

D.A. Morrison Middle School



D.A. Morrison

Parent Handbook 2018-2019

"Learn from yesterday. Live for today. Hope for tomorrow."

D.A. Morrison
Middle School

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A Vision for Learning in TDSB

The TDSB has embarked on a Vision for Learning. Under this vision, each school is to engage in the process of determining a learning focus in 3 areas: Achievement, Well Being and Equity.

Achievement

Our students need to be deep thinkers, problem solvers, creators, collaborators, leaders, global citizens, entrepreneurs, and communicators. The global competencies our students require are changing the learning process. Therefore, our students and teachers need to be deeply engaged in the learning process, leading to positive results.

Well-being

Our students need our collective support to be healthy individuals who possess a “positive sense of self, spirit and belonging that we feel when our cognitive, emotional, social and physical needs are being met” (*From the Ontario Ministry of Education discussion paper 2016*). The classroom environment impacts well-being. The relationships our students have with each other and with adults are key, and every student needs peers and a caring adult to turn to as they learn how to deal with life’s challenges. Developing optimism, self-confidence, resilience and a sense of belonging in our students is essential to their success.

We need to promote positive mental health, safe and caring schools, healthy schools that understand the importance of physical health, nutrition, and physical activity, and inclusive schools that are responsive to all as we celebrate the diversity in our communities. Educators need to partner with parents/guardians effectively to support our children. We must strengthen our partnerships

Equity

Our goal is to improve student achievement and well-being for each and every student in the TDSB. All students deserve to graduate as a foundation for the next successful chapter of their lives after high school. In order to fulfill this goal, we will need to work closely with our students and their families as well as our communities to determine what needs to change in order to make this commitment a reality for all TDSB students. This commitment to equity requires that we engage in challenging conversations not only at the system level but at each and every school. At the school level, staff are asked to engage in important dialogues that include some of the following questions:

- What barriers exist in the school that might be keeping students from achieving?
- What bias might persons in the school possess about what certain groups of students are able to achieve?
- What needs to change in terms of the instruction, the environment in the school, and the relationships in the school so that achievement and well-being will improve for all students?
- How might our parents and communities assist us in this endeavour?

**** Source: *A Vision for Learning in TDSB. Our Educator’s Guide to School Improvement and School Effectiveness.***

School Calendar

2018-2019

September 11 and September 13th
September 19th
September 25th
October 4th
October 4th
October 10th
October 5th
October 16th
October 19th
October 19th
November 13th
November 16th *
December 7th
December 17th to 19th
December 19th
December 24th to January 7th
January 18th *
January 24th
February 12th
February 15th *
February 18th
March 4th to March 6th
March 6th to March 8th
March 11th to March 15th *
March 20th to March 22nd
April 29th to May 3rd
April 25th
EQAO
June 10th to June 12th
June 12th to June 14th
June 25th
June 26th

New Family Orientation Nights
Photo Day
School Council Meeting #1
Meet the Teacher Night
Terry Fox Run
School Council Meeting #2
P.A. Day #1
I.E.Ps go home
Grade 8 Choices Information Night
Photo-Retake Day
Progress Reports Go Home
P.A. Day #2
P.A. Day #3
6A Trip to Sheldon
Winter Concert
Winter Holidays-No School
P.A. Day #4
Winter Activity Day
Term 1 Reports go home
P.A. Day #5
Family Day Holiday
6F Trip to Sheldon
6D Trip to Sheldon
March Break
6E Trip to Sheldon
Musical
Open House
May 27th to June 6th
6C Trip to Sheldon
6B Trip to Sheldon
Term 2 Reports go home
Grade 8 Graduation

ALL DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

*DENOTES DAYS WHEN STUDENTS DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL

Introduction

A Letter From the Principal

Dear Parents,

Welcome to a new year at D.A. Morrison. There are a few new staff and features of the school I would like to introduce you to. First, we have new teachers joining us this year. Mr. Lim and Ms. Allan will be joining our Grade 6 team of teachers, Ms. Trialonis and Mr. Suleiman will be teaching Grade 6 French Immersion, and Ms. McNamara one of our Autism classes. We have a new Guidance Counsellor, Ms. Duff, who is taking over for Mr. Lacasse who retired last year. Finally, Ms. Yuhanov will be returning as one of our Lifeguards in the pool and Ms. Piche is a Special Needs Assistant who will be working in our Autism classes.

Continuing this year Grade 8s will be taught a strand of Science in the Tech room. Additionally the Grade 8s will be offered a section of Dance and cooking (as part of the Healthy Living portion of the Health Curriculum) in our D.A. kitchen.

