

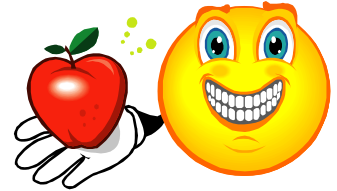
# Brookside Blog

<http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/brookside>

Ms N. Smith, Principal  
Ms M. Sharma, Vice-Principal



**September 2012**



Dear Families,

On behalf of the entire staff at Brookside, welcome to a new school year! I am looking forward to working with you and your children.

This year, we welcome a few new colleagues to our staff and we are confident that you will appreciate the many admirable qualities and skills they bring to our school. Welcome to Ms Grimes (secretary), Ms Miller (p.m. Spec. Ed. EA), Ms Gorgenyi (JK/SK), Ms White (Gr. 2), Ms Ganesh (Gr. 3), Ms Lowhar (Gr. 5/6), Ms Nieto (Gr. 7/8), Mr. Papa (Jr. French), and welcome back to Ms Penman and Ms Noormohamed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Head Caretaker, Mr. Morgan, and his team, Mr. Apigo and Mr. Hicks, who have worked diligently, to ensure that Brookside P.S. is ready for your children's arrival. We couldn't have functioned so effectively without their hard work and dedication. We are also very fortunate to have a caring, dedicated, and professional staff who are ready to address the different learning needs of your children. The teachers have worked hard preparing their classrooms and reviewing the curriculum to plan a year of teaching and learning that ensures opportunities for student success in all areas of the academic program. Although we will emphasize improvement in all areas, our main school focuses will be literacy, numeracy, pathways, and community culture and caring. We're looking forward to a productive year of learning, with you working in partnership with our school, to motivate and encourage all our children to be the best that they can be.

Our monthly newsletter, "The Brookside Blog," is an important communication tool between the home and school. Your child will also be asked to purchase an agenda. The agenda includes school policies, initiatives, and other important information. Please take the time to read the newsletters and agenda with your child. Your modeling teaches him/her that school and learning are important and that you are interested, and care about what goes on in your child's life, at our school.

Every year, at the beginning of September, all schools in the T.D.S.B. review their enrollment to ascertain whether a re-organization of classes is necessary due to increases/decreases in enrollment. If we need to re-organize our grades/classes at this time, a letter will be sent home to parents of affected students. Like you, our goal is to ensure that all students receive the very best effective and equitable teaching/learning experiences.

I invite all of you to take an active role in your child's education by attending our Parent Council meetings. The Parent Council is made up of a committee of parents (like you), community members, teachers, and administration. Your involvement in the Council gives you the opportunity to be a part of a dedicated team working to ensure a high quality and enjoyable education for our children. You are invited to attend any (or all) of the meetings, which are informal, informative, and enjoyable. Our first meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 26<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m., in the school library. In the next few weeks, your child will be bringing home a flyer. Your participation can make a difference!

*Ms N. Smith, Principal*

## Combined Grade Classrooms

As you are aware, many schools in T.D.S.B. and across the province have combined grade classrooms. A combined or split grade class contains students from two consecutive grades.

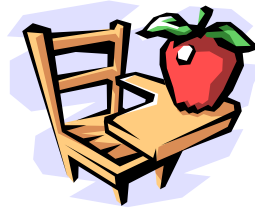
### *Why do combined grade classes exist?*

Schools combine classes to meet student learning needs and to balance class size. Sometimes, there are too many students to form one class, but not enough students to form two classes. In these situations, students from two different grade levels are grouped together to form a combined class. Smaller schools are particularly challenged because of lower overall enrolment. In these cases, students may be in combined grades for several years in a row. All classrooms include students with a range of skills and abilities. Combined classes are neither better nor worse than single-grade classes.

### *Why was my child chosen for the combined class?*

When the school principal and staff consider students for a combined class, a variety of factors may be considered, including:

- a balance according to gender
- work habits, maturity, co-operation
- a balance of ability, interests, and talents
- social and behavioural considerations
- E.S.L. or Special Education needs
- learning styles of the students

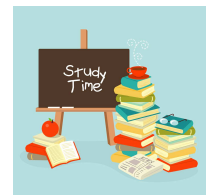


All classrooms, whether single-grade or combined, include students performing at a range of achievement levels. Schools strive to create a classroom environment that will support the needs of all students.

