

Welcome to the 2023-2024 School Year!

September is one of my favourite times of the year. A new school year presents new possibilities to explore and the beginning of exciting things to learn, and experience. There is so much you have to look forward to as a student: new topics that pique your interest, new friendships to make and new things you learn about yourself and the world around you.

And learning doesn't just happen in the classroom. This year, I encourage you to think about one or two new ways you want to get involved. Maybe it's joining a new club or athletic activity, challenging yourself to develop a new study habit, or collaborating with staff and peers to make your school a place where all students truly feel they belong and matter. Student leadership and student voice make TDSB schools better for all of us.



Trying your best at school is important, but you can only do that if you feel good physically and mentally. The first few days of school in September still make us all nervous and excited: students and educators both. There are times during the school year where you may feel nervous, worried, lonely or sad, and that's normal. Everyone experiences those emotions. There are so many people who care about you and are there to support you through the school year. Reach out to your teacher, your family or the other caring adults and staff members you trust, who will listen and find ways to support you.

Every student is a valuable member of your school community. You bring strengths, talents and interests that enrich those around you, and we will do everything we can to support you with your goals this school year. So, dream big!

I wish you the very best for a joyful and successful year ahead.

Ms. Russell-Rawlins
Director of Education

School Year Calendar

The first day of classes for all students is September 5, 2023.

The last day of classes for elementary students is June 28, 2024.

The last day of classes for secondary students is June 26, 2024.

Professional Activity Days

Elementary

- October 6, 2023
- November 17, 2023
- December 8, 2023
- January 19, 2024
- February 16, 2024
- April 19, 2024
- June 7, 2024

Secondary

- October 6, 2023
- November 17, 2023
- February 1, 2024
- February 16, 2024
- April 19, 2024
- June 27, 2024
- June 28, 2024

Statutory Holidays

Labour Day: September 4, 2023

Thanksgiving: October 9, 2023

Winter Break: December 25, 2023 – January 5, 2024 (inclusive)

Family Day: February 19, 2024

Mid-Winter Break: March 11 – 15, 2024

Good Friday: March 29, 2024

Easter Monday: April 1, 2024

Victoria Day: May 20, 2024

Creating Positive and Mentally Healthy Schools

Creating mentally healthy spaces that are safe, inclusive, positive and accepting of all students is a priority in the TDSB.

A school should be a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. A positive and mentally healthy school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviours and interactions.

Part of providing a positive and mentally healthy school climate is also ensuring equity is at the foundation of everything we do for students. This includes, but is not limited to, removing barriers, and creating access and opportunity for our students. By doing so, schools are ensuring each student has all the tools, resources, supports and opportunities they need to thrive.

What makes a positive school climate?

- All students, parents/guardians/caregivers and staff members feel safe, comfortable, affirmed, and accepted
- Principles of equity and inclusive education are embedded in the learning environment
- Mentally healthy and respectful relationships are promoted among all members of the school community
- Students are encouraged to be leaders and positive role models
- Parents/guardians/caregivers and community members are actively engaged
- Positive behaviour is reinforced
- Students are given opportunities to develop relationships that are free of discrimination, harassment, racism and oppression
- There is a culture of high expectations to help students reach their full potential
- Diversity is respected and valued



Bullying, Discipline and Reporting

The TDSB takes bullying seriously. Every student has the right to feel safe and welcome at school, and be treated with respect, dignity and understanding. All students and staff have responsibility for contributing to an environment where everyone's human rights are respected in school.

As a system, we focus efforts on prevention and creating a welcoming school community. Staff and students are educated on what bullying looks like and how to report.

If you hear, see, or experience any of the following, report it. Speak with a caring adult, talk to your principal and/or call the Student Safety Line.

- name calling or threats;
- racist, discriminatory or hateful remarks;
- unwelcome remarks or slurs;
- obscene gestures or jokes;
- unwanted touching or sexual bullying;
- online harassment;
- derogatory or offensive materials;
- threats of outing someone;
- intimidation or physical violence; or,
- anything else that negatively affects an individual or group.

All school staff are required to report serious incidents that could lead to suspension or expulsion to the school principal or vice-principal. When a student has been harmed, the principal must also notify the parents/guardians/caregivers of all the students involved.

In the event of bullying, we provide support for the students who have been bullied and who engaged in bullying behaviours, as well as those who have been impacted in other ways. By working together with staff, students and community, we are able to address inappropriate student behaviour and build strategies that promote and foster positive behaviours.

