



SMITHFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

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S. Sidhu-Thomas, Principal D. Zamin, Vice-Principal J. Morrone, Vice-Principal

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Hello again Smithfield MS Families,

Typically, as school years draw to an end, we pause to allow time for reflection. Considering all that has taken place and all that continues to unfold around us, that process seems especially appropriate. This is a unique time in our school's history and in the history of the world.

The future is always unknowable, but this year it seems especially so. The Covid-19 crisis is still with us, there is ongoing economic concern, and many of our families have been affected by the shutdown of Ontario. The events in the United States and in Canada remind us that systemic racism exists at every level of society and that we still have many steps to take to make our world a welcoming place for all. We will continue to listen to and recognize our students' voices and support them in every way possible.

Smithfield MS and the TDSB continue to be committed to equity and inclusion and we acknowledge the importance of addressing anti-Black racism and systemic oppression. This is the world in which we are entrusted to teach your children, and it is incumbent on us to be responsive to their questions, and to share by our words and our actions, a hopeful message and vision for the future. We are united in our commitment to each child's success and the celebration of every child's unique gifts, talents, cultural heritage and race. We are a caring, supportive community, and divisiveness, hatred and bigotry have no place within it. We are, as always, hopeful and optimistic about our future, and grateful for the support of our entire community.

Pride Month

It is incumbent upon all of us to stand up and do whatever it takes to end racism, hate and oppression of all kinds. This comes as we also recognize Pride Month whose origins are too, rooted in confronting hate and oppression against individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQ+ and those with intersecting identities. While Pride Month is widely seen as a celebration, we must also acknowledge the specific mental health issues and barriers for accessing supports faced by the LGBTQ community.

We hope that you will take a moment to read the statement from TDSB Chair Robin Pilkey and Director John Malloy regarding the TDSB's commitment to equity and inclusion. We look forward to continuing to work with students, parents and staff at Smithfield MS to make our

school, our community and our world inclusive spaces that are free from oppression.

<https://bit.ly/2U7Qiib>

Physical distancing has made it difficult to feel connected to each other and to support each other in times of stress and anxiety. I hope you are all finding ways to express your feelings if necessary, taking good care of yourselves and reaching out to the school when and if you need to. Many teachers are hosting google meet sessions and are available to respond to questions and offer support, we encourage students to connect via the Google classroom or by email with their teacher/peers as needed.

Resources and Supports for Mental Health and Well-Being

Residents experiencing stress or crisis and requiring emotional can access the following community resources:

- Distress Centre of Greater Toronto Call 416-408-4357, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Text 45645 between 4 p.m. and midnight Translation is available in many languages for crisis calls only
- Kids Help Phone Call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week Service is available in English and French
- Mental Health TO at 1-866-585-6486 for free phone or video mental health counselling for infants, children, youth and families Monday to Friday 9AM – 7PM.
- **For immediate help, call 9-1-1**

We are all committed to helping and supporting students, please take care during these extraordinary times.

Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

S. Sidhu-Thomas, Principal
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