



The Dragon's Lair

September 2021



Principal/Vice Principal's Message

We are so happy to see our students, families and staff back at Donwood Park! Approximately 650 students are returning to In Person Learning and approximately 120 students will be attending Donwood Park's Virtual Learning classes. Either way, we are all back together at Donwood Park!

The beginning of each school year is always full of excitement as students return to school, meet their teachers and now they get to reconnect with their friends after being apart. This school year may begin once again with different concerns for both students and parents, given the current pandemic we continue to experience.

The Donwood Park staff recognizes and values the important job we have keeping your children safe while supporting their well-being and academic success. We are all doing our best to prepare for a safe return to school, and your support as always, is critical. We deeply care for our students and want the best for everyone as we move forward with the start of a new school year. Our staff has been working hard to prepare for school start up, establishing school procedures to support student health and safety protocols (e.g., mask expectations, hand sanitizing/hand washing, social distancing) and preparing lessons related to the curriculum. They will also be creating online classrooms for all In Person Learners and will introduce these to students/parents so we are prepared should there be a need to switch to Remote Learning during the school year. We have learned many valuable lessons last school year, which we will use when planning this school year.

We would like to introduce you to the many new permanent staff that have joined our Donwood Family, and to welcome back some returning staff. A warm welcome to Mr. Pears (Grade 2), Mrs. Wickens (Grade 2/3 Virtual), Mr. Davidson (Grade 6), Mr. Lewis (Grade 7/8 Virtual), Mrs. Darwich (Grade 5/6), Mrs. Voltsinis (Resource teacher/Prep delivery), Mrs. Patel (Diagnostic Kindergarten), Mme. Kirkwood-Lazazzera (French), Ms. Anagnostopoulos (Teacher Librarian). Welcome back to some of our staff who were working in the Virtual TDSB School last school year – Ms. Andersen, Mrs. Letcher, Mr. McCrudden, Mrs. Cheng, Ms. Singh, Mrs. Cheral and

Ms. Markland! As well, welcome back to Mrs. Lefebvre who is returning from maternity leave.

As well, this school year we have some Long Term Occasional staff who will be working at our school. A warm welcome back to Ms. Lau (who will be teaching our Grade 4/5 Virtual Class), Ms. Cheung (teaching Grade 1 while Mrs. Hogarth is away), Mr. Mendoza (teaching Grade 3 while Mrs. Lindsay is on maternity leave), Mrs. Siskos (French) and our three Early Childhood Educators joining our Kindergarten team: Ms. Lin, Ms. Sharwin and Ms. Jayanthan.

At the beginning of the school year, we bid a sad farewell to Mr. Preem, our beloved Head Caretaker at Donwood Park. Mr. Preem's dedication and professionalism are very much appreciated and recognized by our Donwood family. He worked tirelessly each day with his team to ensure our school buildings were well taken care of and properly cleaned, maintenance jobs were completed in a timely manner and noted and addressed both small and large maintenance issues constantly. We wish Mr. Preem all the best at his new school and thank him for his years of service at Donwood Park. We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Head Caretaker, Peter Panourgias!

We would like to thank our teachers, support staff, caretakers and our office staff for all of their hard work in preparing for our return to school and the 2021-2022 school year! It takes a village to prepare our two campuses for the start of the school year, and the preparations required for this school year were no different. Each of our staff help to contribute to a smooth school start up for our students and families. We would also like to thank Ms. Markland, Ms. Singh and Ms. Kennepohl for their work with ensuring that the school gardens were cleaned up and given a refresh over the summer!

The school will keep parents/guardians informed of upcoming events/dates, and special interest stories by sending information to you via School Connects (our school wide email system) such as our monthly school calendars and newsletters. Please note that the school calendar and newsletters can also be accessed online on our school website's landing page. As well, our school's

Google Calendar is located on our school website and serves as a reference for families for upcoming school dates and events. Staff will continue to send notices/information home to families in hard copy (paper) format from time to time and by using your child's agenda as a communication tool. We ask that you carefully read all communication that is sent home (electronically and in hard copy), and check your child's backpack daily.

Parent partnerships between home and school are very important for your child's well-being and ongoing success at school. We encourage you to keep open communication with school staff throughout the school year. Ask your child's teacher how you can support your child at home with their learning and well-being, and share concerns you may have in a timely manner in order to problem solve collaboratively. It is through this dialogue that we are able to discuss options for supporting your child, problem solve as a team and strengthen our home-school partnerships, which play a crucial role in your child's well-being and success at school.