### *Are there any benefits to my child in a combined class?*

Educational research supports many benefits for students in combined classes, including:

- the development of independent learning skills
- students learning from each other
- developing decision-making skills, and becoming more self-motivated and responsible
- the enhancement of social/emotional development
- increased leadership opportunities for students



### *Is the achievement of students in a combined grade comparable to children in a straight grade?*

Educational literature shows that children in combined grade groupings do as well as students in single-grade classes. Student achievement is not compromised.

### *Are there disadvantages to a combined class?*

No. An effective teacher and supportive parents provide a positive learning environment for children in any classroom organization. When student achievement is examined, the educational research has determined that there is no significant difference between single and combined classes.

### *Will my child be prepared for the next grade if he/she is in a combined class?*

Yes. At the beginning of each school year, teachers use a variety of methods to assess the needs of each student regardless of the composition of the class. Using the Ontario Curriculum in each subject as a basis, the program is planned to meet the needs and abilities of all students in the class and to prepare students for the next grade.

*(An Introduction to Combined Grades, a Ministry of Education publication available at [www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca))*



## Safety

***AS OUR CHILDREN'S SAFETY IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY...*** we are requesting that you follow the following guidelines:

- Encourage your child to walk to school as it is not only good exercise, but many of our traffic challenges will be eliminated
- Please **Do Not Enter the Staff Parking Lot or Stop in the Driveway** to drop your child off as it's full with staff parking and this blocks the flow of traffic, and creates an unsafe situation
- Drop your child off in a safe manner at the sidewalk on the school side of Oasis Blvd., Seasons Dr., or on another close street
- Give way to school buses entering or leaving the parking lot
- When walking across the street, please remind your child to look both ways before proceeding
- When using the crosswalk, children are reminded to press the button, and only after looking both ways, should they proceed with caution



## Bike Racks

We are very fortunate to have bike racks available for student use. Students riding bikes to school must wear a bike helmet. Please ensure that all bikes left at school are securely locked. As staff are not available to supervise the bike rack area, Brookside P.S. cannot be held responsible for any bikes left at school.



## School Uniforms

Shop online: [www.rjmccarthy.com](http://www.rjmccarthy.com)

Shop by phone: 416-593-6900

Visit the store: 12 Trojan Gate, Scarborough

Students are expected to dress in a neat and appropriate manner that reflects pride in themselves and our school. If a student comes to school without his/her full uniform, a phone call home will be made. Immediate arrangements will be made to have uniform items brought to school, or alternately, arrangements will be made for the student to return home to change. Please refer to our School Uniform Policy that can be found in the student agenda for more information.

- Please ensure that all items are labeled with your child's name, therefore making it easier to return lost items to their owners. There is no formal gym attire to be worn during physical education classes. However, students are asked to change for gym, into loose bottoms (e.g., sweats/shorts) and a t-shirt.
- A plain white short-sleeved undershirt (no logos or coloured borders) may be worn under the uniform polo shirts, oxford shirts, and 1/4 zip sweatshirts

**All tops and tunics worn in school must be official Brookside P.S. issued, purchased from the McCarthy's store** (as decided by the parents). Announcements are made reminding students of the above. Please help us implement the uniform policy that was voted in by the community.

## Late Arrival

We, at Brookside, strongly believe that patterns and practices established while children are young, become a “way of life” and carry on through adulthood. Punctual attendance is an important expectation for all students. It has a direct effect on their work, attitude, and sense



of responsibility. When students arrive late at school, not only are they missing key learning time, but they are also disrupting their classes. **The Education Act states that it is the responsibility of the parent (or guardian) to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually.** When students arrive after 8:40 a.m. or 12:30 p.m., and have

missed entry with their class/division, they are asked to come to the office for a “Late Slip.” There may be consequences for students who arrive at school late. Please help your child become responsible and learn the importance of punctuality.

