

Dundas Kindergarten Handbook

2018/2019

Dundas Junior Public School

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Dundas Junior Public School! As you know, Dundas is a thriving downtown elementary school located in the South Riverdale area. The original building was built in 1917, with a large addition constructed in 1961. The school population has fluctuated widely over the last decade, but in recent years Dundas is growing steadily with a total of 370 students as of the 2017/2018 school year.

Dundas currently offers Junior Kindergarten to Grade 5 in English, early French Immersion starting in Senior Kindergarten as well as Extended French starting in Grade 4.

The parent council worked with teachers, administration, and current parents at Dundas to create this handbook to help ensure that your experience at Dundas is a positive one. We know that the transition to full-day kindergarten is an amazing and exciting time but also can be an emotional and anxious time as well, with lots of unknowns and challenges.

This parent-to-parent guide provides information about your new kindergarten journey: general school rules, daily routines, issues that may arise, a general sense of what to expect, communication with the school, volunteering, and much more.

The content of the handbook is a result of feedback from parents and teachers, along with input from principal Chatzis. The Parent Engagement Committee's Onboarding/Orientation team of 2017/2108 conducted a survey and gathered responses from kindie parents about what information was important to them to know before their child entered kindergarten at Dundas. Teachers were also surveyed about what they believed to be the top issues that parents should know before and during the kindie transition. Thank you to all kindie parents and teachers who responded to our survey!

We hope you find this handbook helpful as you begin the school journey with your child.

Sincerely,

Dundas Parent Council
Executive Members 2017/2018
Parent Engagement Committee Members 2017/2018

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Welcome

The day has arrived. Your little one is a “big kid” now and is entering kindergarten. This can be a tough transition for many children, sometimes more than you might expect! Your child may be excited in the days leading up to kindergarten but will likely surprise you with some challenges in the first days/weeks: crying and not wanting to go to school, not wanting you to leave at drop off, wetting pants, regression in certain areas, over-tiredness, not eating, not wanting to go to the bathroom, having trouble falling asleep at night, etc. This is normal. Even though the first few weeks (and sometimes months) can be rough for some students, rest assured that in time they will figure things out and begin to have lots of fun as they gain confidence in new their surroundings and learn new routines. Usually it takes about a month for kids to feel settled.

If you have any hesitations or doubts or need reassurance about anything, please speak to your child’s teacher. Also, we have included a section in the handbook where you can reach out to a parent mentor who has gone through either JK or SK or both. Parent council will make sure you get connected and get your questions answered!

Dundas hosts a Curriculum Night during the first month of school (date and time TBA). Hotdogs are served to all families in the kindergarten courtyard and afterwards you’ll have an opportunity to visit your child’s classroom and meet your child’s teacher(s). Keep an eye out for a newsletter home with more details in September!

If you missed this night and/or if you haven’t had an opportunity to get a tour of the school and would like one, please contact the office to set one up. We want you to feel at home in this space and be familiar with the rooms and places your child is in on a daily basis.

General Information About Full-Day Kindergarten

Since the implementation of full-day Kindergarten across Ontario in fall 2014, kindergarten is now considered a two-year program. All kindergarten classes are a mix of both Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten students. The exception to this is the French Immersion classes, which contain only second year/Senior Kindergarten students.

Full-day kindergarten does not have a hard cap of students. Generally speaking, classes can be as many as 30 students. The classes are led by a teacher and also by an instructor certified as an Early Childhood Educator (also known as ECE). This means the ratio for student care is 1:15. This is a big change from many daycare programs for youngsters who may have had a ratio of 1:6 or 1:8. Your child will need to have a higher level of independence in their JK and SK years.

Note: If for some reason a class is smaller than 16 students, that class will not have an ECE resource dedicated to it.

Late Birthdays / Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?

The official preparation for kindergarten starts in February of the year your child is turning four years old. Typically, children start JK in the fall of the year they turn four. If a child's birthday is in November or December, some parents choose to keep them out of JK for that year and start their child the following year in SK. This option is available to all parents – the JK year is not compulsory for Ontario students. Children with late birthdays will still be 3 years old at the start of the school year; they may still be in diapers or have not had experience socializing or being independent. On the other hand, your 3-almost-4-year-old may be thriving and absolutely ready to kick off their school adventure. Here is a link with helpful information in terms of child-readiness for kindergarten:

City of Toronto

<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/resources-for-schools/a-healthy-start-to-school/>

The TDSB released data in 2017 showing the distinct advantages of holding back would-be JK students with birthdays in October, November, and December. Here are some helpful links discussing this data:

The Globe and Mail

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/toronto-kindergarten-late-birthdays/article34229793/>

Global News

<https://globalnews.ca/news/3952508/redshirting-delaying-school-kindergarten-enrolment/>

Today's Parent

<https://www.todayparent.com/family/what-teachers-want-you-to-know/>

Keep in mind every child is different. Every family is different. There are many considerations when making the decision to either send your child with a late-birthday to school or hold them back. We realize this decision-making process can be agonizing for some families. Please do not feel any pressure either way, just focus on doing what is best for your child and your family. Also, keep in mind, if you start your child in school, take it one day at a time; you can always change your mind and decide to wait if the timing doesn't feel right. Speak to your child's teacher if you have any doubts in those first few days and weeks – they will have professional insight and can share their thoughts/opinions about your child's readiness.

When you are ready to register your child to start kindergarten in the fall, you'll visit your home school in February of that year to provide all of their official documents (birth certificate, health records, etc.) In the registration package, you will be given the opportunity to provide information about your child in terms of health/medical issues, allergies, and social/emotional or behavioural issues that you are aware of.

Before & After School Care

At registration time in February, you should investigate whether you will need before-school or after-school care at Dundas. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) will ask you to fill in a survey (included in registration package) as to whether or not you will require before and after care. This information is used to determine the demand at various schools across the system from year to year. In our area, there has typically been a very high demand for a host of reasons. As such, Dundas does have an existing provider of before and after school care for kindergarten students. This program is run by Native Child & Family Services of Toronto.

Native Child & Family Services of Toronto

Charitable organization that offers a multitude of children's services across Toronto.

Operates the before and after care program for students in full-day kindergarten at Dundas.

Must register with the Director of the program:

Kim Kirkley

kkirkley@nativechild.org

You also need to confirm at this time if your child will be taking the bus to school or not. If Dundas is not your home school and you are travelling to Dundas for either the French Immersion or the Extended French programs, you may be eligible for busing services. This is information you should ask about at the time of registration. Dundas office staff can provide you with the right forms and information.

Transition Insight

Here are some "golden nuggets" of insight for kindie parents about the transition to school.

- **Four-year-old development and five-year-old development are different; don't compare**
"Four-year-olds are going to struggle with a lot of skills that five-year-olds aren't going to struggle with." And that is something teachers and parents, who might be tempted to view all kindergarteners as being similar, need to understand and adjust for, says developmental psychologist Caitlin Mahy of Brock University. <https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2015/08/children-in-jk-and-k-at-different-stages-of-development-brock-researcher/>
- **Take your child on a tour of the school & kindie classroom**
"Research shows that children are most often upset because they're unsure of what's going to happen next, where they put their things, who their teacher is, what they're supposed to do," explains assistant professor of human development and applied psychology Janette Pelletier of Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. "That kind of talk ahead of time and any possible experience to familiarize them are really the best things." Pelletier studies the transition of preschoolers into the school system as kindies

and she recommends that parents arrange a school tour and visit to the classroom before school begins, if possible.

<https://www.todayparent.com/family/how-to-prepare-for-the-first-day-of-kindergarten/>

- **Start talking!**

“Start talking about the upcoming transition well before it is due to happen,” says Anthony Field, ECE and creator of The Wiggles. Talk to your child about what their day will be like at Dundas. Use the Typical Daily Schedule example in this handbook to let them know what sorts of activities they will take part in.

<http://www.parentscanada.com/blogs/the-wiggle-room/making-the-transition-to-kindergarten>

- **Visit the school, keep a routine, and accommodate sleep needs**

Dundas principal Georgia Chatzis reiterates the value of a school visit before classes begin, and stresses to parents/guardians how important it is to keep a routine at home as much as possible and to ensure your little one gets enough sleep.

Preparing for Kindergarten

Here are some skills you’ll want to practise with your child in the months and weeks leading up to kindergarten.