**It is important to note that at the end of September we will be watching our enrolment numbers very carefully. The Board will be letting us know if we need to reorganize any of our classes due to low or high numbers. We will keep parents informed of any changes to class assignments that affect your child. If reorganizing is necessary, parents will be notified by letter if their child is moving classes (this will take place the last week of September).

We look forward to a great school year with our wonderful Donwood community of learners, our Donwood families and our dedicated staff!

Daily Health Screening

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. Once students arrive at school, they will enter through their designated doors and a staff member will verify their health assessment has been done that morning. Learn more about the self-assessment and verification process at www.tdsb.on.ca/healthscreening.

A self-assessment for students will be verified two ways:

- A parent/guardian signing the TDSB Student Health Pass (lime green paper) daily and the student showing it to staff at the entry door.
- A parent/guardian verbally telling the teacher that their child has been screened and has passed the screening

The school office will call home for any child without a Health Pass to verify with the parent that the screening was completed that morning and your child passed the screening. *We all need to work together to do our part to keep everyone safe! If your child is sick, you must keep them at home.*

Safe Reopening of Schools

Health and safety is a priority in our schools and the TDSB is taking action to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep schools safe for staff and students.

The TDSB takes its direction from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Toronto Public Health to implement health and safety practices in our schools and workplaces. This year, our approach has been cautious and we are hopeful that we will be able to ease up on practices and protocols with the support of Toronto Public Health, as the year progresses.

Some of the health and safety measures in place for 2021-22 include:

- Encouraging vaccinations (a TDSB Mandatory Vaccine Procedure is also in development)
- Screening for COVID-19 symptoms daily
- Wearing masks
- Improving ventilation
- Practicing physical distancing, proper hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Enhancing cleaning

Learn more about these health and safety measures, as well as about practices and protocols in schools, at www.tdsb.on.ca/returntoschool.

Staff Vaccination

As directed by the Ministry of Education, all TDSB staff are required to disclose their vaccination status <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/School-Year-2021-22/Health-and-Safety/COVID-19-Testing> to the TDSB. Staff who are unvaccinated or do not disclose their vaccination status are required to undergo rapid antigen testing twice weekly as a measure to protect schools from the risk of COVID-19. A TDSB Mandatory Vaccine Procedure is also in development.

Facility Update

We are excited to share that our back field is finally open for our school to use! Our students and staff have been enjoying the field at recesses and during outdoor learning and gym time. It was worth the wait!

Students will continue to access the green spaces in our community for community walks and outdoor learning activities coordinated by their teachers. We are very fortunate to have such lovely ravines, trails and green space in our community and intend to continue to use this to support our programming.

Building Security/Student Safety/ Parent Access/Parent Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

A reminder to parents that we have a secure access system installed at our main entry doors at Donwood Campus as well as our entry door at Highbrook Campus that gives our school staff more control over who enters our school. This means that when you arrive at our school during the school day, the outside doors will be locked and a buzzer system will need to be used to gain access to the school. Using this system will provide a safe and welcoming environment and a single point of entry to both campuses where visitors will be welcomed and assisted by the office staff.

****Parents are encouraged to call the school to book an appointment in advance, as we are required to limit the amount of visitors inside our school buildings as part of our current health and safety practices due to COVID-19.**

Before parents/guardians enter the building they are expected to have conducted a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms. If you are experiencing any of the symptoms, you are not to come to the school. As well, before you enter the building you will be expected to read the screening information and complete a self-screening before entry and wear a mask while you are in the building. Once you enter either of our buildings, there will be self-screening tables that include sanitizer which you are required to use before entry to the office, as well as disposable face masks which you are able to use should you not have your own personal mask. We all need to work together to make this process work, and to keep our 600+ students safe, as well as our staff.

If you are coming to school to pick up your child during the school day (e.g., for an appointment), please call ahead so the office staff can have your child ready at the office with their belongings. Office staff will sign out your child upon your arrival, and will walk them to the front door. This process will help to minimize the amount of people coming into our school buildings.