We have a very active School Council, and I would encourage our families to be involved. School Council has its' own blog that lists upcoming events, activities for students and ways to be involved. Links to their blog are listed later in this handbook and on our school website.

Finally, I would like to leave you with these few thoughts. Middle School is about 3 key things: Relationships (learning to navigate these). Learning Skills (how to be successful) and Experiential Learning; different ways and types of learning (athletics, project based learning, inquiries, cooking, building, leadership, music, art, etc). As the year progresses, we'll keep you updated on how we're helping our students with these ways of engaging education

Warm Regards,

Marc Mullan

History of D.A. Morrison

The first school on this site was Danforth Park, which opened in September 1922. By the end of the school year a pool and 12 more rooms were added. Danforth was originally built to accommodate the overflow of students from Secord Public School. By 1935, Danforth Park had 1,435 students, 34 teachers and 1 Principal.

In 1953, Parkside School was completed. Students in grades 1 to 6 were transferred from Danforth Park to Parkside. The remaining students and staff were organized into Oak Park Junior High School.

In 1977, Oak Park was torn down and that site became the playing field for the new building erected at the opposite side of the block. The new school was named D.A. Morrison Junior High to honour Dalton A. Morrison, the longest serving Director of Education in Ontario. He was both the Vice Principal and Principal of the former site.

On February 23rd, 2005, D.A. Morrison Junior High was officially converted to a middle school which now accommodates grades 6, 7 and 8.

School Council 2018-2019

School (Parent) Council

A committed and involved School Council is very important at D.A. Morrison. A new council is elected by the parents at the beginning of each school year. Nomination forms for specific council positions are sent home in advance of the first meeting.

Council raises funds and helps to run several events throughout the year. The School Council also acts as an advisory body and provides support to the school. In past years, this included working with the Superintendent and Trustee to keep up staff ratios, helping to develop a School Profile that is used in choosing a new Principal (as part of the TDSB's policy) and reaching out to the community to help foster better ties between D.A. Morrison and its neighbours.

The following positions form the Council:

The Executive
Chairperson(s)
Treasurer
Secretary

Specific committees, such as a Fundraising or Communications Committee may be developed as issues/needs arise.

School Council meetings happen approximately once a month. They are held at the school, usually in the Library on the third floor. Current issues in the school community are addressed; the Principal gives a detailed update on school happenings; and D.A. Morrison staff provide information about various school programs.

New business may be initiated by any parent. Please discuss your issue with one of the Council Chairpersons beforehand, so that it may appear on the agenda if necessary.

School Council Roles:

Chairperson(s)

- Provides guidance & leadership to the Council, ensuring democratic procedures for decision making and conduct of the Council
- Sets Council meeting dates in consultation with the Principal and Parent Members, prepares agendas & chairs Council meetings

- Maintains record of activity throughout the year
- Maintains contact with Principal, teachers and Council members

Treasurer

- Maintains Council financials including bank account deposits, issuing cheques and preparing financial statements
- Counts money raised and keep records of Council fundraisers
- Prepares budget updates/summaries for meetings

Secretary

- Ensures that agendas and minutes are posted and accessible to the school community
- Keeps minutes of Council meetings
- Organizes refreshments & child care for Council meetings, in consultation with the Principal
- Keep a list of all users and passwords for websites used by council
- Chair Council meetings if Council Chair(s) are absent

Currently, all Council members work together to carry out additional Council tasks such as:

Communication

- Maintains Council blog and Twitter feed
- Emails parents that have opted in to receive Council emails about upcoming Council initiatives and events

Fundraising

- Plans fundraising events which correspond with goals and resources of the school
- Recruits parent volunteers
- Communicates with parents at general meetings regarding fundraising

School/Education Concerns

- Prepares responses to issues relating to education and the school as a whole

Social

- Provides activities and events which encourage community building and D.A. Morrison family interaction such as Potluck Dinners, Bake Sales and support at special events such as the Grade 8 Graduation.

You can follow the School Council blog by clicking on this link:

<https://damorrisoncouncil.wordpress.com>

Parent Concerns

Communication between parents and teachers at D.A. Morrison is a priority. We hope that if there is a concern regarding your child, you will first take it directly to the teacher. If you would like more information or have additional concerns, talk to your school principal. Check online at

<http://www.tdsb.on.ca/ContactUs/StepstoAddressQuestionsConcerns.aspx> for the full TDSB Parent Concern Protocol.

School Code of Conduct

D.A. Morrison's School Code of Conduct

We believe that a full partnership is essential among all members of D.A.'s school environment, including staff, students, volunteers and parents to create a safe and caring environment in which all students may achieve their full potential.