Dressing

Be sure your child is as familiar as possible with velcro for shoes, zipping up jackets or pants, doing the odd button on sweaters or shirts. They should be able to take their shoes, jacket and sweaters/tops off and put them back on again pretty much by themselves. Of course, the ECEs in the kindergarten rooms will be helping and working on these skills in the first few months of the year.

Take note that once the weather gets colder, there are many more items to deal with (snow pants, hats, mittens, scarves, neck warmers, boots, jackets, etc.) and the ECEs and teachers cannot be expected to help each student dress. Some kids will come to school knowing how to do it all, while others will need extra time and assistance. Each child learns at a different speed. The goal is for your child to be able to dress/undress from outdoor attire independently. Practising at home is the best way for your child to get comfortable with the process and they will feel so proud of themselves once they are able to do these things on their own!

Schoolwork Skills

You can help your child to hold a crayon or pencil properly and perhaps even start with writing letters or symbols, if they’re interested! Here is a “how-to” guide to help your child hold a pencil properly: <https://www.todayparent.com/kids/preschool/pencil-grip/>. This video is also an amazing resource for teaching proper pencil grip: <https://youtu.be/ZIxUtwO29r8>. You may also want to practise with

numbers, shapes, and patterns as these will help prepare kindies for math. Again, these things will be worked on with the teacher and ECE once students begin school.

Toileting & Personal Hygiene

Your child must be potty-trained to attend full-day kindergarten. They should be able to pull down clothing, use the toilet and wipe (as required), pull up clothing, flush the toilet, and wash hands. ECEs will help with gentle reminders and supervision. For those sunny months in September and in the spring, talk to your teacher and ECE for details if you are concerned about sunscreen re-application.

Self-regulation Tools

For many children, kindergarten may be the first time they have to function in a large group setting. They will learn how to line up in a straight line, share with other kids, take turns, tell people when they don't like something, raise hands when they want to speak in a group, and many other social skills. You may want to help introduce these concepts at home as much as you can. Dundas also uses the "Zones of Regulation" program/curriculum, designed to help children learn to independently self-regulate their actions. During the year, teachers and ECEs will teach students to recognize how their body is feeling, using colors to explain the different emotions:

- Blue zone – tired, sleepy, bored, sad, sick
- Green zone – calm, focused, happy, content, ready
- Yellow zone – excited, anxious, nervous, surprised, silly, embarrassed, frustrated
- Red zone – panicked, enraged, elated, crying, screaming, furious

If you want to familiarize your child with these "zones" and practise recognizing them before September, that is great! Here is a helpful link to read more:

<http://www.zonesofregulation.com/learn-more-about-the-zones.html>

Families with Special Needs

In many cases, it is difficult to determine if your kindergarten-aged student has any special needs when it comes to learning or education. There is a wide range of "normal" development in those very early years for various academic skills, like starting to write or read. Currently, there is no mechanism within the Toronto District School Board to have students formally assessed before they enter the full-day kindergarten program. As stated above, if you have any concerns, please mention them in your registration package and to your child's teacher.

If your young child has already been determined to have special education needs, it is highly recommended that you call the main office at Dundas well before school starts to set up an appointment with the principal. The principal will arrange for a meeting with a representative from the TDSB's Special Education Department.

At this meeting, you will be able to share any needs, relevant documentation, and discuss supports that are available in the school for your child. In some cases, there may be another school or program that may be better suited to your child's needs.

It may only become clear after your child starts those first weeks of school that they are finding it difficult to learn in the regular classroom environment. Teachers and parents/guardians can meet with a member of Psychological Services, who can provide ideas and information to help the student become a more effective learner. Here is TDSB info about psychological assessments:

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Professional-Support-Services/Psychological-Services>

The TDSB's founding principle is that every child should be able to succeed; they are committed to working with parents and schools to determine the supports and resources your child will need for a successful transition to school.

Getting Ready for Kindergarten – Links to Online Resources (articles, videos, book list)

Official Government Resources

- City of Toronto – Getting ready for kindergarten <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/children-parenting/pregnancy-and-parenting/parenting/healthy-child-development/getting-ready-for-kindergarten/>
- Government of Ontario – Preparing your child for full-day kindergarten http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/multi/english/fdk_fs_preparing_your_child_en.pdf
- Toronto District School Board (TDSB) - Preparing your child for kindergarten (video) <https://youtu.be/2g8hUEvsgis>

Today's Parent

- Get kindergarten ready before the big day <https://www.todayparent.com/hub/kindergarten-readiness-get-your-preschooler-ready-for-the-year-ahead/>
- How to calm first day of kindergarten fears – and make drop-off easier <https://www.todayparent.com/family/how-to-prepare-for-the-first-day-of-kindergarten/>
- List of 24 books about first day of school for (anxious) kids <https://www.todayparent.com/family/books/first-day-of-school-books-for-your-anxious-kid/>

Other

- This is a really helpful perspective about children in JK and SK being at different stages of development. It will allow you to adjust your expectations of your little JK-er!
<https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2015/08/children-in-jk-and-k-at-different-stages-of-development-brock-researcher/>
- These books in particular, “The Invisible String” and “The Kissing Hand” have been super helpful for a number of parents at Dundas. Both are available through the Toronto Public Library.
- Many parents have also found these “How I get ready for school” charts helpful
<https://shop.easydaysies.com/collections/home-collection/products/my-day-for-preschool-aged-kids> If you enter an internet search “Visual schedule / routine checklist for kindergarten,” or something along those lines, you should see many examples of something you could buy or make.
- Making the transition to Kindergarten → tips for before, during and at the end of summer
<http://www.parentscanada.com/blogs/the-wiggle-room/making-the-transition-to-kindergarten>
- The Conversation – Five steps to prepare your child for kindergarten
<http://theconversation.com/five-steps-to-prepare-your-child-for-kindergarten-81017>

Facebook

- “Starting School with Roots and Wings” – consider joining this group! Founded by a kindergarten teacher and mom who wanted to share with other parents who are navigating this precious time early in the school experience, the group focus is on 3-6 year olds participating in Ontario’s full-day kindergarten program. There is a ton of helpful information posted in this group, lots of questions asked, and many answers from teachers and other parents.

September

Towards the end of summer you will receive a notice from the school with information about what teacher and/or classroom number your child will be in. KEEP THIS INFORMATION. You will need to know this when you get to Dundas on the first day as the classes line up by room number.

Backpack – What to Pack / Checklist

Extra clothes – Sometimes kids get messy, sometimes they jump in mud puddles at recess, sometimes they have an accident. Please send a second set of clothing (top, bottom, socks, underwear) in a plastic bag (a large ziploc bag tends to work best). This extra fresh clothing will be kept at school in their cubby. You may want to have shorts and short sleeves in there to start and then switch up the type of clothing when the weather gets colder. In the event that your child needs a clothing change, the wet/soiled

clothing will be put into the plastic bag and sent home. Be sure to label each clothing item as well as the bag/ziplock.

Footwear – indoor/outdoor shoes

Kindie students need one pair of closed-toe indoor shoes that can be worn inside and left at the school. This is to keep the classrooms as clean as possible and not full of the cedar wood chips that are around the climbing structures. It's best if indoor shoes are running shoes. Velcro, slip-on, side zippers, or curly laces are great options for kindies! If your child's indoor shoes are not "running shoes" we ask that you also provide a pair of running shoes suitable for gym days. Outdoor shoes will be worn to and from school and in the Kindie courtyard during recess and lunch recess. All footwear must cover toes (flip flops/sandals are not allowed; closed-toe sandals are ok). Your child must be able to put on and take off the indoor, outdoor, and running shoes independently.

Hat/Sunscreen – Consider sending your child with a hat for those sunny days in the fall and spring. Lightweight long-sleeved shirts are also a good option if you're concerned about sun exposure. You should apply sunscreen to your child at home, if necessary. Talk to your child's teacher or ECE to make arrangements about sunscreen reapplication and reminders.

Other weather-related clothes as required – Rain boots, rain jackets, extra hoodie, sweater, etc. In winter: snowpants, snow jacket, winter boots, hat, scarf/neckwarmer, mittens. etc.