When dropping off and picking up your child from school at entry and dismissal times, you must wait outside of the school at your child's entry/dismissal door. You will not be able to enter the school and wait in the hallways. Please plan accordingly during inclement weather, as these guidelines will be in place no matter what the weather is as our focus must remain on keeping all of our students and staff safe which means limiting their exposure to other parents and children not in their class and/or cohort. Your

child's teacher will greet and dismiss their students at the same door each day. Parents will be expected to be waiting outside of the entry/exit doors while practicing social distancing protocols and wearing a proper snug mask while on school property. By everyone working together to follow these new procedures, it will greatly assist our staff with ensuring safe entry/dismissal routines for our students and families.

Mask Wearing

Wearing a mask is an important strategy in slowing the spread of COVID-19. In TDSB schools, all students, Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12, are required to wear a mask indoors at school. During recess, if they are unable to maintain physical distance from others outdoors, it is advised that they keep their mask on. If this is not possible, then mask breaks can be taken outside while students are with members of their cohort. Please ensure that your child comes to school with two masks/face coverings each day and bring a breathable bag (paper or cloth) to store masks during outdoor breaks and/or when soiled. While students are encouraged to bring their own masks, our school is equipped with extra masks if your child needs one.

Parents/guardians and other visitors are also required to wear a mask on school property, including during pick-up and drop-off. For more information, read the TDSB Mask Procedure. <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/docs/COVID-19MaskProcedure-PR730-completeset.pdf>

Drop Off/Pick Up of Students

Many of our families live within walking distance to school. We ask that whenever possible you walk your child(ren) to school instead of driving. This helps to reduce traffic congestion around the school during entry and dismissal times. If you do drive your child(ren) to school, we ask that you park on Highbrook Drive in the designated parking areas on the street if you need to park your car. The Drop Off Loop at Donwood Campus is for dropping off and picking up children only, NOT for parking. All our parents/guardians need to work together to continue to make our student drop off and pick up times safe for all of our Donwood families, and to help ensure that things flow as smoothly as possible, especially now with social distancing protocols that also need to be followed.

Our school crossing guard, Edgar, will continue to support students and their families at Dorcot Avenue and Birkdale Road. Our crossing guard will be at the intersection each morning and every day at lunch and after school to assist students and families with safely crossing the street. It is important to remind your children to listen to the instructions that the crossing guard gives them, and it is equally important that parents listen as well.

Student Safe Arrival Program

One measure of keeping students safe is ensuring students have safely arrived at school. If your child is going to be late or absent for any reason, it is important that you contact the office immediately and report the reason for the absence.

Please remember to call 416-396-6200 or call the main office directly to report a student's late arrival or absence. This telephone line is available 24 hours a day.

At the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) we have an automated call-out system that will attempt to contact you if your child is late or absent on a day where the school was not previously informed.

The system call-out works as follows:

Parents/guardians identified in TDSB's Student Information Systems and emergency contacts with priority 1 or 2 will receive a call.

When you receive the call, you are required to listen to the entire message and follow the prompts accordingly.

You will be asked if you are aware or unaware of your child's absence.

If unaware, you will be asked to call the school immediately.



If you are aware of the absence, you will be asked to enter the reason for your child's absence. The following options will be provided for you: illness, doctor's appointment, dentist appointment, family matter, weather and other. **At the end of the message, you will have to press 2 to confirm you received the message. If you do not confirm receipt, you will receive a call on your**

second number that is listed.

If there is no response from a Priority 1 contact, this same process will be followed for Priority 2 contacts.

If there is no contact with either Priority 1 or Priority 2, this entire process will be repeated 3 times in 10 minute intervals.

In the evening, all parents/guardians of students who were late that day will receive a call informing them of their child's tardiness.

With this in mind, it is important that your contact information on file at the office is current and up-to-date. Please let the office know immediately if your contact information or emergency contacts change at any time

throughout the school year. Thank you for your continued cooperation in keeping your child safe and accounted for.

Please remember that regular attendance is essential to the safety, academic success, and well-being of all students. As such, it is important that your child attend school every day unless they are sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms listed on the daily health assessment that you conduct at home each morning.

For more information please visit <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary-School/Caring-Safe-Schools/Safe-Arrival-Program>.

Punctuality

Learning to be punctual is a skill that students **must** develop in order to be successful at school and it is also an important life skill. It is disruptive for both students and teachers when students arrive late to class. Valuable learning takes place at the very beginning of the morning and afternoon that students miss if they arrive late.