The goals of our behavior code are to foster in all students a sense of responsibility toward themselves, toward others, and toward the physical surroundings. We use the slogan, "D.A. Rocks" to help students and parents remember our Code:

R-Respectful

O-On task

C-Cooperative

K-Know it

S-Safe

Responsibility of Students

Students are expected to:

- ❖ Exercise self-discipline
- ❖ Be polite and respectful toward everyone
- ❖ Comply with school and classroom rules and routines
- ❖ Come to school prepared, bringing all necessary materials and complete all necessary assignments to the best of their ability
- ❖ Resolve conflicts peacefully
- ❖ Take pride in and care for the school environment
- ❖ Be responsible for their behavior on the school premises, on out-of school activities that are part of the school program, and while travelling on a school bus
- ❖ Accept consequences of personal behavior

Responsibility of Staff

Staff are expected to:

- ❖ Establish and maintain a school and classroom environment that is conducive to learning
- ❖ Encourage each student to work to his/her maximum potential
- ❖ Communicate information on the behavior and progress of each student to his/her parents
- ❖ Involve students in the establishment and review of school and classroom rules and routines
- ❖ Ensure that students know and follow school and classroom rules and routines
- ❖ Provide recognition of student achievements
- ❖ Be polite and respectful to students, parents and each other
- ❖ Promote a full partnership among students, families and staff

Responsibility of Parents

- ❖ Get involved with the school through volunteering.
- ❖ Volunteering can include: attending School Council Meetings, helping with field trips, assisting in the classroom, special events (Winter Activity Day, Musical Productions), sitting on committees, etc.
- ❖ Follow and encourage the students to follow, school rules and routines
- ❖ Encourage self-discipline and responsibility at home, school and in the community
- ❖ Ensure that the student attends school regularly and punctually
- ❖ Ensure that the student is prepared for class with appropriate materials, and assignments completed
- ❖ Inform the school of any special circumstances which may affect the student's progress or behavior
- ❖ Be polite and respectful to the staff, students and each other

Consequences and Actions

When deciding how best to address a breach of the Code of Conduct, the following factors are taken into account:

- The type and frequency of the incident
- All the facts, circumstances and individuals involved
- The degree of harm caused to the victim and school community
- The age of the individuals involved
- The underlying causes of the incident (e.g., racism, homophobia)

Consequences should be immediate, fair, consistent and related as closely as possible to the inappropriate behavior: e.g., damage to a classmate's property may require restitution. Consequences may involve counseling by staff, or discussions with other students. Where appropriate, students may choose from among their peers a mediator to help resolve a dispute. Often these methods are sufficient where the inappropriate behavior is of a minor nature.

Where the behavior is of a more serious nature, or continues despite teacher guidance, one or more of the following may occur: contact and / or meeting with parents; behavior contract signed by the teacher, student and parents; in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or community service.

Please be aware that the following serious incidents must be reported to the police and are suspendible actions:

- possession of weapons (e.g., guns, knives)
- threats of serious physical injury
- physical assaults causing bodily harm
- sexual assault
- robbery and extortion
- any hate-motivated violence (e.g., racism, homophobia)
- vandalism causing extensive damage to school property
- bullying

Dress Code

The D.A. Morrison Dress Code was established three years ago, in conjunction with our School Council. Students are reminded of the Code through the Student Agendas, announcements and school wide assemblies. The Dress Code at D.A. is as follows:

1. Clothing covers all undergarments at all times
2. Skirts and Shorts: When arms are extended straight down, the shorts or skirts must not be shorter than the end of the finger tips
3. Tops must meet and cover the midriff at all times.
4. No muscle shirts or tops with very thin straps that expose undergarment straps
5. Hats and other headgear are not permitted in the school building (with the exception of religious headwear). Bandanas are not permitted on any part of school property.
6. Clothing that advertises alcohol, tobacco products or drugs, and any clothing that displays inappropriate messages that contravene the TDSB and/or D.A. Morrison Code of Conduct is not permitted.
7. Clothing, accessories or mode of dress that supports or reflects gang involvement is not permitted.

D.A. Staff 2018-2019

The staff at D.A. Morrison is a group of qualified and dedicated teachers who are deeply committed to the children entrusted in their care.

