

Blake News

The Newsletter of
Blake Street Public School
Phone: (416) 393-9415

Blake Street Public School
21 Boulton Avenue, Toronto, ON M4J 1A7
Jennifer Zurba, Principal **Jackilyn Wallace**, Vice Principal
Marc Sprack, Superintendent of Education **Jennifer Story**, School Trustee



As the weeks go on, and the city's count of positive cases rises, we THANK YOU for your ongoing support and commitment to keeping our community safe. You do this by encouraging regular hand washing, limiting your social bubble, keeping your children home when they are sick, and being so responsive when we call to notify your child is well. Keeping our school as safe as possible is everyone's responsibility. Thank you for doing your part!!!

Terry Fox

Yesterday we as a school celebrated the life and contributions of a Canadian Hero: Terry Fox.





It is not too late to donate. All donations can be made on line at

<http://www.terryfox.ca/BlakeStreetPSToronto>

Our UserName is 2020ON5912

English Re-Organization

Following up on the letter sent to you earlier this week by the TDSB about teacher staffing and classroom changes at elementary schools, I am providing you with an important update about the classroom reorganization taking place at our school.

Every September, schools review the actual number of students in each class compared to the initial projected enrolment. Classes are then reorganized, as required. We do our best to plan for the new school year, but there are always factors, such as new or departing students, that affect how classrooms are organized.

Typically, these adjustments are made approximately two weeks into the school year. Because the start of the school year was delayed this September as a result of the pandemic – to September 15 – we are at that two-week point into the resumption of classes when we are ready to reorganize our classrooms. While this is a routine process that happens every school year, adjustments will be more significant this fall as a result of COVID-19, the creation of the Virtual School, students changing their preference for Virtual School or in-person instruction and the importance of keeping class sizes as low as possible for health and safety reasons.

With more students enrolled in the Virtual School and fewer English students than projected, adjustments must be made to ensure that teachers are allocated where students are attending.

As a result of student enrolment at our school, we have lost two teacher allocations in the English stream, which has resulted in the following changes:

- We have combined the three Kindergarten English classes into two classes with 23 students in each.
- We have combined the two grade 1/2 classes to make one grade 1/2 class with 20 students.

- Mr. Tsai's grade 3/4 class (Room 212) has become a grade 2/3 class. As a result, some grade 2 students from the original grade 1/2 classrooms have been moved to this classroom. In addition, the grade 4 students from this original grade 3/4 class have been moved to Mr. Nicolaou's grade 4/5 class in Room 308. Mr. Tsai's new grade 2/3 class will have 18 students.
- Mr. Nicolaou's class remains a grade 4/5, however, because of the additional grade 4s coming into the class from Mr. Tsai's original grade 3/4 class, some grade 5 students from Mr. Nicolaou's class will be moving to Mr. Richman's class which has become a grade 5/6. Both Mr. Nicolaou and Mr. Richman's classrooms will have 22 students.
- Mr. Green 's morning Long Term Occasional Position co-teaching in Rom 308 will end
- Ms. Kagan will be leaving us temporarily to teach virtual school
- Ms. Dymment will move into Ms. Kagan's prep position

Changes to classes at our school will take effect on Tuesday, October 13th, 2020.

While these changes will impact class sizes, please know that these adjustments **will not exceed** the TDSB's original targeted class size limits so that health and safety standards relating to classroom size and social distancing can be maintained.

In addition, this reorganization requires the establishment of new cohorts (groups of students) within our school, including the addition of students who have recently switched from the Virtual School. We have consulted Toronto Public Health (TPH) about these changes and we are taking the following health and safety measures:

- TDSB Student Information Services will keep track of the specific details (impacted students, impacted teachers, specific dates, etc.) of all cohort changes and provide this information to TPH to conduct efficient contact tracing, should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19 in our school.
- Enhanced cleaning will occur prior to the classroom changes taking place.
- We will also continue to ensure mask/face coverings, social distancing, handwashing/sanitizing and daily school and classroom cleaning.

We understand that changing classes and/or teachers may be difficult for students and families, especially during an already challenging school year. Please know that students will continue to be supported as we make this transition. Thank you for your ongoing patience and understanding during this reorganization.