Reusable water bottle – (your child should be able to open this without assistance). There are water fountains at Dundas but it's easier for kids to have a water bottle they can keep in their backpack or cubby. Please do not send juice as part of your child's lunch.

Lunch – More details on this in the Lunch Routine section.

Snack – Pack one snack for your child to eat in the afternoon. Morning snack is provided by the school.

Note about toys/stuffed animals from home – Some students may find it helpful to bring a "lovey" or special stuffy or other "security item" to help them through the first few weeks of school. If this is the case, please speak to your child's teacher about it and let them know that your child is having a hard time and would really like to have some support. Many teachers and ECEs are helpful with this. Of course, if it becomes too much of a distraction it will still be taken away/put away. Check in with your teacher to find out details. Generally speaking, toys and stuffed animals from home are not allowed in classrooms, so please remind your child that the item needs to stay in their backpack unless it is recess or lunch time. Please label the item.

Note about backpack size – It is a good idea to get a backpack large enough to accommodate extra clothing, home lunch (if it applies), water bottle, snack, artwork, library books, etc. Depending on your child's size it might seem ridiculous to get a standard-size backpack as they might seem to be swimming in it! However, from experience, it is a good idea to air on the side of having more space than not

enough to ensure items don't get lost and to avoid your child needing to hold items outside of the backpack in his/her hands if they don't fit. It's a good idea to do a "trial run" before school starts in September and put all the items your child needs in the backpack; if things seem to be fitting quite tight, then consider a bigger backpack.

***** PLEASE LABEL EVERYTHING WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME *****

Feel free to use permanent marker for labeling, or whatever works for you. Mabel's Labels has partnered with our parent council and a portion of the sale goes to Dundas fundraising efforts. Click on "Support a Fundraiser" button and select Dundas school. These type of labels are particularly useful because they're dishwasher-safe, microwave-safe, and waterproof as well as safe to go through washer/dryer cycles. Check them out at www.MabelsLabels.com

First Day Expectations & Everyday Routines

Getting to School

Riding bike / scooter

It is highly recommended that all students walk/bike to Dundas whenever possible. However, please keep in mind Dundas school policy is that students may not ride bicycles or scooters or skateboards or rollerblades (anything with wheels) on school property during school hours, 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. When you arrive on school property please dismount, "walk" it or pick it up and take it with you during drop off and pick up, or lock it in the bike rack provided at the school entrance. We have many young children playing on school property and we want to ensure that everyone is safe. Thank you for your cooperation.

Driving

If you are driving your child to school, there are **10-min max** parking spaces along Boulton's one-way street, after the school bus drop off zone. If you park in the bus loading zone, officers will ticket and it is a hefty fine. Parents/caregivers can park their car for up to **10 minutes** in order to take their children into school or the daycare. It would be a great idea to visit the school or drive by during the summer to familiarize yourself with your drop-off/pick-up zones, route, and routine. We kindly ask that parents **not** use the staff parking lot because of safety reasons. The parking lot is very small and can barely accommodate staff.

Taking the bus

If your child is taking a bus to Dundas, you will have received information about where you and your child will meet the bus on the route to Dundas. Once the bus arrives at Dundas, it is met by a Dundas staff on Boulton Avenue. Children are then escorted to their lines and/or to the front office and classrooms, depending on bus arrival times. Bus routes and stop times will be posted on the school entrance windows on August 27th. If you'd like to take a look at the bus routes and stop times from last

year (2017/2018) they are online here: <https://www.torontoschoolbus.org/bus/routes-and-maps/>. It'll give you a sense of what to expect. In September it is not uncommon for buses to run late and be a little unorganized. The schedule and route will solidify in the first few weeks of school.

Parents/guardians are generally not notified if the bus is running late. Some bus drivers are willing to give out their cell phone number and make arrangements with you to provide updates if they are running late. Talk to your child's bus driver to see if this is a possibility.

Where and What Time is Drop-Off?

Kindergarten students can gather in the school yard that is just for JK and SK students, located on the Boulton Avenue side of the school. The kindie courtyard is fenced off from the bigger kids' playground and has its own smaller play structure. This is where you will bring your child each morning at drop-off.

8:45 a.m. – School bell rings! At the sound of the bell, children will line up according to their classrooms (teachers and ECEs will help with getting lines organized during that first week). The children will then be escorted into the school, line by line. There is a 5-minute window to get your child into the school through these courtyard doors. **During the first week of school there is some flexibility with late arrivals as children learn new routines and some deal with anxiety/emotions at drop-off.**

8:50 a.m. – If you arrive after this time, you may have missed the line ups and will be considered “late.” In this case, please go to the front main entrance of the school on Dundas St. and sign in your child at the office. You can say good-byes there and office staff will guide your child to their classroom.

In Case of Bad Weather

If it is pouring rain or freezing snow, you will notice there is no line up outside. Bring your child straight up to their regular door in the kindie courtyard and they will be let in. The children will line up in the hallway instead of outside. The door is monitored from 8:30 until 8:50 during bad weather.

Note About First Week(s)

There may be some confusion and chaos as teachers, parents, and students all get used to the new routine. Dundas is a rapidly growing and changing school – sometimes there are switches in teachers and/or rooms that may happen leading up to the first day of school or even until the end of September. Do your best to stay calm and know that things will settle down. Comfort your little ones and let them know that the teachers and ECEs are there to help them and take care of them. Many teachers and ECEs will take the time on that first day to say a quick hello to you and to your child and put a name tag on them and welcome them. There is no time on the first day to get into a long history about your child and any special needs they may have. These details should have been captured during your registration process and teachers will be aware of them. If your child is upset, stay with them and comfort them until you can transfer them calmly to an ECE and/or teacher who can comfort them. Be assured that the

administration at Dundas regularly allows for extra staff and ECEs to be there during the first days and weeks to ease the transition as much as possible and assist children to enter into a smooth routine.

First Day(s) Line-Up – FAQ

What do I do if my child is extremely upset?

Stay close, stay calm, stay positive. Know that you are NOT ALONE. Many children get upset on that first day. Don't worry what other parents are thinking about you and/or your child. The best thing is to reassure your child as best you can and follow the teacher's and ECE's lead. They will guide you in the best way to hand off your child. Trust them - they've done this before!

What's the best response to ease my own child and prevent him/her from also getting upset?

Stay close, stay calm, stay positive. If you yourself are feeling anxious, do your best to put on a "happy face." Children easily pick up on anxiety and emotions from their caregiver(s), so if they sense you are uneasy, this will reinforce your child's own fear. If you happen to see a neighbour or recognize a friend, it's a great idea to point out that so-and-so is also here. If they're in the same line-up/classroom, you can suggest they sit together once inside. It is best if good-byes are quick, light, and reassuring: "Bye honey! Have a good day. I love you. I'll (so-and-so will) pick you up after school and then you can tell me all about your day."

Can I come inside with my child?

It is best that parents do not accompany children into the school. Follow the teacher's lead. If the teacher believes it's a good idea for you to come in with your child, they will let you know. Otherwise, expect to say good-bye outside and trust that when you leave your child in the amazing care of the teachers and ECEs, they will be just fine!

Tips for kids with separation anxiety

Follow the teacher's lead

<https://www.todayparent.com/family/how-to-prepare-for-the-first-day-of-kindergarten/>
<https://www.todayparent.com/kids/preschool/4-tips-for-managing-anxiety-in-preschoolers/>

How do I communicate a special need with my child's teacher before the first day of school?

If your child has emotional, academic, intellectual or social/behavioural issues, along with any allergies or any other medical issues, these should all have been captured when you registered for kindergarten at Dundas, and your child's teacher will be aware of them. If you have any doubts about the school's knowledge of the above-mentioned special needs, or if there is something you'd like to communicate to the teacher that may not have been captured in the initial registration documentation back in February, please call or visit the office and let them know your concern as soon as possible before school starts. **The Dundas school office is open until June 28 and re-opens on August 27, 2018.** For minor things (fears, worries, allergies, etc.) the office staff can help you arrange an appointment with your child's teacher during the last week of August. For more

delicate cases, such as identifying a special need over the summer (autism spectrum, speech delay, etc.) please call the office to make an appointment with principal Chatzis as soon as possible.