Students that arrive in class after 8:45 a.m. or 12:35 p.m. are late and must get a late slip from the office.

Grades 1-8 School Times

School starts	8:40
Recess	10:05-10:20 (Cohort 1) 10:35-10:50 (Cohort 2)
Lunch	11:30-12:30
Recess	1:15-1:30 (Cohort 1) 1:45-2:00 (Cohort 2)
Dismissal	3:20
Remedial Support (at teacher's discretion)	3:20-3:50

Kindergarten School Times

School Starts	8:40
Lunch	11:30-12:30
Dismissal	3:20

****Students who go home for lunch are not to return to school until just before the bell rings at 12:30 p.m. for student entry for the afternoon. This will assist us with managing our cohorts at lunch and with physical distancing.**

Kindergarten students **MUST be supervised by an adult** until they are handed off to their classroom teacher or Early Childhood Educator. They are not to be dropped off and left unsupervised on school property at any time.

Parents are also reminded that all young children must be carefully supervised by their parent/guardian when using the playground and climbing equipment. We highly recommend assisting young children when using the

climbing stairs, slide, etc. Please ensure that children wear proper footwear and clothing, and are being safe at all times.

Snack Program



This year we will continue to run our school Snack Program to provide all of our students with access to healthy and delicious snacks every school day. The Snack Program for the 2021/2022 school year will be run by our Snack Program Coordinator, Mrs. Patel, along with a group of volunteers. The Snack Program will start in mid October. Forms will be sent home soon. Carefully note due dates for returning the forms.

We are pleased to share that as we start up our Snack Program it will be offered for free, thanks to



grants and donations from Toronto Foundation for Student Success and President's Choice! Should parent donations become necessary at a later date, we will send out a communication to our families. Every child is welcome to participate, however, a Snack Program permission form must be completed for each individual child in order for them to be part of the program.

Anaphylaxis: Taking the Necessary Precautions



Although this may or may not affect your child or your child's class directly, we want to raise awareness about this life-threatening

condition. Students who have severe allergies to such food substances are exposed to severe health risks 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 other students and please do not send any snacks or lunches with your child that contain nuts of any kind or shellfish. No latex gloves are to be brought to school or to be worn by people visiting the school at any time.**

Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that can be life threatening. This medical condition can cause a severe reaction to specific foods or other materials, and can result in death within minutes. Although foods such as peanuts, milk, eggs, and sesame seeds are the most common cause of anaphylaxis, insect stings, medicine, or latex can also cause a reaction. In recent years, anaphylaxis has increased dramatically among students. The TDSB is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy learning

environment for all students and works with Toronto Public Health and other partners to ensure student safety.

Sabrina's Law requires every school board to establish and maintain an anaphylactic policy that includes strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents in classrooms and common school areas. The TDSB has procedures for the prevention and management of anaphylactic reactions.

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

Whether you are living with the allergy yourself, caring for someone who is, or concerned about people in your community, more information about life threatening allergies is available on Food Allergy Canada's web site at: <http://foodallergycanada.ca>.

Cell Phones



It is important for parents to understand that you can always contact your child through the main office if there is an emergency, and therefore students, especially those in elementary school, do not need to bring cell phones to school.

Please note that although students may possess personal communication devices while on school property; cell phones shall be turned off and placed out of view during the regular school day, while on excursions and at all extra-curricular and school related activities. It is important to understand that students who bring cell phones to school are doing so at their own risk. The school is not responsible for the replacement of such items should they be stolen or lost, or if they are damaged.

Students are encouraged to make plans for after school activities before coming to school in the morning, and only with their parents' permission. Students should not be going to a friend's house after school without having made that arrangement with their parents before the school day begins.

Lockdown and Fire Drill Practices

At the beginning of each school year, our students and staff prepare for the year ahead by establishing the foundations for a successful school 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 they 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.

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 is 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 10 minutes. They help to ensure that our plans are effective and allow us to systematically identify safety concerns that may exist and to make changes as needed.

Communication is also very important in any emergency situation. The emergency contact information kept on file at the office is important in making this happen. It lists the people who can pick up a student from the school along with contact numbers. Remember to provide this information to the office and your child's teacher as soon as possible, and to update the information throughout the school year as needed.

Orange Shirt Day and National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

September 30th marks Orange Shirt Day & the First National Day of Truth and Reconciliation

Thursday, September 30th is Orange Shirt Day, it also marks the first annual National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, which was passed by legislation this summer to become a federal statutory holiday.