Shortage of Occasional Teachers and Support Staff

As a result of having to fill so many additional needed jobs within virtual schools, our bank of occasional teachers is quite depleted. This has led to regular unfilled occasional teaching jobs. In a regular school year, we would be able to collapse classes, and have students in small groups join other classes for part of the day, however with CVOVID-19 and our need to separate class cohorts, this is not possible. To ensure that the class is supervised, we have had to use our rotary teachers, including special education and prep teachers. It is our hope that after Tuesday's re-organization, which will move out a number of in-school teachers to virtual school, and bump out occasional teachers, that this problem may be solved.

Back to School Confirmation Form

Toronto Public Health has developed a [Back to School Confirmation Form](#) for parents/guardians to sign in the event that their child has a suspected or confirmed illness. The form is to confirm that your child is safe to return to school. Toronto Public Health is not recommending or requiring medical notes for return to school. This form is an option for you to sign off on when sending your child back to school after illness. You may also call the office to inform us.

Safe Arrival

To report your child's absence, please call 416-393-9415 or 1-833-250-2290.

When contacting you to confirm an unexplained absence, the School Messenger system number will appear as 1-833-250-2290. Please make sure to answer the call and acknowledge the absence in order to stop the automated phone calls.

For those celebrating this weekend, we wish you a happy Thanksgiving. A reminder that school is closed on Monday but we look forward to seeing your children back on Tuesday.

Have a wonderful weekend.

Jenn and Jacki

Updates from Toronto Public Health

With Thanksgiving approaching this weekend, here are some reminders to keep everyone as safe as possible. Remember to:

- Wash your hands often and stay home when you are sick
- Keep two meters distancing from others not part of your household
- Wear a mask or face covering in indoor public places
- Wear a mask or face covering when physical distancing is difficult with others that are not part of your household
- Avoid touching your face. Cover your cough or sneeze with inner elbow or a tissue.
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces

If you have friends or relatives travelling to Canada to celebrate the holidays with you, please remember that they are required to quarantine for 14 days.

Smaller, outdoor gatherings are safer than indoors. Reserve close contact to members of your household and essential supports, and keep a physical distance and wear a mask with everyone else. Add a virtual event to include family and friends from out of town and anyone who is feeling unwell. This year, avoid buffet style food service. Instead, serve food on individual plates to avoid passing and touching items.


Notes and Updates from Parent Council

Welcome Blake Families! A special welcome to the many new families that have joined our school this year. We hope that you are starting to feel at home and excited to be a part of such a wonderful school community. Also, a shout-out to our families who have chosen virtual learning during these COVID times - we're here for you!


This week the School Council elected a new Executive to serve for the school year of 2020/21. As a Council, we are committed to diversity, inclusion and fostering community among our families - both in-person and virtual learners. We have a number of initiatives we're keen to get started on, but are always open to hearing new ideas or tackling concerns. Our new Executive is below - we encourage you to find us on the school yard or reach out via email: blakeschoolcouncil.tdsb@gmail.com


For those on facebook, consider joining the Blake St PS Families group. There you will find a wonderful and supportive community forum where information is shared and questions can be answered.


Our next meeting will be held virtually on October 28th at 7pm. There is always an open invitation for all to participate in Council meetings. You choose the level of participation that works for you. If meetings aren't your thing, that's okay! Reach out another way. We want to hear your voice! It truly takes a village to have a school that is spirited and full of life!