The Early On Child & Family Centre

The Early On Centre is a great resource, available to all parents and caregivers. It is a place where children ages 0-6 are welcome to learn and play! If you are feeling uneasy after drop off, or worried that your child might need you in those first days, feel free to grab a coffee at the Early On Centre and hang out for a bit. The doors are located right outside the Kindie courtyard. You'll need to flag someone's attention to come open the door (they are locked at all times). The Early On Centre operates Mon-Thurs, 8:45 a.m. - 1:45 p.m.

Click here for more info about Early On Centres: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/find-earlyon-child-and-family-centre>

Morning Routine

After the kids go into the school for attendance, drop off backpacks and sometimes hear/sing O Canada, JK and SK starts with outdoor time all throughout the year. Be sure your child is dressed for the weather. After about 20-30 minutes of outdoor activity, the JK and SK students go back into their rooms and begin "circle time" / "carpet time." This will be some instruction time from the teacher and/or ECE. Then children will often break into smaller groups to learn at various stations around the room. The kindergarten curriculum is play-based so there will be various tables/areas around the room dedicated for dramatic play, math, literacy, science and nature, and more. Please note, for some JK/SK classes, the carpet time occurs first and the outdoor time follows. The order can change throughout the year.

Dundas operates on a Day 1 - 5 schedule so that the schedule remains even if there is a holiday or PA day. In the first week, your child's teacher should send a calendar home that outlines the month ahead and indicates the Day 1 - 5 rotation. Depending on the day and the class, the children rotate through gym, drama/music/dance and library/media literacy. With this calendar, you can help your child to be prepared with the library book or with proper gym shoes, etc. Speak to your child's teacher if you have not received this and if you would like this information.

Many teachers use classroom apps as well that will send you email reminders for gym day or library day so you can make sure your child has the required items.

All JK and SK students will have a nutritious morning snack that is provided by the school. The school asks parents to contribute \$10 per term for the snack items. Look for a form to fill out and an envelope for payment in September.

This is what a typical JK/SK classroom looks like



Lunch Routine

Lunch begins for kindies at 11:15 a.m. If you are picking up your child for lunch, you can meet them at the office. Be sure to have them back at the school office promptly at or before 12:30 p.m.

Otherwise, all JK and SK students eat lunch in their rooms. Your child's ECE will be in the classroom from 11:15 - 11:30 a.m. to help serve lunch, then they are supervised by a paid lunchroom supervisor who has been vetted and hired by the TDSB. This person can help a little bit with students eating but generally speaking children have to be independent. If you know your child will need help with eating, this should be included in registration information. Also, encourage your child to speak up and be able to ask for help. In some cases, Dundas administration will arrange for a special helper from Grade 5 to also assist with the JK and SK kids during lunch. Children are given 35-40 minutes to eat, from 11:15 until approximately 11:50/11:55 a.m. They then start getting ready to go outside for lunch recess: 12:00 - 12:30 p.m.

Hot Lunch Program

Dundas has a hot lunch program available to all children in the school. Parents are asked to pay for this program at the beginning of the year. Within that first week of school, you will receive a letter with more details and the envelope for payment. If you choose to enrol your child in the hot lunch program, you can pay for the entire year or month by month. The cost is \$50 per term (about \$3/day). For the first week, you can send your child with a lunch from home or they can trial the hot lunch program – **hot lunch is offered to all children during the first week**. It's up to you in terms of what you think your child will eat.

Here is the hot lunch menu plan (sample from 2017/2018 year, subject to change for 2018/2019):

MONDAY – sandwiches/wraps

TUESDAY – pasta

WEDNESDAY – meatless (beans/lentils)

THURSDAY – chicken

FRIDAY – fish

All dishes are accompanied by a vegetable and/or fruit along with milk and water.

Veggie options are available for each day.

Dundas Public School is proud to serve over 300 students on a daily basis through our Nutrition Program. We are one of very few schools within the TDSB with a hot lunch program. Ms. Louisa Nixon and Ms. Lina Valker are the cooks/chefs who run the program. They are brilliant, making sure all of the children who choose the hot lunch program get healthy, balanced meals every day. All food is freshly made in-house in our kitchen. On Fridays we have daily seafood delivered to us. Our Nutrition Program is run through the Toronto Foundation for Student Success.

Home Lunch

If you choose to send a lunch from home, keep in mind that **Dundas is a nut-aware school. Also, along with nuts, no sesame seed products are permitted on school property.** Aim for a balanced, nutritious meal of veggies, fruit, protein, and carbs. Some ideas: sandwich or wrap, bagel, croissant, bread sticks, leftovers in a thermos container, cheese cubes, string cheese, pepperoni sticks/slices, yogurt cup/tube/drink, tofu cubes, hummus (no tahini/sesame), chickpeas, hard boiled eggs, mini quiches, cut up fruit, vegetables, applesauce, nut-free crackers, goldfish, dry cereal, nut-free granola bars, muffins, fruit snacks, digestive cookies, etc.! Please do not send juice.

Home lunch should be in a lunch bag and also be as litterless as possible. This means reusable containers and water bottles. If you send an item in a wrapper (granola bar, yogurt tube, cheese stick, for example) or in a ziplock, that's not a problem, just don't be surprised to see the wrapper/bag sent back in your child's lunch kit. Remember to LABEL your child's lunch kit and every single container as well (if you want to see them again)! Be sure your child can open and close all containers and bags by themselves. If they really need help with something, encourage them to be able to ask for help. There is only one staff

in the room during lunch time. In some cases, Dundas administration will arrange for a special helper from Grade 5 to also assist with the JK and SK kids.

Keep in mind that kindie lunch hour is from 11:15 - 12:30 p.m. Your child will have approximately 35 minutes to eat their lunch, from 11:15 - 11:50 a.m., before going outside to play. Pack items that they will be able to eat within that time frame.

If you're interested in looking into a lunch kit option that doesn't involve labeling and opening multiple containers, check out the Yumbox and Bentgo (\$38-\$42), or Planetbox (\$70). They are certainly not cheap but for many parents, worth the investment.

Afternoon Routine

After lunch, children go outside for lunch recess from 12:00 - 12:30 p.m. JK and SK students are again contained in the fenced-in kindergarten school yard. Following this, students are back in their classrooms, with more instruction time from the teacher and ECE. Children will be in large groups (circle time / carpet time) and again break into smaller groups and various learning centres. There is also time for an afternoon snack. **This must be sent from home.** Children will also have media literacy, gym, library, or music (look for Day 1-5 schedule in Sept.).

End of Day – Where and What Time is Pick-Up?

The bell rings at 3:15 p.m. to signal the end of the day. Pick up time for kindergarten is at 3:15. Each Kindie classroom has a door that is accessed along the side of the school that faces the field/track. This is where parents/caregivers and before & after school programs will pick up students at the end of the day. It's quite common for kindie children to be released a few minutes early, before the official bell rings. On the other hand, you may need to wait until 3:15; it depends on the day. Teachers will get all the kids ready and release them to their parent and/or designated person that is there to pick them up. Again, all names of people with the authority to pick up your child must have been provided to the office in the registration package. If someone new is picking up, you must call to the office to inform your teacher before hand. That person must have photo ID to prove they have the same name that has been given. If there are any doubts about who is pick to up your child, the school will not release the child until the office has gotten a hold of a parent/guardian to confirm.

For kindergarten students taking the bus home, an ECE is responsible to pick them up between 3:05 - 3:10 p.m. Kindergarten students in after-school care with Native Child and Family Services will be picked up at 3:10 p.m. Boulton Avenue Childcare Centre and Matthew John Daycare will pick up their kindergarten students at 3:15. Please confirm these pick-up arrangements with your childcare provider BEFORE the start of school.

Picking up your child late

If you are running late and know that you will not be there in time to pick up your child between the 3:15-3:30 window, please call the Dundas office and let them know. Your child (along with backpack, jacket, etc.) will be brought to the office and will wait for you there, under the office staff supervision. When you arrive, please pick up your child from the office.

Picking up your child early

If you need to pick your child up during the day for whatever reason, go to the front office. The staff there will call to your child's class and your child (along with backpack, jacket, etc.) will be brought to meet you.