Established in 2013, Orange Shirt Day was inspired by Phyllis Webstad, who was excited to wear her new orange shirt to her first day of school in 1973. However, when she arrived at St. Joseph Mission Residential School, her shirt was taken and never returned. From that day forward, the colour orange, for Phyllis, reminded her of that moment, how her feelings didn't matter, how she felt like she wasn't worth anything and that no one cared for the children who were crying about it that day.

Now, on this day, we recognize the legacy and impact of the residential schools system on First Nations, Métis and Inuit families and communities.

We acknowledge the legacy of residential schools in Canada by wearing orange and we honour the survivors. We remember the thousands of children who were murdered and buried in unmarked graves.

On Thursday, September 30, 2021 wear orange to participate in Orange Shirt Day.

Follow @UIEC_tdsb and @tdsb on Twitter to see how students and staff from across the Toronto District School Board recognize Orange Shirt Day.

For more information, visit the Urban Indigenous Education Centre website. To learn more about Phyllis' story and Orange Shirt Day visit <http://www.orangeshirtday.org>

Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement

The Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement is dedicated to improving the experiences and outcomes for Black students. It aims to be responsive to the voices of Black communities who continue to advocate for systemic change within educational institutions and for dismantling anti-Black racism at the TDSB.

At the recent virtual launch of the Centre of Excellence for Black Student Achievement, the event featured an engaging panel discussion about the Centre's mandate with distinguished academic leaders and community advocates; brilliant student contributions, and an inspirational performance which can be viewed at <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/cebsa-launch>.

TDSB Summer Programming Newsletter

The Summer Newsletter is now available. This edition highlights Culturally Relevant and Responsive Pedagogical (CRRP) programming offered at the TDSB. Summer learning programs provided students and families with rich CRRP alongside strong literacy and numeracy practices. Many students enrolled in the Pre-Kindergarten "Inspire to Excel", Model Schools Summer School and Continuing Education summer programs participated in virtual African Drumming, Storytelling, Spoken Word, Visual Arts and/or Reggaecise activities with community-based arts educators. Students were encouraged to engage in activities that reinforced positive racial identity, honoured the lived experiences of learners and explored methods of creative expression. To view newsletter, visit: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/cebsasummernews>.

School Council



Thank you to our 2020-2021 School Council members for their commitment in supporting our Donwood community and for their valuable input and information sharing as we worked to share information and updates related to school practices throughout the school year and during school closures.

Soon, you will be receiving information regarding the upcoming School Council election. We encourage new members to join the council as everyone has something that they can contribute and share in order to benefit our students and their families.

School Settlement Worker



Maysa Salem, our Settlement Worker, offers support to families in our Donwood community. She will continue to be available to assist parents by phone. If you would like information on learning English, finding a job,

housing for your family, schools, education, health care, the law and/or immigration, please feel free to contact Maysa by phone (647-296-0237) or by email at msalem@ccscan.ca

Visit our school website at: www.donwoodpark.ca



Follow us on Twitter @ **TDSB_Donwood**

KIND WORDS, KIND ACTIONS, HELPING HANDS

Donwood Park Steps to Problem Solving

Most of our families are familiar with our three *Steps to Problem Solving* that we use school wide. These steps were created to support our students in problem solving and provide a step-by-step process for students from Kindergarten right through to Grade 8. Posters are displayed throughout our two campuses, and staff use this process to guide students as well.



THREE STEPS TO PROBLEM SOLVING

1. **Say, "Stop! I don't like what you are doing!"**
- *Clearly communicate to the other person how you are feeling. If the problem continues, go to the next step.*
2. **Walk Away!**
- *If the person with whom you are having problems continues to follow or bother you, go to the next step.*
3. **Ask for help from a staff member or supervisor on duty!**
- *Find the closest teacher or supervisor on duty and ask for help to solve the problem.*



Terry Fox Run – Your Way	September 29
National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	September 30
Virtual Curriculum Night	Dates Coming.....
Teacher Appreciation Day	October 5
Thanksgiving	October 11
Remembrance Day	November 11
Parent-Teacher Interviews	November 18 (evening)
P. A. Day	November 19
Parent Teacher Interviews	November 19 (morning)
Winter Holidays	December 18-January 2

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

