

The Dragon's Lair

October 2021

Administrators' Message

Thank you to our students, parents and staff for all of your support as we worked through our first month of the school year, adjusting to our school routines and expectations. We will continue to make adjustments to our routines as needed and will provide students with ongoing reminders and education around our health and safety protocols. We encourage parents to continue having the same discussions at home with their children as well.

Our school will be hosting our Virtual Curriculum Nights once again this school year, which will take place starting on Monday, October 18th – Wednesday, October 20th. Please see the schedule sent to you via our School Connects email system. Your child's teacher will be sending you an invite to their class' session via email. This is a great way to connect with school staff, learn more about your child's classroom program, the routines and expectations that are in place, and to ask the teacher questions around programming and/or the curriculum.

If your child is attending In Person Learning, remember to check your child's backpack on a regular basis, as forms, and/or notes are sent home with your child throughout the school year. Notices/letters sent home for the entire school will be sent home via email. If a paper copy is needed, it will be sent home with your youngest child only, to help reduce the amount of paper used and the duplication of messages. *All newsletters and monthly calendars will be sent home via the School Connects email system. Should you require a paper copy, please let the office know.

Revised Screening Guidelines

Ensuring the health and safety of our students and staff is a priority and everyone plays a role. The most important thing families can do to help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19, is to screen their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keep them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19. All staff and visitors will also be required to screen themselves before entering a TDSB building.

Before coming to school each day, all students must conduct an active student health screening self-assessment and if, based on your answers your child is clear to come to school, please record the information daily through the paper Health Pass (now on bright pink paper).

Learn more at www.tdsb.on.ca/healthscreening

Ensuring the health and safety of our staff and students is our priority and we all play a role. One of the most important things families can do to help slow the spread of COVID-19 is to screen their children every day using the TDSB Health Pass and keep your child(ren) home if they do not pass the screening checklist.

Thank you for your continued efforts to help keep our school safe and healthy.

Keeping Students Safe – Street Safety

Drivers are reminded to do their part to keep children safe.

Drivers should follow these tips:

- Stop and never pass a school bus when its red lights are flashing.
- Leave space around school buses and avoid blocking school bus loading zones so children can enter and exit safely.
- Be prepared to stop for a school bus at any time, not just during school hours.
- Always obey the rules of the road and watch for children, especially in school zones.
- Stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and school crossings.

Parents can also help keep their children safe by reminding them to be aware of their surroundings when they are around school zones which are quite busy during entry and dismissal times.

Hallowe'en

Hallowe'en provides an opportunity for parents and children to spend time together creating costumes, carving pumpkins, and planning fun Fall based activities.



At school students will be engaging in a variety of activities. On Friday, October 29th, students are welcome to dress up in a costume if they would like to wear one, or they can wear orange or black.

October is Somali Heritage Month at the TDSB

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) proudly recognizes Somali Heritage Month during the month of October. The TDSB has been marking Somali Heritage Month since June 2016, and we continue to expand on the selected theme Educate. Elevate. Excel.

In October 2020, the Government of Ontario proclaimed the Somali Heritage Week Act, which will take place on June 25 through July 1.

“By proclaiming the week of June 25 through July 1 as Somali Heritage Week, the Province of Ontario recognizes the economic, political, social and cultural achievements and contributions of Somali Canadians in all aspects of Ontario society. Like many refugees and immigrants who have made Ontario their home, Somali Canadians are proud to be part of diverse communities across the province.”

Please follow us on Twitter: SomaliHM@TDSB

Islamic Heritage Month – October 2021

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) proudly recognizes Islamic Heritage Month during the month of October since our Board of Trustees passed their motion on June 22, 2016. Our main theme for the month continues to be: Reflect. Celebrate. Learn.