Typical Daily Schedule (example of what your child may do on a typical day in kindergarten)

8:45 - 8:50 Bell rings, children line up and go inside
Hang up backpacks on hooks in cubbies (inside classroom) / attendance
(8:55 - 9:00 Sing O Canada / listen to morning announcements - *some classes skip this*)

Period 1

8:55 - 9:25 Morning recess outside

Period 2

9:25 - 10:05 Carpet time - story
OR
Media literacy, gym, library, or music (look for Day 1-5 schedule in Sept.)

Period 3

10:20 - 10:50 Learning centres - drawing, writing, lego/blocks, dress-up, reading corner, etc.
OR
Media literacy, gym, library, or music (look for Day 1-5 schedule in Sept.)

Period 4

10:50 - 11:15 Carpet time - story
OR
Media literacy, gym, library, or music (look for Day 1-5 schedule in Sept.)

11:15 - 11:50 Lunch time in classroom
12:00 - 12:30 Outside time / lunch recess

Period 5

12:30 - 1:10 Media literacy, gym, library, or music (look for Day 1-5 schedule in Sept.)

Period 6

1:10 - 1:50 Science, literary, or problem-solving
Media literacy,, gym, library, or music (look for Day 1-5 schedule in Sept.)

1:50 - 2:05 Recess

Period 7

2:05 - 2:45 Home snack + science, math, literacy, or problem-solving

Period 8

2:45 - 3:15 Carpet time - reflective literacy and sharing

3:15 Bell rings to signal the end of the day / official pick-up time

If you'd like more information about the content of the music, gym, library, and/or media literacy program, please contact your child's teacher or ECE and they will put you in touch with the program teacher, who can field your questions.

More Information on Toileting

Your child's teacher is not allowed (by law) to assist children in the bathroom. Your child must be able to use the toilet independently. Please dress your child in clothing that (s)he can remove and pull back up with ease for the purpose of using the toilet. For example, if your child cannot yet do/undo buttons, please don't dress them in pants with buttons. There is one bathroom stall (with one toilet) located in each Kindie classroom. The stall is a half-door that provides privacy but staff can still look in if there is an issue.

Here are some common toileting questions, ANSWERED:

Alone or with help?	Alone
How to wipe bum?	Skill to be learned over summertime
Locks or no locks?	There is a lock on the stall
Bathroom in classroom or not?	Yes
Do kindies use the hallway bathrooms?	Kindies have access to hallway bathrooms
Stools? Training seats?	Stools + training seats are provided
Adult or kid-sized toilets?	Toilets are standard (adult) size
Wet wipes or toilet paper?	Toilet paper is provided in each bathroom

Handwashing

All children must wash their hands after using the washroom. The sink is located just outside the bathroom stall. It is easily accessible and at children's height. Pressing down on the tap/handle will

produce a stream of water that will turn off automatically. Soap is in a dispenser. Paper towels are available for drying hands.

Keeping in Touch With Your Child's Teacher / ECE

There is a lot of fluctuation as to how teachers communicate with parents. Unfortunately there is not an overall guideline that can be set in terms of how all teachers at Dundas will handle specific situations. Some teachers send print outs home in backpacks. Please check your child's backpack for forms, letters, and other information along with completed school work or artwork. Many teachers have an online classroom app that parents must sign up for. It is a closed and secure way for them to send photos of kids at school, updates on what they are doing, and to highlight what forms are coming home that need to be filled in. Teachers can also send a private note to parents through the app if they have an issue or would like a parent to follow up on something while their child is at home. Parents can also send group messages to other parents in the classroom or private notes to the teacher.

Teachers are responsible to address any serious academic or behavioural issues with you when they occur. If there is a serious issue with your child, your teacher will call you or email you and you can arrange a time to talk.

If you want to get in touch with your child's teacher, a quick word is fine at the beginning or end of the day but for anything more substantial, talk to them and ask what is their preferred method of communication. Teachers should be open to face-to-face conversations at a set time or by telephone when they have a break in the day or just after school.

Teachers can be reached via email through this system: `firstname.lastname@tdsb.ca`

Note: Teachers will do their best to respond within a specific timeline – 24 to 48 hrs – when a parent attempts to make contact via email or phone.

If you feel you cannot get a hold of your child's teacher and are concerned, please call the school and set up a time to speak with principal Georgia Chatzis or with vice-principal Kristen McDonald. They are both very responsive by phone and/or by email.

What Will My Child Learn This Year in JK and SK?

The detailed curriculum for full-day kindergarten is available on the Ministry of Education website. You can look it up online and follow along term by term: [The Kindergarten Program, 2016 - Ministry of Education - Ontario.ca](#)

There is not any expectation for homework at all. Some teachers will start a weekly reading log or similar quick tasks that they will send home on Fridays and ask for parents to help with over the weekends. But this varies from teacher to teacher. Otherwise, the first check-in parents have with their

child's teacher and ECE is in the fall for the first progress report. This is an initial "Observation of Learning." The second and third reports, called "Communication of Learning" will outline key goals for achievement: belonging & contributing, self-regulation & well-being, demonstrating literacy & mathematics behaviors, and problem-solving & innovating. See section on Progress Reports / Parent-Teacher Interviews on p. 26 of this handbook for more info.

What if I Feel My Child is Not Advancing Properly?

If you feel your child is struggling, whether academically, emotionally, or socially, or if you are feeling nervous or anxious about your child at school, set up a time to speak with your child's teacher. Depending on your own school history, you may feel awkward. Feel free to bring someone along with you. Teachers should make themselves available for these conversations. Sometimes it is difficult to ascertain if your child is having trouble academically or if they're experiencing normal adjustments to a more structured setting, having more children around, and all the other social and environmental pressures of a formal educational environment.

There is a wide range of ways that teachers address more typical or minor behavioural issues. Many teachers offer various reward programs for individual students or classroom-wide. These are all a combination of individual teaching styles and various techniques that are taught as part of classroom management.

If your teacher is not responsive to your requests to set up a time to meet, please contact principal Chatzis. After that, please follow the TDSB Parent Concern Protocol: <http://www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Policies-Procedures-Forms/Detail/docId/169>

In the case of more formal support for your child's academic needs, teachers should have the professional training and expertise to identify those. Teachers have a professional responsibility to notify parents/guardians and work with them to address those items. The first formal opportunity is the fall progress report. Be sure to attend that interview with your child's teacher, or set up another time where you can speak to your child's teacher and review the progress report in detail. If there are adjustments to be made to support your child, ask your child's teacher what their plan is for your child to be able to improve. All teachers should be able to note the various strengths of students, what they need to work on, and next steps on how to proceed.

In the case that a child needs Special Education support, children will be identified to be assessed by a committee or by other professionals. Unfortunately, sometimes this is a long and complicated process. Once assessed, teachers will work with the student and parents to develop an Individual Education Plan, also known as an IEP. Again, this can also be a long process and is confusing for many parents. The guide below offers detailed information on Special Education support at the Toronto District School Board.

http://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/Elementary/docs/SpecED/Parents_Guide_English.pdf

Should I Put My Child into French Immersion in SK?

There are many reasons why you may want your child to learn French. If you think you may be interested, the school board offers information nights to all JK parents starting in the fall. These events will give more information on the French Immersion program in general as well as more detailed information on how to register and enrol your child for SK. How will you know whether French Immersion is right for your child? Speak to your child's JK teacher and/or ECE to get feedback. Feel free to get in touch with one of the SK French teachers to chat about your concerns and ask questions. There are many things to consider before opting in/out of French Immersion, but there is no way of knowing beforehand whether it's the right thing for your child. Rest assured that if your child starts SK in French they are not "stuck" there. If a student is not thriving and you as a parent feel it's best to put them back into the English stream, this is totally doable! They will more than likely be put back into the same class from their prior JK year.

Communication from Dundas – Getting Updates and Information

In addition to communication from your child's teacher, the school and the parent council also have a range of ways to get in touch with parents.

Weekly Email Updates from Principal Chatzis

Each week, updates are sent by email about major school events and other important information. You will automatically receive these if you have included your correct email address in your school registration information. If you're not receiving updates from "Dundas PS" (notifications@schoolconnectsweb.com), check your junk mail or contact the school office to update your email address.

Hard Copies in Backpack

In some cases, school-wide information is also sent home as a handout in backpacks as well. Teachers will use backpacks to send home classroom information, updates, forms, etc.

Windows

Teachers may utilize the classroom windows to post information or artwork. Check it out at pick up time! Rest assured that any information posted to a window would also have been sent home in a backpack or communicated via email/app.