Mr. James Lim
Grade 6A Core + Grade 7 HSP (English)

Ms. McNamara
ISP (AUT) Grades 6-8

Ms. Sarah Butler
Grade 6B Core + Music

Ms. Mark-Miller
ISP (AUT) Grades 6 -8

Ms. Inglis
Grade 6C Core + Phys Ed+ Dance

Ms. Emes
Music + D.A. Kitchen

Ms. Allan
Grade 6D Core + Grade 6 Science

Mr. Kingston
Phys-Ed

Ms. Trialonis
Grade 6E French Immersion

Ms. Moyer
HSP + Resource

Mr. Suleiman
Grade 6F French Immersion

Mr. Murphy
Visual Arts

Ms. Jones
Grade 6/7 Core French

Ms. Piche (SNA)
Ms. Juman (SNA)

Ms. McMechan
Grade 7A Core + Grade 8 Math

Ms. Molto (CYW)

Ms. Nakamura
Grade 7B Core + ESL

Mr. McDonald (Head Caretaker)
Mr. Roach (Caretaking)
Mr. Andrews (Caretaking)
Mr. Forbes (Caretaking)

Ms. Walker
Grade 7C Core

Ms. McDonald (Lunchroom Supervisor)
Ms. Traikos (Lunchroom Supervisor)
Ms. Kyle (Lunchroom Supervisor)
Ms. Lidgold (Noon Hour Assistant)

Ms. Scarcello
Grade 7F French Immersion

Ms. Chamberlain (Office Administrator)
Ms. Wilmott (Secretary)

Ms. Perovic
Grade 8A Core + French

Mr. Pendleton (Vice Principal)
Mr. Mullan (Principal)

Ms. Harrison
Grade 8B Core + I.T. + Library

Mr. Gowans
Grade 8C Core + HSP

Ms. Parming
Grade 8 French Immersion

General Information and Routines

School Day

8:20 – 8:40 Breakfast Club open
8:50 First bell rings
8:55 School begins
11:31-12:25 Lunch
12:25-12:30 Entry from lunch
12:30 School begins
3:06 School Ends
3:06-6:00 Beyond 3:30 program

*Class websites

* Email-we typically email information out to all parents (who sign up)

*Phone

* Weekly/bi-weekly newsletters

* School Council Blog

* Messages on the sign outside of the school

Parents who drive their child(ren) to school are asked to be on time so that classes can begin their school day together.

Beyond 3:30

As a Model School, D.A. has had the Beyond 3:30 for several years. In this program students receive assistance with homework, engage in sports games, crafts, cooperative activities, cook each day and attend special field trips. This is a free program available to all of our students. Nina Cocomello is the Coordinator of the program. Registration/information forms are available in the main office.

Safe Arrival Program (Absences)

Please call the school (416-394-2400) before 8:55 a.m. if your child is going to be late or absent from school. If you know in advance that your child must leave school before dismissal time, please provide a signed note. Otherwise, please call the school. Students are then required to sign out in the main office. The school will call home if students are not in by 9:30 and we have not heard from you. Please ensure your child arrives to school on time. Students who are late will be required to sign in, make up the time after school and may miss special events/activities if the lateness is habitual. In addition, a meeting with the family may be required if the lateness issues do not improve.

Parent Notices/Communication

Throughout the year, parents will receive notification of upcoming events, activities or assignments by the following methods:

*School website: <http://schools.tdsb.on.ca/damorrison>

Lunch Program

Lunch is scheduled from 11:31 to 12:25 pm. All grade 6 students are required to eat on property. They eat in our school Cafeteria and are supervised by 3 Lunchroom Supervisors. All food (snacks or lunch) must be eaten in the lunchroom and students must sit while eating. Each person is expected to clean up after him/herself.

D.A. Morrison employs a system of lunch passes for students in grades 7 and 8 who wish to leave the premises. Students must have a signed permission form to be allowed to leave property. PLEASE NOTE: Lunch passes can be suspended or revoked due to frequent lates and/or inappropriate behaviour at school. Additionally, students are reminded that while off premises proper conduct is expected and that their actions reflect upon the school in general.

Late Policy

Students arriving late to school must report to the office and obtain a late slip. Parents are reminded to notify the office if a student will be late for any reason. If a student is continuously late, a form letter will go home to parents requesting a meeting with the principal.

Visitors

All visitors to the school must come to the office located off the north parking lot to sign in and out. A visitor's tag must also be worn at all times.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Athletics

Students have the opportunity to enjoy team sports such as volleyball, soccer and basketball with the benefit of participating in tournaments. Students are expected to keep up their academic performance and behave according to our school's standards. If a team member's performance is falling behind, or if his/her behaviour is unacceptable, the classroom or subject teacher will speak to the coach, who, in turn, will speak to the individual student. Failure to improve and comply may result in dismissal from the team.

We also have a house league program, where students can come to the gym at lunch and participate in a variety of sports activities. Typically one lunch is allocated for grade 6 students, grade 7 and grade 8.