Canadian Islamic Heritage Month has been recognized across our nation since October 2007. Subsequently, since November 2016, the province of Ontario established October as Islamic History Month through the Islamic Heritage Month Act, "proclaiming a month to be Islamic Heritage Month in Ontario will provide all Ontarians, both today and in future generations, with an opportunity to reflect, celebrate, and learn about the rich and longstanding Islamic history in the Province and the diverse roles and contributions of Muslim people in communities across Ontario. This new understanding will in turn help combat anti-Islamic sentiment."

The TDSB Islamic Heritage Month Volunteer Planning Committee initiated a poster created by photographs provided by author Richard A. Awid with the theme History of Early Canadian Muslims. In addition, the TDSB is excited to release an updated version of the TDSB Islamic Heritage Month Resource Guidebook (2021) as it may be used as an educational tool to learn about the Islamic heritage.

During the month of October several Islamic Heritage Month events are being organized for

students, staff and TDSB community members. TDSB students - Grade 7-12 will be invited to attend a virtual event with Bilqis Abdul-Qadir, former American Professional Basketball Player who challenged the International Basketball Federation when informed that she could not participate in the league while wearing a hijab. Bilqis will share the challenges she faced while trying to change this requirement for players.

TDSB community members, students and staff will also be invited to join a virtual event with Master Chef contestant Reem Ahmed and City TV Host Maleeha Sheikh in the upcoming weeks. We will learn about preparing a meal and we'll hear a candid conversation about Islamophobia and what it is like to be Muslim in Canada. Registration will be required and details will be shared soon.

Follow the Islamic Heritage Month Committee on Twitter at - @tdsb_ihm

Lockdown and Fire Drills

At the beginning of each school year, our students and staff prepare for the year ahead by establishing the foundations for a successful year. One of the ways we know we can help students be successful is to create a safe environment in which to learn. Though no one ever wants to see an emergency happen at a school, it is important for school staff to be equipped to deal with those situations, should these occur.

The safety of students and staff is a top priority at our school and to that end, as with all emergency drills, it is essential that we are prepared and understand the importance of procedures that will help ensure the safety of everyone in our school. The TDSB has taken steps to ensure your child's safety while in school. Each school has developed emergency preparedness plans that include steps staff will take in the event of an emergency, how staff will get students away from possible dangers, and how students' families will be contacted.

One aspect of emergency preparedness are the lockdown and fire drills. All schools are required to

conduct a minimum of two lockdown drills and six fire drills each school year. Lockdown drills, like fire drills, are an essential component to ensuring student and staff safety. It is important that all staff and students are prepared and know how to respond in cases of emergencies. The drills last approximately ten minutes and help to ensure that plans are effective and can also help to systematically identify any safety concerns.

Communication is also very important in any emergency situation. The emergency contact information kept on file at the school is essential in helping this happen. It lists who to contact in the event of an emergency and the people who can pick up a student from the school. If you have not yet provided this information to the office or have updates to the information on file (including any updates throughout the school year), please make sure our office staff are given that information as soon as possible.

French Program Application Deadlines

For families interested in the Toronto District School Board's system-wide French Programs, we offer an online process to apply for Early French Immersion (begins in JK and SK, for September 2022 only) and Middle French Immersion (begins in Grade 4). An offer of placement in the program (not a specific school) is guaranteed to all on-time applicants. The timelines for applying for these programs for September 2022 are: Early French Immersion: Applications must be completed online between November 1 and November 26, 2021. Middle French Immersion: Applications must be completed online between January 3 and January 28, 2022. Offers of placement within your chosen program (not a specific school) will be made to all on-time applicants in the weeks following the close of the application window. Families with an older sibling currently in a French program are still required to complete an online application for the new student.

Virtual Information Sessions for the Early French

Immersion application and placement process are available in November on the following dates:

- November 8, 2021 at 7 p.m.
- November 15, 2021 at 10 a.m.
- November 23, 2021 at 7 p.m.

For more information about the Virtual Information Sessions, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary-School/School-Choices/French-Programs/Information-Sessions.

For more information about French programs, the application process and important dates, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/french.