Dundas PS Website

The school website has general information and links to the weekly emails:
<http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/dundas/>

Weekly Email Communications from Parent Council – the “Dundas Digest”

Parent Council’s weekly email communication is called the Dundas Digest. The Digest will contain information from the school, TDSB, school trustee, and activities of the parent council: when meetings are coming up, fundraising activities, and how money is being spent on school and classroom items. Unfortunately, the parent council does not have access to parent email addresses that have been provided to the school (for privacy reasons under Canadian law). Parents must sign up for the Dundas Digest by emailing: dundasparentcouncil@gmail.com. Your name will then be added to the distribution list for the Dundas Digest.

Parent Council Website

Here you can find Dundas Digest emails, meeting minutes, other information about events, resources for parents, and more. The most updated version of the Dundas Kindergarten Handbook will also be linked on the parent council website: www.dundasparentcouncil.ca

Parent Council Bulletin Board

The parent council also has a dedicated bulletin board on the first floor of the school near the gym where information is posted. They also put up posters around the school for upcoming events and activities.

Facebook

Parents at Dundas are also invited to sign up to access a closed Facebook group, “Dundas Jr. PS Parents.” This is not an official channel of the parent council or the school. Parents are able to post questions, events and other information, as long as it meets general posting guidelines. This is at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/dundasparentcouncil/>

Bulletin Boards

There are bulletin boards lining the hallways, displaying student artwork, activities, and photographs. Come in and check it out!

Parents Who Live Apart – How to Ensure Communication

For partners/parents/guardians who do not live together, please speak to the office staff as well as to your child’s teacher to request that all school and class communication reaches both parents/guardians.

Volunteering at Dundas

In order to ensure the safety of our students, the TDSB now requires all volunteers to obtain a police reference check. So, if you’re interested in volunteering in any capacity with your child’s classroom, it’s a good idea to get a head start on your police check application as **the process can take 2-3 months to complete**. Police reference check forms are available right now at the school office, until the last day of classes, June 28, 2018. The office re-opens on August 27th, 2018. Dundas needs all the volunteers we

can get in order to go on class field trips, and in general, have as many enrichment activities and programs as possible. We ask all parents to please consider getting their police checks done and help us bring as many activities and programs as possible to our students.

Police Reference Check Process:

1. Pick up a blank police reference package at the school office
2. Read all the instructions carefully, and fill the forms completely
3. Attach a money order, or a **certified** cheque in the **exact amount** indicated on the form (this expense is a one-time fee)
4. Bring the completed package, with the money order or **certified** cheque (NO cash or personal cheques) to the office
5. We (Dundas office) will submit your completed form
6. Once your reference check has been completed, the result will be sent to **your home**
7. Once you receive your reference check approval from the police, you must bring your confirmation to the office
8. Once you are entered in to the TDSB system, you can begin to volunteer at the school
9. You will be able to go online and renew your offense declaration on a yearly basis after that

Kindergarten teachers decide which parents can volunteer or accompany on field trips on a first come, first served basis. There are only certain numbers of parent volunteers needed. Sometimes the supply outweighs the demand! If you're interested in volunteering in the classroom, speak to your child's teacher about opportunities and what roles are needed, if any. Perhaps you have a unique skill or area of expertise to offer? Let your child's teacher know and if you'd like to come in and do an activity with the class, most teachers are quite open to it! If you're interested in volunteering at the school, speak to principal Chatzis to find out what opportunities are available and where you might be able to plug in.

Lost & Found

You would be amazed at the type and number of items that end up in the lost and found! If you need to search for lost items, parents/guardians must report to the office. Let the office staff know that you'd like to check the lost and found. They may or may not require you to put on a "visitor" tag. The lost and found room is located off the main floor hallway, about halfway down near to the entrance to the school kitchen. There are shelves and a bin that are all clearly marked.

Please ensure all of your child's items are labelled. This makes it a lot easier for things to be traced back to the correct child/classroom. If your child's item ends up in lost and found, at least you will be able to easily identify it with the label.

Mabel's Labels has partnered with our parent council and a portion of the sale goes to Dundas fundraising efforts. Click on "Support a Fundraiser" button and select Dundas school. Check them out at www.MabelsLabels.com

Dundas regularly donates unclaimed lost and found items before the Winter and March breaks, as well as at the end of the year. The school will send an update home to let parents/guardians know that unclaimed lost and found items will soon be donated and to please come by the school to pick up children's lost things. The items are laid out in the front foyer for easy searching.

Birthdays

All students at Dundas get a special "Happy Birthday" announcement on their birthday during morning announcements. For those with weekend birthdays, they are announced on the Friday before or the Monday following. In addition, children may also get a bookmark with their picture on it from the company that takes the school photos. This varies year to year. Note that often JK/SK students go out for morning recess before the announcements take place, so may not hear their birthday greeting.

If you would like to bring treats in to your child's classroom to celebrate their birthday, please speak to your child's teacher in advance to make arrangements. It is up to the teacher's discretion. There could be issues of allergies that make it difficult to bring in a food item, or there may be other reasons why it may not be possible. There is no school-wide policy on birthday celebrations at this time.

Food / Allergens

Dundas is a "nut aware" school. This means no nuts of any kind are permitted. Also, no sesame seeds. Students who have severe allergies to such food substances are exposed to a severe health risk when such products are consumed in their environment or shared with them. As prevention is the best approach, we ask that you speak with your child about not sharing their snacks or lunches with their classmates and **please do not send food and snacks with nuts or sesame seeds in them.**

Progress Reports / Parent-Teacher Interviews

Progress Reports are sent home in November and the "Communication of Learning" document is sent home in February and June. Parent-teacher interviews take place in the week(s) after the reports are sent home. It's a great opportunity to meet with your child's teacher, ask questions, and find ways to work together to further support your child's success. This first progress report will show the various areas that children have been working on. The templates for these are also available online. Feel free to have a look and familiarize yourself with the terms and phrases that are used: [Report Card Templates - Ministry of Education - Ontario.ca](#)

Safety at Dundas

The safety of students, staff and everyone within the school walls and on the school grounds is our priority. Many safety protocols and procedures are in fact created at the Toronto District School Board head office. The principal at every school holds ultimate responsibility for following all the various regulations that are related to the safety of everyone on site.

Visitors

Anyone entering the school should come in through the main doors at the front. All other doors are locked throughout the day. Parents, TDSB staff, people working on the school all must sign in at the front office and receive a visitor's pass to be worn while they are moving around the school.

Students Leaving School Property During School Hours

Kindie students are not allowed to leave the school grounds unless they are accompanied by a parent/guardian and have been signed out at the office.

Recess

During recess, kindergarten students are contained in the fenced courtyard/play area. For Grades 1 - 5, lower grades are kept on the Boulton side of the school. Older grades do have access to the large field that runs along Dundas during recess time. Please note: As part of the 2018/2019 revitalization project for the Dundas school grounds, this field will be better fenced off from Dundas St. East.

Dogs

All parents should note that there are NO DOGS allowed at any time on any TDSB property across the city, including all the playgrounds, fields, and all areas outside Dundas and within the school. There is an absolute liability that if there was ever any incident where a child was injured by a dog, the school and the board would be open to lawsuits and damages. Therefore, regardless of any protests from responsible dog owners, the TDSB does not allow ANY dogs on their property at any time. Even if the dog is considered friendly, or a great family pet or being on a leash, they are still not allowed on the Dundas grounds at any time.

Lockdown Drills

Dundas is required to hold a practice school lockdown drill at the start of every year. This involves an announcement being made over the PA system within the school that all teachers are to hold and secure their rooms. Teachers would calmly turn off the lights in the classroom and ask children to huddle together depending on the situation/location. Meanwhile, other staff at the school would be locking down all other elements of the school and securing the perimeter of the building. The school may be asked to go into a hold and secure or a school lockdown if there is an incident involving police in the immediate area around Dundas.

Safe Arrival Protocol

ALL PARENTS AND VISITORS MUST REPORT TO THE DUNDAS PS OFFICE

We ask that all parents and visitors to begin their visit at the Dundas office. In the morning, if your child's class has already entered the building (if it's later than 8:50 a.m.), please bring your child to the main office to sign them in. All late students will be escorted to the classroom by two older children or a staff member. It is very important that we adhere to this routine. If you arrive early to pick up your child please report to the office and we will have your child brought down to the office. This way we will keep track of all unidentified adults in the building and ensure the TDSB Safe Arrival Protocol is being followed.

