your child's agenda. There you will find all the School's and Board's policies and procedures that you will be required to sign off on the mandatory forms sent home. The student agenda also serves as a useful way for teachers and parents/guardians to communicate. Parents/guardians, please check your child's agenda daily. We may also communicate through regular newsletters.

Excursions/Community Walkabouts

Our outdoor spaces are learning spaces. Teachers may take classes on walks around the community to support classroom learning, environmental literacy, and mental and health and well-being. 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.

Family Resources

Visit www.yrdsb.ca/familyresources or click on the link from the Board's homepage to access a variety of resources for families, including:

- links to the start-up forms (when available)
- IT support for families
- translation tools, privacy considerations and more
- links to community resources, curriculum materials, student supports and more
- online tools like Google Classroom, Edsby and School Cash Online. Click on the "Need Help?" link for access to tips and resources to support you in using these online tools.

Lunch Time Agreement

Students who leave school property for lunch must have parent/guardian permission, otherwise students must stay at school. The **School Start-Up Permissions Form** must be completed for all students and returned to the school.

Classroom Celebrations & Food Guidelines

We recognize that food and eating is a pleasurable and social activity and we do not want it eliminated in the school. However, some guidelines are necessary. To this end, we have several requests related to food allowed in the school.

- **No nuts or nut products at any time in any classroom.**
- **No foods containing other known allergens in homeroom classes where anaphylactic students attend (ie. No shellfish in a room where a child is allergic to shellfish, etc.).**
- **For religious, health, and dietary reasons, FOOD SHOULD NOT BE PROVIDED FOR CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS.**
- **Food will only be part of celebrations for unique and "special" classroom events, organized by a staff member.**
- **WE CANNOT ALLOW HOME-BAKED OR HOME-PREPARED FOODS TO BE SHARED IN THE CLASSROOM.**

If a classroom celebration is being organized by a teacher and food is included then **the teacher is responsible** to:

- Ensure that all food provided is "nut free", as indicated on ingredient labels.
- Ensure that all food is "allergy safe" related to known allergies that exist for students in the classroom.
- Convey to parents who may be providing food that all food must be "nut free", as indicated on ingredient labels, and "allergy safe" when applicable, and that absolutely NO HOME BAKED PRODUCTS will be allowed.
- Ensure that any cooking/baking/food preparation occurring at school conforms to all of the above, as well as to ensure that any ingredients sent from families' homes for class cooking/baking/food preparation are sent to the school in SEALED and ORIGINAL PACKAGES/CONTAINERS.
- Encourage healthy choice options as articulated per the [Ministry of Education policy/program memorandum 150](#)

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.

Significant Faith Days

York Region is rich in culture and diverse in religious beliefs and practices based on faith.

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:

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
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.

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. Please complete the **School Council Nomination Forms** and return to the school office.

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.

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.

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 Student Threat-Risk 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.