Working Together to Ensure Student Success

In order to ensure the best possible education for your child, it is necessary for them to attend school regularly and to be on time for class. A student's academic progress depends on regular class attendance – whether they are part of In Person or Virtual classes. Students are expected to fully participate in learning opportunities. Research indicates that attendance patterns and attitudes are developed at an early age, so establishing and supporting these expectations at home is very important.



You can help ensure your child's success by:

- being involved in your child's education;
- knowing the school's schedule and ensuring that your child comes to school unless they are sick;
- communicating regularly with classroom teachers (use your child's agenda to communicate with the teacher) or send notes;
- ensuring that your child gets a good night's sleep so that they have the energy they need for the next day.

Let's work together to ensure student success!

Parents and Caregivers As Partners Conference 2021

Join us for a virtual conference and learn strategies to support your child, connect with other parents and hear from our inspirational keynote speaker. The conference will take place on October 16th and 17th.

TDSB is committed to parent, caregiver, and community engagement as an essential element in our shared efforts to improve outcomes for children throughout their lives. Our role is to help build capacity by successfully engaging parents and caregivers, strengthening home-school partnerships, and aligning our collective efforts.

The Parents and Caregivers as Partners Conference 2021 provides an opportunity to highlight innovation and high-impact strategies for partnering, collaborating, and nurturing parents and caregivers' partnerships and alliances. Registration is now open! Learn more at www.parentsaspartners.ca

Punctuality

Learning to be punctual is a skill that students **must** develop in order to be successful at school. It is disruptive for students and teachers when students arrive late to class.



Valuable learning takes place at the very beginning of the morning and afternoon that tardy students miss.

Students that arrive in class after 8:45 a.m. and/or 12:35 p.m. are late. If students are consistently late, the classroom teachers and/or office staff will be following up with parents. If the student continues to arrive at school late, or there are frequent absences (10+), a letter will be sent home to parents from the Principal to further address this area of concern.

Student Safe Arrival Program

Please remember to call 416-396-6200 or 416-396-6201 to report students' late arrivals and absences.



It is important that parents call the school when a student will be late or absent from school.

If your child arrives to school late (after 8:45 a.m. or 12:35 p.m.), please ensure that they go to the office to get a late slip. If your child does not check in at the office when they are late, the School Connects system will call out to your home as the teacher's attendance will indicate that your child is absent.



Student Valuables/ Cell Phones

Parents can always contact their child through the main office if there is an emergency, and therefore students do not need to bring cell phones to school for calling home. Students are encouraged not to bring valuables such as cell phones, electronic devices, jewelry, as well as large quantities of money.

We realize that in some cases students may have cell phones for safety purposes (e.g, for walking home). While on school property; cell phones are to be turned off and placed out of view during the regular school day, on excursions and at extra-curricular and school related activities. Students are responsible for storing their cell phone in a secure location. It is important to understand that **students who bring cell phones and other valuables to school are doing so at their own risk.** The school is not responsible for the replacement of such items that may be damaged, stolen or lost.

Snack Program

Thank you to Mrs. Patel, our Snack Program Coordinator, who will be providing our students

from Kindergarten to Grade 8 with a daily healthy morning snack! **Our Snack Program will begin on Monday, October 18th.** Snack Program is available for any family that wishes to participate in it, you just need to complete the Snack Program form for your child to receive snack.

If you choose to send your own snack for your child, remember that **many students and staff members have life-threatening allergies to certain foods, in particular nuts and nut products.** Please try to send a healthy snack for your child, such as fruits and vegetables.



PLEASE
DO **NOT** SEND NUTS OR
NUT PRODUCTS TO SCHOOL!

Reminder: If your child has health problems of any kind, please inform your child's teacher or office staff immediately so that the necessary health protection steps may be taken, and to ensure everyone's co-operation for a safe learning environment.