After School Pick-Up Arrangements

It is policy that kindergarten teachers and ECEs must make eye contact with the parent/guardian or childcare provider before handing off a JK/SK child after school. They know and will be able to recognize who is authorized to pick up your child. If there is a change in the arrangement of who is picking up your child, whether a parent instead of daycare, or another parent for a playdate, or grandma, etc., this MUST be communicated to the teacher. Please call the office to let them know about the change. The person will be required to show photo identification. If there are any doubts, the child will not be released until the office gets a hold of the child's parent/guardian to confirm pick-up details.

Dealing with Injuries / Behaviour in Full-Day Kindergarten

There may come a time in JK or SK when your child is either injured by a classmate, or when your child injures a classmate by kicking, hitting, pushing or possibly even biting. This is considered normal as young children at ages 4 and 5 are still learning self-regulation and modifying their behaviours to get along with classmates. That is not to say that these behaviours are tolerated by teachers and/or ECEs.

In any case of a serious injury (in all cases of biting), the children will be sent to the front office for First Aid. This may involve cleaning the cut/wound, application of band-aid, application of ice pack or similar. If necessary, you will receive a phone call from the office to inform you and give you the option to come pick up your child.

If your child is the one who has hurt their friend, they are taken to the office to complete a "Think Sheet". This is an opportunity for them to write and/or draw what happened, what they did and what better choice they should make the next time they are in a conflict or get angry or frustrated. Sometimes these "Think Sheets" are sent home for the parent to sign off on.

In these cases of conflict, most often you will get a call from your teacher at the end of the day letting you know that either your child was injured, so you can look out for any change in mood or behaviour at home. Or you will be called to tell you that your child caused injury so you can speak to him/her about making good decisions and conflict resolution. Many teachers really value the relationship between home and school and would want acceptable behaviour to be reinforced at both places. Teachers are not to reveal who your child hurt or who hurt your child, due to privacy concerns.

In the case that your child falls and hurts his/her head (especially involving the outside climber, etc.), or in a case of another classmate causing injury to the head, the child will be sent to the office for observation/first aid and you will be notified by the front office staff as soon as possible. This is to be aware of concussion or any potential change in behaviour.

If your child continues to be involved in bad behaviour that causes injuries, you will be notified and there may be a need to develop alternative strategies to deal with the misbehaviour with your child's teacher, with the school principal and perhaps with another support staff if needed.

If you notice an injury on your child that you have not been notified about, please contact your child's teacher as soon as possible to speak about it on the phone, by email, or in person at pick-up time. (Probably won't be able to speak about it at morning drop-off). If you are not getting information from your teacher, please contact the school principal to speak about it.

ESL families

The Dundas school community is extremely diverse with a large majority of families reporting they speak a language other than English at home. And statistics from across the entire Toronto District School Board show that more than half of TDSB families speak a language other than English at home.

The full-day kindergarten program has resources to support children who do not speak English to build their communication skills in English. Both kindergarten teachers and ECEs will also be able to provide books in your home language as well if you would like. Once in grade school, Dundas teachers and other support staff will be able to work with your child to learn and speak English. Research shows that maintaining your child's first language has tremendous long-term benefits; the TDSB encourages families to continue speaking and reading with their child in their home language.

Settlement Worker at Dundas

Dundas is very happy to welcome Yan Gu from CultureLink to our community.

"I am very excited to start offering settlement services at Dundas Junior Public School and Queen Alexandra Middle School. My name is Yan GU. I am assigned to work as a Settlement Worker from CultureLink, which is a non-profit community agency, at your school to assist and support newcomer students and their families. I provide one on one individual consultation services, such as how to apply for government funded benefit programs, Permanent Resident application and renewal, Citizenship application, government's letter of interpretation, and filling out different kinds of application forms. In addition, I help you access the information regarding education, English classes, employment, housing, tax, legal, and immigration such as parent visiting visa. If you would like to get these information and need any help, please feel free to contact me at 647-283-0784, or email me by ygu@culturelink.ca. Thank you."

很高兴被派到你的学校来协助新移民学生和他们的父母。我叫顾岩。我是 CultureLink 社区非盈利机构新派到学校的安居辅导员(或叫社工),我可以免费 为你提供一对一的客户服务,包括新移民来到加拿大后如何申请福利,如何更新枫叶卡和公民申请,解读政府信件,填写各种表格,咨询教育,语言班,工作,住房,税务,法律,父母探亲等各方面的信息,还有我会根据需要,定期举办一些讲座,如公民申请和考试,老人房和老人金申请,药物福利,和找工技巧等等。您如有这些方面的需求,请联系我。我的电话是647-2830784,邮箱是ygu@culturelink.ca.谢谢.

Anti-Racism, Equity, & Inclusion

In recent months and years, the Toronto District School Board has had a renewed focus on equity for all students across the education system and this reaches into day-to-day operations for teachers, staff, and students at Dundas.

When we speak of equity, this means that every student should be able to succeed regardless of race, socioeconomic status, (dis)ability, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, immigration status, or any other aspect that makes students unique and diverse. Teachers at Dundas are required to complete training that speaks to moving beyond personal bias, being inclusive, fair and democratic, working against oppression in their classrooms and in their schools, and more. Teachers must be able to identify how they can reach students where they are and establish criteria for their success.

This is especially important for a school like Dundas which is extremely diverse and has teachers and students from nearly every corner of the world, from various socio-economic backgrounds and other wide-ranging aspects of diversity.

The school is responsible to put forward three school goals each year that are decided on by the principal and teachers under the categories of Academic, Equity, and Well-Being. These are tracked throughout the year and reported on to parent council.

Parent council is also required to attend an Equity and Inclusion training each year; this session is mandatory for all executive council members. Parent council is working to be representative of all parents at Dundas. Parent council is committed to offering information and support to all parents in as many ways as possible.

TDSB Equity Policy

The outdated TDSB Equity policy from 1999 was just revised this spring 2018. Check it out here <http://ppf.tdsb.on.ca/uploads/files/live/100/200.pdf>

Bullying

Dundas has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of bullying. Keep in mind, bullying is characterized as repeatedly and intentionally using words or actions against someone or a group of people to cause distress and risk to their well-being. These actions are usually done by people who have more influence or power over someone else, or who want to make someone else feel less powerful or helpless. Every school and Board in Ontario is required to have a comprehensive Bullying Prevention and Intervention plan. Whether the bullying happened at school, between students off school property, or online, if it impacts student safety, the school must investigate and respond to any reports. Dundas also supports the Anti-Bullying week in November as well as Pink Shirt day in April, that is also dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of inclusion and diversity.

Safe & Caring Schools Committee

According to the TDSB, each school must have a Safe and Caring Schools Committee. This team is responsible for fostering a safe, inclusive, and accepting school climate. Team members must include at least one student, at least one parent, one teacher, one non-teaching staff member, one community partner, and the principal. The team works together to ensure the school space is positive and peaceful – the Dundas Code of Conduct is currently being revised. The committee also completes various safety audits that cover physical elements of the school facility, like exterior lighting and secured doors, and may conduct surveys to get their finger on the pulse of Dundas, so-to-speak, in order to get a sense of how students treat each other and what are the common dynamics between students at the school. If you'd like to get involved, feel free to contact principal Chatzis or the parent council and we will make sure you get plugged in.

Dundas Code of Conduct

The Safe and Caring Schools Committee at Dundas is currently updating the Dundas Code of Conduct. Please stay tuned for this document to be available/distributed in the fall of 2018.

Parent Council

Dundas parent council is always looking for more parents to join. This is a group of Dundas parents just like you who volunteer their time and sometimes expertise to help make Dundas the best school it can be. No matter what your experience at school was like when you were young, join the parent council to make your child's school days the time of their life! Parent council can help you to understand the sometimes confusing acronyms and processes of the education system and is a great way to stay in the loop and get involved with the happenings at Dundas. Anyone can join parent council; anyone can nominate themselves or someone else for an executive position in the fall. Stay tuned for more information about the first parent council meeting in early September.