## Safe Arrival

Please make every effort to contact the school office if your child is going to be late or absent. Daily calls are made for unaccountable absenteeism. This Safe Arrival Program can take up a great deal of time if parents do not inform the school of their child’s absence. Please leave a message on the school’s answering machine the evening before, or early in the morning at **416-396-7940**. Include your child’s first and last name, grade, teacher’s name, and the reason for the absence.



If you are going to pick up your child earlier than the regular dismissal time, please write a note to the classroom teacher. Come directly to the office and our staff will call your child to meet you. In order to ensure the safety of all students, we require written permission from a parent or guardian if someone other than the regular caregiver is picking up a child. A reminder to begin all school visits by stopping in at the office.

## Forgotten Items at School

Students are reminded to take their needed belongings home with them each night. Unfortunately, for safety and security reasons, students and/or parents are not able to enter the school to pick-up forgotten items (e.g., lunch bags, homework, boots, etc.), after dismissal time. Students will need to wait until the next school day. Thank you for your co-operation.

## Kelsey’s Partners with Brookside P.S.



The next time your family eats at Kelsey’s Markham Road location (7710 Markham Road, North of Steeles), please write Brookside P.S. on the back of the receipt and ask for it to be deposited in the “Brookside P.S. envelope.” Kelsey’s will donate 10% of the total of all food items purchased back to our Parent Council at the end of the year. Thank you for supporting Brookside Parent Council fundraising efforts ☺

## Student Accident Insurance

The T.D.S.B. does **not** provide accident insurance coverage for student injuries that occur on school premises or during school sponsored activities. Also, the Board's insurance does not cover student injuries. Accidents can and do happen. Some injuries incur medical, dental, or other expenses that are not covered by provincial health care or employer group plans. The Board has arranged a Student Accident Insurance Policy exclusively through Reliable Life Insurance Company. Participation in such a program is voluntary and the costs are to be paid by the parent/guardian. The insurance agreement is between **you** and **Reliable Life Insurance Company**. If you wish to subscribe, you can apply directly on-line at [www.insuremykids.com](http://www.insuremykids.com) or call Reliable Life Insurance Company toll free at **1-800-463-KIDS (5437)**. Students in JK to Grade 8 can also subscribe by using the brochure that will be provided by our school.



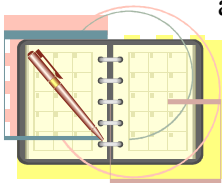
## Curriculum Night

We are looking forward to meeting all of you at our Curriculum Night on Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. We have organized a special presentation from 6:30-7:00, in the library, called, "The Benefits of Special Education". We hope to see many of you there, even if you don't presently have a child receiving extra support. At 7:00 p.m., you will have an opportunity to visit your child's class, listen to a presentation by the teacher, and chat informally. At Brookside P.S., we strive to create a strong partnership between students, staff, and parents. It is extremely important that you make every effort to attend this evening. A flyer will be sent home in the next couple of weeks.



## Student Agendas

Agendas help students create timelines, set goals, and monitor their progress. The front of the agenda includes an insert that summarizes the Brookside rules and routines. The agendas represent a learning tool for students, a communication tool for parents, and a teaching tool for teachers. **Please sign your child's agenda each night when homework has been completed.** Through a strong partnership between the school and home, we will be able to help our students achieve their full potential. All students in Grade 1 to 8 are asked to purchase an agenda for \$7.00. Please send the money to school with your child, as soon as possible.



### NO NUTS AT SCHOOL

Due to some of our students and staff having life-threatening nut allergies, students are asked not to bring any food to school that contains peanuts, peanut oil, or nuts.