Lunch Supervision

Lunch time is a very busy time at our school! If parents are at home during the lunch hour we encourage that students go home for lunch for a break, **students are to return to school right before the entry bell rings which is at 12:30 p.m.** Going home at lunch time is an opportunity for students to take a break from the hustle and bustle of the school day, they are able to take an extended mask break and have a chance to relax with their family while enjoying a nice lunch.

Terry Fox

A great big thank you to all of our students who participated in our annual Terry Fox Run this year!



Much appreciation to Ms. Voltsinis, Ms. Dowling, Ms. Reid and Ms. Rastogi for coordinating this event for our school. If you would like to make a donation to the Terry Fox Foundation, we are encouraging our families do this online.

Steps to Problem Solving

Each week we continue to remind our students of the three steps to problem solving to help them when conflicts arise.

- 1- Tell the person, "Stop! I don't like what you're doing."
- 2- If the problem continues, walk away.
- 3- If the problem still continues, go and find a staff member for help in solving the problem.

These three steps also guide our discussions with students when problems arise. They have been very helpful when students are trying to solve conflicts that occur, as well as when they are reflecting on their actions after a problem has happened.

Problem solving skills need to be supported and worked through with our students and children on an ongoing basis at home. All of us have an important role to play in helping our students (your children) to make good decisions for both themselves and others, and to learn from their mistakes and make better choices the next time. This is an essential part of progressive discipline as well.

School Council

Our School Council nomination forms were emailed to parents in preparation for the 2021-2022 School Council Election.

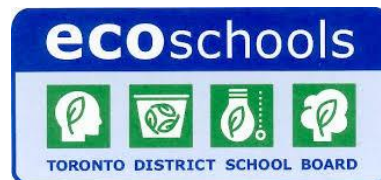


Parents are welcome to attend School Council meetings as often as you can. Meetings take place **monthly**. This school year they will continue to take place virtually. Please look for dates and times on the school calendar and on our school's

Google Calendar located on the landing page of our school website. Our first School Council meeting which includes our election is Tuesday, October 26th at 5:00 p.m. A link will be emailed to parents prior to each meeting date.

Eco Schools

Donwood Park is certified as a **Gold Eco School**. Our school, from



Kindergarten-Grade 8, continues to work on initiatives such as recycling of materials in the classrooms, turning our classroom lights off and technology when it is not in use and following our Boomerang/Litterless Lunch Program goals. Parents can support our Eco initiatives by teaching your children through showing Eco awareness in your homes and supporting our Boomerang Lunch Program.

Suggestions to Parents to Support Boomerang Lunch:

- Encourage your child to eat leftovers as a snack after school if they are still safe to eat.
- Pack sandwiches, fruits and vegetables in reusable plastic containers.
- Help your child pack their own healthy foods that they like.
- Only pack as much food as you know your child will eat.
- Label all containers so that lost items can be returned home.
- Avoid packing drinks that cannot be resealed.

Dates to Remember

Virtual Curriculum Night	October 18 th – 20 th
School Council Meeting	October 26 th
Interview Request Forms Sent Home	November 1 st
Kindergarten Assembly: Empathy	November 2 nd
Interview Request Forms Due Back to School	November 5 th
Interview Confirmation Forms Sent Home	November 9 th
Remembrance Day Assembly	November 11
Progress Reports Sent Home	November 18
Parent-Teacher Interviews	November 18 (evening)
P. A. Day	November 19
Parent-Teacher Interviews	November 19 (morning)
Winter Holidays	Dec. 18-January 2

Principal	Andrea Lane
Vice Principal	Thanasi Dimakas
Superintendent	Kurt McIntosh
Trustee	David Smith
Office Administrator	Sophie Guarnaschelli
Secretary	Michelle Andersen
	Sinead Meechan
Head Caretaker	Peter Panourgias



**DONWOOD PARK
PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Visit our school website at:

www.donwoodpark.ca

Follow us on Twitter at [@TDSB_Donwood](https://twitter.com/TDSB_Donwood)