Parent council is the only formal way to provide broad, general feedback to the principal and to the school. If you want to see something changed, get parent council to help. Many changes are slow in coming and require a lot of work - why not share the load? (Of course, parents can approach the principal individually on any matter they choose).

Each year, a new parent council kicks off with elections for all voting members of council as well as elections for the executive members of council (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer). Once the executive is established they will set up various committees to help with specific projects or ongoing coordination of parent council activities: Fundraising (bake sales, fun fair, silent auctions, etc.), Communications, Equity and Inclusion, Parent Engagement, etc.

The parent council meets once a month. All meetings have agenda items that parents can influence and all meeting discussions are minuted with action items. Also, the principal is required to consult with parent council on a number of items including the overall School Improvement Goals, in the areas of Academic, Equity and Overall Well-being, the school budget, and staffing allocations.

In addition, the parent council does a wide range of activities to fundraise throughout the year and we need parent input as to how and where that money should be invested back into the school and to enrich our child's/children's experience while at Dundas. Previous council members voted to upgrade the playground structure, so this year children will see a new structure in place! This year, our focus is on using art to revitalize the Dundas building and grounds (front entrance, lobby, courtyard, etc.). The presentation speaks to the importance of art to establish an engaging and creative space that will facilitate learning for all students at Dundas. Read the proposal presentation here:

<http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/dundas/docs/Art%20%26%20The%20Environment%20at%20Dundas.pdf>

Parent-to-Parent Mentor Program – Get Connected!

The Dundas parent council offers a mentor program where current Dundas parents volunteer to provide their contact information to a new incoming family and be a “go-to” person to answer the new family's questions over the summer before they join the Dundas school community. Please email dundasparentcouncil@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to get involved.

Good to Know

Here are a few helpful items for you to take note of!

Clubs & Activities Available for JK/SK Students

- **Reading Club** – the school library is open every morning from 8:15 - 8:35 a.m. for parents to come in with their children and read to/with them. (Grade 1-5 children are permitted to read or do homework independently, while supervised by the librarian)

- **Running Club** – All Dundas students and their families are welcome to join for the Running Club in the fall and in the spring. For about a month in September/October and again for about a month in April/May, students can come to school at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and run laps around the school track. Students in JK and SK must be accompanied by an adult. Grades 1-5 students need to have a permission slip signed off and sent in and parents can still join if they like. Children receive a popsicle stick for every lap they run and there is a friendly competition between classes for who earns the most sticks. It's a great way to start the day!
- **Art Club** – Tuesdays at lunch, 11:30 - 12:30 p.m.. The day and time are subject to change for 2018/2019, depending on student interest and teacher availability.
- **International Languages Program** – Mandarin, Vietnamese, and Spanish classes are offered by the TDSB on Mondays from 3:20 - 5:50 p.m. Look for a notice to come home in backpacks in September with information about how to register and pay. There is a minimal fee for the year.

Library Book Exchange

When your JK or SK child comes home with a book from the library, they can keep it at home for up to 3 days and are required to bring it back to school on the third day. Teachers will collect the library books and return them on behalf of the children.

Strollers

If you are coming into the school with a stroller, please park it in the front foyer, away from the general movement of traffic through the hall. Another option is to enter through the Early On Centre doors, located just outside the kindie courtyard gates, where is designated stroller parking down one side of the school hallway. Please do not walk through the hallways with a stroller.

Character Development – Monthly Themes

There is a need for family, community, and schools to engage cooperatively to encourage students' learning and maturing as social beings. Throughout the year Dundas focuses on the 10 attributes identified at the TDSB and we encourage parents to reinforce these attributes at home whenever possible.

September – Respect

October – Responsibility

November – Empathy

December - Kindness & Caring

January – Teamwork

February - Fairness

March - Honesty

April - Cooperation

May - Integrity

June - Perseverance

Here is a helpful link with tips for supporting Character Development in the home:

<http://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/grenoble/docs/2016-2017/Ways%20to%20Involve%20Parents.pdf>

Significant Dates / PA Days / Holidays (some specific dates TBA)

September – Respect

First day of class for all students: September 4, 2018

Curriculum Night

Running Club begins

October – Responsibility

No school on October 5, 2018 (PA Day)

First field trip

Picture Day

Thanksgiving

Halloween

November – Empathy

No school on November 16, 2018 (PA Day)

First Progress Report & Parent-Teacher Interviews

Anti-Bullying Week

December – Kindness and Caring

Winter Concert

Last day of school before Winter Break: December 21, 2018

Winter Break (December 24, 2018 - January 4, 2019)

January – Teamwork

First day back to school after Winter Break: January 7, 2019

No school on January 18, 2019 (PA Day)

February – Fairness

Communication of Learning report & Parent-teacher interviews

No school on February 15, 2019 (PA Day)

No school on February 18, 2019 (Family Day)

Kindergarten Registration Month

Chinese New Year Celebration

Chinese Heritage Month

African Heritage Month

Black History Month

March – Honesty

Greek Heritage Month

March Break (March 11 - 15, 2019)

Persian New Year
Earth Hour (March 30, 2019)

April – Co-operation

Pink Shirt Day
Passover
No school on April 19, 2019 (Good Friday)
No school on April 22, 2019 (Easter Monday)
Eastern Orthodox Good Friday
Eastern Orthodox Easter Monday
Earth Day
Jump Rope for Heart Campaign
Latin American Heritage Month
Sikh Heritage Month

May – Integrity

No school on May 20, 2019 (Victoria Day)
Spring Concert
Asian Heritage Month
Jewish Heritage Month

June – Perseverance

No school on June 7, 2019 (PA Day)
Welcome to Kindergarten Info Night for incoming families
Communication of Learning report & Parent-teacher interviews
Pride month
Portuguese Speaking Heritage Month
National Indigenous History Month
National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21, 2019)
Italian Heritage Month
Dundas Fun Fair - fundraiser
Last day of class for elementary students: June 27, 2019

Yearbook / Directory

We would love to put together a Yearbook/Directory of all teachers, ECEs, lunchroom supervisors, office/admin staff, custodians, etc. for the Dundas Kindergarten Handbook in the future. On the Curriculum Night in early September, you will have the opportunity to meet all teachers and be able to put a face to a name. If you still have concerns or need help identifying a teacher, ECE or staff member, please feel free to contact parent council dundasparentcouncil@gmail.com and we will help you out!

School Rules for Parents

Late Arrival: Students who arrive late for school need to enter at the front doors and sign in at the office. They will get a late slip and you can say goodbyes there. They will be escorted to their classroom by a staff person or another classmate. Parents are not to go with their children to the classrooms.

Parent Entry Into the School: All exterior doors to Dundas are locked at all times and are opened only for students to enter/exit at the bells. Parents are not permitted to enter the school at any time through any door other than through the front lobby doors. During school hours, all visitors to the school must ring the buzzer for entry into the school and sign in with the front office. This includes those parents who are volunteering for the school or in a classroom.

Kindergarten Yard: Generally speaking, no adults other than teachers and ECEs are to be in the kindergarten yard once the school day is in session. If you are picking up your child for lunch, you can pick up and drop off at the front office.

Drop-Off by Car: Parents are not to stop or park their cars in the bus loading zone on Boulton just south of Dundas, in the receiving area by the garbage bins, or in the school parking lot. The designated drop off spot for cars is further south on Boulton across from the play structures/climbers. Signs are posted by the City of Toronto.

Indoor Shoes: All year long, students change out of their shoes or boots into inside shoes (must be closed-toe). These stay at the school in their cubbies. If your child is not wearing runners regularly as inside shoes, they should bring runners for gym days.

No Dogs on School Property: According to the policy from the Toronto District School Board, on-leash or off-leash dogs are not permitted on school property at ANY time. This includes evenings and weekends. Signs are posted at all entry points to the school grounds that state this policy. Please be aware that local by-law officers do monitor the schoolyard and grounds from time to time and will ticket those who are violating this policy.

Please note: This is a living document, updated as needed. If you have a hard-copy print-out of the Dundas Kindergarten Handbook, feel free to also visit the Dundas parent council website www.dundasparentcouncil.ca to see it online in its most updated state (and for easy access to links).

Website: dundasparentcouncil.ca
Email: dundasparentcouncil@gmail.com