	<p>Valerie Laurie Co-Chair</p> <p>Her son, Sebastian, is in Grade 4 with Mme Prakesch and her daughter, Poppy is in Grade 1 in Mme Jang's class. She has participated on School Council for 5 years and finds it an excellent way to have a direct impact on our students' success.</p>
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	<p>Meaghan Phillips-Shiner Co-Chair</p> <p>Her daughter, Cadence, is in Grade 1 with Ms Barr and her son, Harrison, is in JK with Ms Whiteside. This is her third year involved in Council and is looking forward to working with the staff and parents of Blake PS to create a really positive year for all students, those learning face to face and those learning virtually.</p>
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	<p>Dean Kotwal Co-Treasurer</p> <p>His son, Tehm, is in Grade 3 with Mme. Thomas and his daughter, Arya, is in Grade 1 in Mme. O'Sullivan's class. This is his fourth year on School Council and his fourth year being a Co-Treasurer of School Council.</p>
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	<p>Karen Thomson Co-Treasurer</p> <p>Her children attend Mme Dungo's class (Rachel) and Mme Prakesch's class (James). She has been a member of council since Rachel started SK in the first Blake French Immersion class 7 years ago. She has helped coordinate projects such as the Clothing Fair, Halloween Dance, Communications Committee and 2 years as Co-Chair.</p>
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	<p>Melissa Greer Co-Secretary</p> <p>Her daughter is in Grade 1 and her son is in JK - they are both currently enrolled in virtual school. This is Melissa's second year as co-secretary and she is very excited for the opportunity to work with the school council and community.</p>
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	<p>Andrea Gusen Co-Secretary</p> <p>Her daughter Hannah is in grade 5 in Mme. Dungo's class, and her daughter Scarlett is in grade 2 in Mme. Wald's class. Andrea has been actively involved in Council since Hannah was in JK - on the school garden and communications committees and as co-secretary for the last two years.</p>
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Annual Clothing Swap

Donations:

October 13-16th
Drop off pre-sorted clothes and footwear only.

Please make sure your clothes are sorted according to age and size, boots correctly labeled and in bags.
We have very limited time. Please be courteous and pre-sort.
Drop off is at the parking lot Gym Entry off Kiswick Street during school hours – please call the office (416.393.9415) upon arrival and someone will open the door for you.

Refer to map - Red arrow

Last day for donations is Friday the 16th 2:30pm. Clothes need to quarantine for at least 3 days.

For all other items (games, equipment, toys, books...) please visit Blake Street PS Virtual Swap Group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1413500632176268> and post there.
If you need something and feel shy to ask publicly, please message me directly and I will do it for you.

Swap:

October 20th from 9:30am-4pm (rain date October 21st)

Entry is in the backyard where the Kindergarten Playground is – at Kiswick Street.
Exit at Main entrance of school on Boulton. **Please refer to map – Blue arrow.**

Please wear a mask at all times – absolutely no entry without mask.
You will be asked to leave your name and phone number at the entry for tracing according to Public Health guidelines. Paperwork will be stored for 30 days and then destroyed.
You will be asked to use sanitizer upon entry.

No access to the school building, no toilet access.

You will have a 10 min window to "shop". You can enter as many times as you want but you must exit after 10 mins and go back to the end of the line.

Please bring your own bags and make sure you wash the clothes on hot before using them

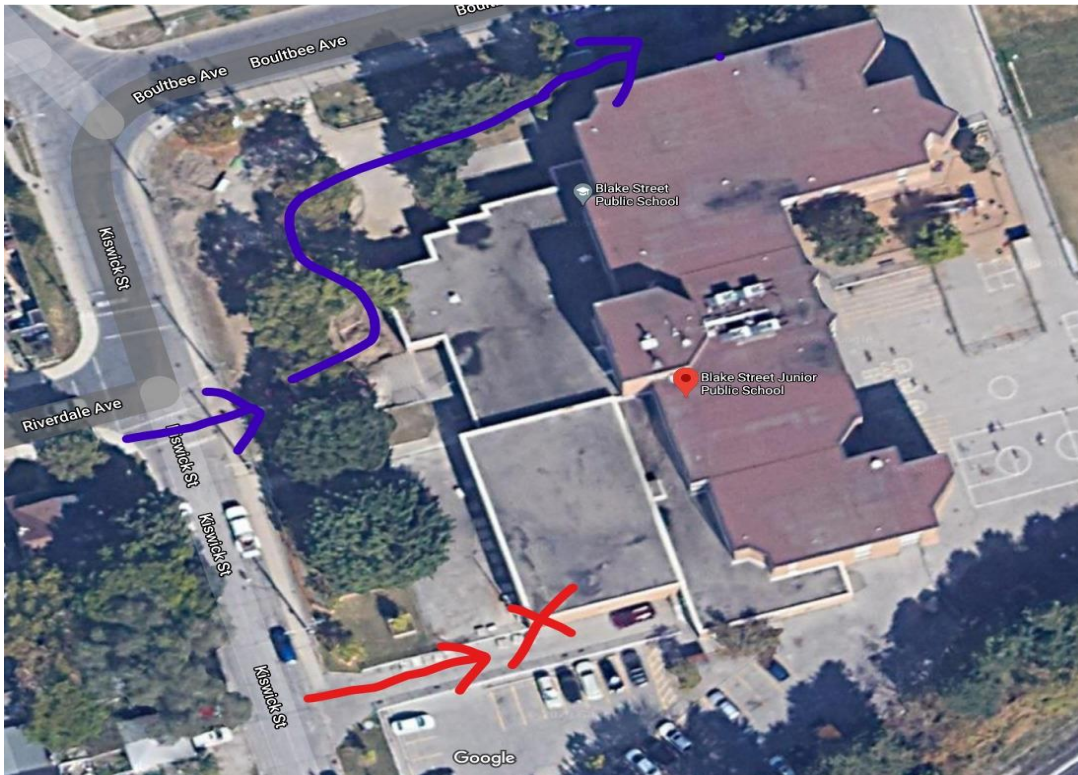
Looking for volunteers:

Sorting - Monday 19th

Swap - Tuesday 20th

Cleanup - Wednesday 21st (bagging & driving to value village)

Please email me at nora.schramek@gmx.com

**October virtual workshops**

We are pleased to offer you these virtual workshops for October. Please click the "register now" button below the workshop you would like to attend.

The Families First team



Talking with your teen about suicide and self-harm (for parents of teens)

This workshop will offer support for caregivers on how to talk with their teens about suicide and self-harm. Caregivers who attend this workshop will learn about the common signs that their teen is thinking about suicide, the factors that can increase (and those that can lower) suicide risk, why teens self-harm, and what to do in crisis situations.

In the spirit of talking openly about suicide and self-harm, there will be an opportunity at the end of this workshop for caregivers to address and specific questions to the presenters.

When: Thursday, Oct. 15; 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Presenters: Gwyneth Hodgins, MSW, RSW, Rebecca Hsiang, MA, RP

Webinar will be run on a videoconferencing platform

Pre-registration is required. Click button below to register.

[Register now](#)



Supporting young children emotionally through trying times (for families/parents of children aged 3 to 6)

Families everywhere have been learning to live a whole new reality. As time goes on, many may feel that it's hard to continue holding things together. How about the little ones? How do we know exactly what their experience of this difficult time might be? What do we do when they start hitting the roof? In this workshop, we will explore ways of supporting young children (and their caregivers) with their big feelings.

When: Tuesday, Oct. 27; 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Presenters: Trina Rosenzweig, RECE, Lisa Ihnat, MA, RP

Webinar will be run on a videoconferencing platform.

Pre-registration is required. Click button below to register.

[Register now](#)

Blake Virtual Parents Community Building

With the launch of virtual classes this week, we are reaching out to all virtual families to help build a sense of community and to stay connected to Blake Street Junior Public School. Currently, there are two ways that we will achieve this.

First, we are going to establish a virtual weekly check-in for parents and children to meet and talk about their experience, identify any needs and to socialize. Our first drop-in meeting will be Monday evening from 6 – 8pm. After that we will be holding drop-in meetings every Wednesday from 6 – 8pm.

It is a drop-in so feel free to join when you're able to (you don't need to stay for the entire meeting) and attend as many or as few as you'd like. **Please email us for the link.**

This week we will be discussing any questions, concerns or needs that you have. We will also be discussing planning a brainstorming meeting to organize both virtual and distanced meet-ups, for those who are comfortable.

Second, we have established a parent liaison. You can reach out whenever you feel you need support, resources or just another Blake parent to talk to. Both Bryanna and Melissa will be acting as liaisons. You can reach out to either of us.

Our hope is that we will be able to strengthen our sense of community and be a support to parents who need it at any stage of their virtual learning.

You can contact us at:

blake.virtualparents@gmail.com

TDSB Remote Learning Support Group

For those looking for additional support on Facebook with virtual learning, this group was initiated by a Blake parent and has grown to over 2,500 members. It is a source of information sharing, resources and support. If you're interested, please request to join.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/366148551446910/?ref=share>

Virtual Swap

Blake has started its very own virtual clothing swap. Please go to Facebook and join. Everyone is welcome. Search: Blake Street PS Virtual Swap.