



The Dragon's Lair

September 2022



Principal/Vice Principals' Message

We are so happy to see our students, families and staff back at Donwood Park for another school year! The beginning of each school year is always full of excitement as students return to school, meet their teachers and reconnect with their friends after the summer holidays. We are looking forward to a stable school year ahead, given what we have all experienced over the past two and a half years with the pandemic.

The Donwood Park staff recognizes and values the important job we have keeping your children safe and supporting their well-being and academic success. We have learned many valuable lessons over the past two years and we understand the importance of our students and families being able to connect with each other once again in person – these connections and relationships are so important to everyone's well-being and mental health. We are looking forward to offering various co-curricular experiences for our students and family events throughout the school year.

Over the summer there have been some staffing updates that have taken place. We would like to thank Ms. Lewis (Educational Assistant) for all of her hard work and her dedication and support to our students at Donwood Park over the last several years! Ms. Lewis is moving on to another school this coming school year and we know she will be greatly missed by the students she worked with, staff and parents. As well, Mrs. Wickens and Mrs. Lindsay (formerly Ms. Boyle) will be moving on to continue their teaching careers in Durham. We thank them for their support and the work they did while they were with us at Donwood Park and we wish them all the best in their future endeavors.

We would like to introduce you to some new staff that have joined our Donwood Family, and to welcome back some returning staff. A warm welcome to Mrs. Perera, who has joined our Donwood Park administration team as a Vice Principal. We will now have two Vice Principals supporting our students, families and staff! As well, we welcome the following educators to our staff: Ms. Davis (Educational Assistant working with Mrs. Reid and Mrs. Anagnostopoulos), Ms. Seunarine (Early Childhood Educator working with Mr. McCrudden), Ms. Whyte

(teaching our Grade 5/6 Virtual class) and Mrs. Maier (teaching French in the afternoons). We are excited to welcome back Ms. Kennepohl, Ms. Anagnostopoulos and Ms. Davis (yes, a second Ms. Davis)! As well, we are welcoming some Long Term Occasional staff who will be working at our school. A warm welcome back to Ms. Cheung (teaching Grade 2 until Mrs. Jabaralli returns), Mr. Mendoza (teaching Grade 4), and Ms. Sathiyathan (teaching Grade 3/4 with Ms. Markland).

We would like to thank our teachers, support staff, caretakers and our office staff for all of their hard work preparing for the 2022-2023 school year! It takes a village to prepare our two campuses for the start of the school year, and each of our staff plays a significant role in contributing to a smooth school start up for our students and families.

The school will keep parents/guardians informed of upcoming events/dates, and other important information by sending information to you via School Messenger (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 anticipate that we will need to make some changes in our Grade 1-3 classes due to high numbers and 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 on either Thursday, September 29th or Friday, September 30th, and classroom moves will happen on Tuesday, October 3rd.

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/Rapid Antigen Test Kits

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. All staff and visitors are expected to screen themselves before entering our school. Learn more about the daily screening process at <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/994c-Screening-Questionnaire-Child-Care-Day-Camp-School.pdf>

The school office will call home if your child is not feeling well and will provide information on when your child can return to school based on the new screening tool guidelines from Toronto Public Health. Rapid Antigen Test kits are available in our offices upon request. *We all need to work together to do our part!*

Facility Update

Over the summer, the revitalization of our paved play areas began. This work will be continuing until the project is finished this Fall. We are excited to have new asphalt, and are looking forward to having new trees for additional shaded areas, sitting areas for students, playground line games, a brand new 3 hoop basketball net and a designated lined area for the wall ball games that many students love to play at recess times. We know our students will love the new additions to our outdoor space as well!

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 doors 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.

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.

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.

When dropping off and picking up your child from school at entry and dismissal times, please wait outside of the school at your child's entry/dismissal door and plan accordingly during inclement weather. Your child's teacher will greet and dismiss their students at the same door each day. By everyone working together to follow these routines, it will greatly assist our staff with ensuring safe entry/dismissal routines for our students and families.

Drop Off/Pick Up of Students



Almost all 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 (do not park in the Bus Drop Off/Pick Up zone, or on the opposite side of the street as this is illegal).

The Drop Off Loop at Donwood Campus is for dropping off and picking up children only, it is NOT meant for parking.

All of 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.

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 model this for their children as well,

Road Safety

It is back to school time and we would like to remind drivers to slow down in school zones.