## Lunch Program

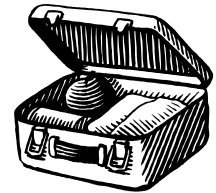
The lunch program is provided for students from Grades 1 to 6 (Gr. 7/8 by special permission), where both parents are working (or going to school) and no other arrangements can be made for lunchtime supervision. If at all possible, we strongly encourage students to go home for lunch or for parents to make alternate arrangements for their children. The children are more refreshed when they have the opportunity to leave school grounds during the lunch hour. Not only do they get a much-needed break, but they also get to eat their lunch in a family setting. Unfortunately, for safety

reasons and due to high numbers, we cannot offer a “drop-in” lunch program. A permission form and contract must be completed for each student staying at school for lunch.

Students staying for lunch are not allowed to leave school property. When a student needs to leave school property, a note must be sent to the school. Acceptable table manners and decorum are expected from all students who remain at school for lunch. **If a student is unable to adhere to the rules, it may be necessary for the parents to make other arrangements for their child at lunch time.**



Students are asked to bring a **LITTERLESS LUNCH**. **Everything brought to school must be taken home.** Students will repack everything they brought in their lunch bag (garbage, tetra packs, etc.) and take it home, to be thrown out or recycled. Please refer to our school agenda for more information. Parents are asked not to deliver “fast food” (e.g., McDonalds, Burger King, etc.) to their children at school. Not only are we encouraging healthy eating, but we all adhere to the “litterless lunch” practices.



### Parent Concern Protocol

The Toronto District School Board has established a procedure for principals and superintendents of education to follow in addressing individual parent’s concerns. The Parent Concern Protocol is based on the best practices currently used in TDSB schools for addressing parents’ concerns, and provides a range of feasible options for principals and superintendents of education when parents bring individual concerns to them.

At our school, parent concerns have always received a high priority and this procedure will support that priority. We encourage parents to discuss any concerns first with the teacher if the concern relates to the student or the classroom. Discuss the concern directly with the principal or vice-principal when the concern is about the school as a whole, or its policies.

### Celebrating Birthdays



If you would like to acknowledge and celebrate your child’s birthday at school, your child is invited to bring in a small token treat to share with all his/her classmates. Any food treats need to be already divided into individual portions and must be nut-free. For example, mini chocolate bars, mini cupcakes, a decorative pencil/eraser, stickers, etc.

<b>5 Day Schedule</b>	
Entry	8:40 a.m.
Lunch	11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Early Dismissal	3:20 p.m.
Remediation/Detention/Activities	3:20 p.m. – 3:50 p.m.
Morning Kindergarten	8:40 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.
Afternoon Kindergarten	12:45 p.m. – 3:20 p.m.



## Pizza Lunch Fundraising Days



This year, the staff will be hosting 5 Pizza Lunch Days for all interested Grade 1-8 students. JK/SK students will have an opportunity to purchase a special treat on these days. Pizza months are tentatively scheduled for November, December, January, March, and May. More details will follow.

## Beat the Homework Blues

Balancing after-school activities, work, and the daily rigors of life is always a challenge. Add homework to the mix and it can be an overwhelming experience for both kids and parents. Try these five easy steps to help alleviate some of the homework stress in your home.



1. *LET THEM UNWIND* - Allow your child at least half an hour after school to unwind and have a healthy snack before starting homework.
2. *SET A TIME AND PLACE* - Choose a specific time and place for homework to be completed, and be available to supervise and offer assistance. Have necessary materials, such as sharpened pencils, an eraser, and a ruler ready.
3. *ORGANIZE* - Know what the task is. Read the instructions together and have your child repeat them back to you to ensure understanding. Highlight key pieces of information with a highlighter, or underline instructions.
4. *CHUNK IT* - If the homework is difficult or lengthy, break it into more manageable chunks. For instance, if there is a whole page of math, do one row at a time, covering the rest of the questions with a blank paper.
5. *CREATE BREAKS* - It is much easier to complete one section of homework knowing that a five-minute break awaits you. An egg timer can be a great tool for ensuring that the break time is limited. Avoid television – but offer your child the time to get a drink, stretch, or help you with a task in the kitchen. A game of tic-tac-toe or Simon Says can provide a quick and effective release before getting back to work.



Parents and teachers are partners in education. If your child is experiencing homework difficulty, talk to the teacher. The teacher will appreciate your input, and your child's needs will be better met as a result.

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