Winnit Program

At the start of the school year, each D.A. student receives a Winnit Certificate. Students can earn an achievement sticker for each extra-curricular activity they participate in. Students fill the certificates with the stickers they have earned. Students who fill two or three years of certificates will be eligible for a small trophy or letter of the school.

Spirit Assemblies.

Every two months we host Spirit Assemblies. Each assembly is run by a different group of teachers and focuses on a specific learning skill. Here is the schedule for this year:

Month	Learning Skill	Date
Sept/Oct	Organization	Late October
Nov/Dec	Responsibility/ Initiative	Late December
Jan/Feb	Independent Work	Late Feb
March/April	Collaboration	Late April
May/June	Self-Regulation	Late June

Music

Last year we had an inspiring production of the Lion King Jr. Our staff have decided to produce another (but different) musical this year. Stay tuned for details as the school year progresses. We also have a Winter Concert scheduled for December and an Arts Night in May. Additionally there will be special trips and workshops available for students.

The Geography Fair

Last year was our first time hosting a Geography Fair. We are continuing the tradition this school year. Students in grade 7 will be conducting an Inquiry and sharing their results in a Fair format in late June 2018.

Breakfast Club

Each day the school opens from 8:20 to 8:40 to offer a free Breakfast to students. A different meal is prepared daily by our Breakfast staff that are in according with the Canada Food Guide. All students are welcome.

Special Lunch Days

Twice monthly students have the opportunity to buy either a Pizza Lunch or Sub Lunch. School council organizes this treat for students. Order envelopes go home two weeks before the special lunch days.

Science

For those who love Science we have opportunities to get involved outside of the classroom. We have a Lego Robotics Club, and a weekly Science club (that competes in STEM/Math competitions and have fun creating hands on experiments and projects!).

D.A. Garden

We have a DA garden club! With both a garden outside the school AND grow towers in the school, there are lots of opportunities for those with a "green thumb" to get involved!

Winter Activity Day

Winter Activity Day is an annual tradition here at D.A. Morrison! One day in February each year, students have an opportunity to move out of the school and engage in an interesting activity: Rock Climbing, Skiing, Pottery, Art, Dance, Laser Quest and more.

Student Parliament

Each year students vote for a student parliament. Candidates write speeches which are delivered in front of the entire school. Students vote for their candidates and the voting is conducted very similarly to provincial and federal elections! Successful students help plan dances, spirit days, special activities and monitor spirit points!

Girls Club

The goal of the D.A. Morrison Girls club is to equip girls with the inn-strength, resilience and confidence needed to face the world. Students meet several times a month and plan activities and attend workshops.

Boys Club

Our boys meet several times a month and engage in a variety of activities including games and cooking regularly in the D.A. Kitchen.

Ways to Help Your Child Succeed in Middle School

1. **Attendance.** There is a direct link between success in school and attendance. Students who are absent frequently tend not to be as successful as those that do. Additionally, there may be important reasons why the student does not want to attend-bullying, hard assignments, social problems, etc. It's important you talk with your child and with the school as soon as possible if attendance issues arise.

2. **Attend Meet the Teacher Night,** New Parent Orientation Nights and Parent-Teacher Interview times. Attending these help families become aware of a teacher's expectations and the programs and policies of the school in general.

3. Look at the **school website** and classroom websites where you can find the following information:

- special events
- the school calendar
- upcoming assignments and tests
- notices about extra-curricular activities
- School Council Meeting dates
- copies of the school newsletter

4. **Help with Homework.** Establish a common time each day to tackle daily homework. It could be before or after dinner. When starting homework, encourage your child to start with an easier or more interesting assignment. Then they can try something harder. If possible, have them finish with an easier task. This approach helps them become motivated to start work and leaves them feeling good they accomplished something.

5. **A good breakfast.** A nutritious breakfast energizes students and gets them ready to learn. At D.A Morrison we have a free breakfast program each day from 8:20 to 8:40 in the morning. All students all welcome to have breakfast at school. Either way-breakfast at home or school-is important to fuel up students. It's hard to learn and concentrate on an empty stomach.

6. **Reinforce Organizational skills.** Use class websites and school agendas to teach your child how to schedule activities, upcoming assignments and tests. Perhaps a daily "to do" list might be helpful such as:

1. swim practice
2. walk the dog
3. dinner
4. homework time

7. **Get involved.** Volunteer in the school and/or attend School Council Meetings.

8. **Know your child's friends.**

9. Get to know the **Guidance Counsellor**

10. Encourage your child to be involved in **extra-curricular activities.** D.A. has quite a few!

General Information and Routines

Discipline