In recent years, TDSB staff has been working closely with the City of Toronto's Transportation Services, Toronto Public Health and other community partners to improve road safety for children and youth. In 2017, the TDSB launched its Traffic Safety Program (TSP) which helps schools identify travel issues and develop workable solutions. The TSP program aligns with the City of Toronto's Vision Zero Road Safety Plan, which seeks to reduce the number of traffic-related deaths and serious injuries on Toronto's roads.

Together, we can keep school zones safe! To learn more about road safety, please visit: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Road-Safety>.

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 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.



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 assists us with supervision of students who stay for lunch.**

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 2022/2023 school year will be run by our Snack Program Coordinator, Mrs. Patel, along with a group of volunteers. The Snack Program will start on Tuesday, October 11th. Permission forms have been sent home with the First Day Package that families received. 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 the 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 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.



School Council

Thank you to our 2021-2022 School Council members for their commitment in supporting our Donwood community as we worked together to share

information and updates related to our school community and thought of new and creative ways to fundraise for our school with the goal of celebrating and showing our school pride with the Donwood Merch fundraiser. We are looking forward to continuing to work together this school year!

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 this school year by phone and in person. 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

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

Friday, September 30th is Orange Shirt Day, it also marks the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, which was passed by legislation last 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 Friday, September 30th students, staff and family members are invited to 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>

Pedestrian Safety Tips

Children under ten should be accompanied by adults or older children when crossing the street. At this age, their judgment and perceptual skills are still not fully developed, and they often eagerly try to cross streets on their own in order to demonstrate some independence. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/2ETzMO5>.



Teach your children the rules of the road - start when they are young. Think of it as gradually training your children about safety until all the connections are in place. By the time your child reaches age ten, and can act more independently, the road safety rules will be second nature.

Teach your children how to cross the street safely. Teach them to stop (before stepping onto the road), look left, right and left again, and listen for traffic before stepping out into the street. Teach them to wait until the street is clear and to keep looking until they have crossed the street. They should also look the driver in the eye before crossing. Listening to crossing guards, like our school crossing guard Edgar, is also very important to help keep our students safe on their way to and from school.

Teach your children to recognize pedestrian crossing signals but not rely on them. Before crossing, children should also be sure the traffic has stopped. Remind them to continue across if the light changes to "Don't Walk" while they are in the crosswalk. You should also teach your children to be extra alert when crossing at a corner with no traffic lights.

Children need to know that they need to stop at driveways, alleys and areas without curbs and to never run out onto the street, even if a ball or a toy goes into the street.

Teaching children about the dangers of crossing the street between parked cars or when not at a corner are also important. Children should cross only at corners and

pedestrian crosswalks, not diagonally or between parked cars. Whenever possible they should walk on the sidewalk. In areas without sidewalks, teach children to walk as far away from the road as possible, facing approaching traffic (when there is no choice but to walk on the road).

Teach children that playing games at railway crossings or around trains can be deadly. The only way to cross railway tracks is to use designated railway crossings.

Follow the same rules that you want your child to follow. You may want to cut across the street in the middle of the block, but you want your child to learn to cross at the intersection. Be a good role model.

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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 to 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.



Dates to Remember

Grade 1-8 Assembly	September 9
Caring & Safe Schools Wk	September 12-23
Kindergarten Assembly	September 16
Terry Fox Run	September 22
Terry Fox Run – Raindate	September 23
Truth and Reconciliation Day & Orange Shirt Day	September 30
World Teachers’ Day	October 5
School Picture Day	October 6
Curriculum Night	October 6
P.A. Day	October 7
Thanksgiving	October 10
Scholastic Book Fair	October 24-28
Photo Re-takes (a.m.)	November 1
Interview Request Forms Sent Home	November 1
Interview Confirmation Forms Sent Home	November 10
Remembrance Day	November 11
Report Cards Sent Home	November 16
Parent-Teacher Interviews	November 17 (evening)
P. A. Day	November 18
Parent Teacher Interviews	November 18 (morning)
P.A. Day	December 2
Winter Holidays	December 24-January 8

Principal	Andrea Lane
Vice Principal	Thanasi Dimakas
Vice Principal	Brandi Perera
Superintendent	Jacqueline Spence
Trustee	Aleem Punja
Office Administrator	Sophie Guarnaschelli
Secretary	Michelle Andersen
Secretary (a.m.)	Sinead Meechan
Head Caretaker	Peter Panourgias



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Visit our school website at: www.donwoodpark.ca

KIND WORDS, KIND ACTIONS, HELPING HANDS