**Student
SAFETY LINE**
416-395-SAFE(7233)
416-620-9711 (TTY)
www.tdsb.on.ca/safetyline



KidsHelpPhone.ca
1 800 668 6868

Kids Help Phone

Human Rights Accommodation – Exceptions to Rules, Extra Help & Support

The TDSB is committed to supporting accommodation requests based on human rights needs. These are requests to make changes so that you can fully participate and be included at the TDSB. Accommodations reduce or remove barriers related to disability, religious needs, gender identity, and other protected identities. Please speak with a teacher, principal, vice-principal, or guidance counsellor to discuss your needs. More information can be found at www.tdsb.on.ca/about-us/human-rights.

Reporting Incidents of Racism, Hate or Discrimination

The TDSB is committed to providing a safe, respectful, equitable, accessible, and inclusive learning environment free of harassment and discrimination. Anyone in the TDSB (including students, parents/guardians/caregivers and community members) who witnesses or becomes aware of discrimination, racism, bias or hate should report it to a TDSB employee or supervisor (including a teacher, principal, vice-principal, or guidance counsellor). Learn more about how to report or file a complaint at www.tdsb.on.ca/about-us/human-rights.

Student Dress Policy

The Board-wide Student Dress Policy supports learning environments that are safe, equitable, welcoming and inclusive, and recognizes that decisions about dress reflect individual expression of identity, socio-cultural norms, and economic factors which influence students' health and well-being. Students may attend school and school-related functions in dress of their choice that conforms to system standards that respect the Board's intent to sustain a community that is positive, anti-oppressive, equitable, accepting and inclusive of a diverse range of social and cultural identities.

Read the complete Student Dress Policy (P042), including the system standards, by visiting www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Your-School-Day/Student-Dress.

Communicating Concerns (parent concern protocol)

The TDSB Parent Concern Protocol (PR505) is a tool for parents/guardians/caregivers to address school and classroom concerns. The protocol confirms the responsibility of the principal, superintendent and Trustee in providing advice, direction or decision-making when a parent/guardian/caregiver has a concern.

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Step One

Classroom Teacher

The first place to go about any classroom-related question or concern is your classroom teacher.

They can help you with:

- Any questions about the classroom
- Classroom rules and consequences
- Homework and assignments

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Step Two

School Principal

If you would like more information or if you have questions that are beyond the classroom, talk to your school principal. They can help with:

- Concerns about an individual school
- Student registration
- Student schedules
- Student suspensions
- Report card concerns
- Classroom concerns
- Code of Conduct
- Safety and security
- Budget and fundraising
- School Council

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Step Three

School Superintendents

Superintendents are responsible for a Network of Schools. They support school staff and can be contacted if you have questions that have not been answered or for help with:

- Alternate attendance request
- Suspension appeals

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Step Four

Trustees

Trustees are your elected community officials. They are available to help you with the following areas of the TDSB:

- Concerns about your community
- Ideas and suggestions for the Board
- Items on Board Agenda
- Board policies under review
- Board budget
- Collective bargaining

Chart of Consequences of Inappropriate Student Behaviour*

SUSPENSIONS A principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at a school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate (Education Act s.306 (1)).	Principal May Issue Suspension	Notify Police	
		May	Shall
1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person*	1-19 Days		x
2. Possessing alcohol, illegal drugs or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	1-19 Days		x
3. Being under the influence of alcohol or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis	1-19 Days	x	
4. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority*	1-19 Days	N/A	N/A
5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school*	1-19 Days		x
6. Bullying*	1-19 Days	x	
<i>* Any activity listed in section 306(1) motivated by hate, bias or prejudice based on the prohibited grounds of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and gender identity and expression will be considered suspendable under section 310(1) of the Education Act.</i>			

SUSPENSIONS A principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at a school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate (Education Act s.306 (1)7).	Principal May Issue Suspension	Notify Police	
		May	Shall
1. Willful destruction of school property; vandalism causing damage to school or Board property or property located on school or Board premises*	1-19 Days	x	
2. Use of profane or improper language*	1-19 Days	N/A	
3. Use of tobacco*	1-19 Days	x	
4. Theft*	1-19 Days	x	
5. Aiding or inciting harmful behaviour*	1-19 Days	x	
6. Physical assault*	1-19 Days	x	
7. Being under the influence of illegal drugs*	1-19 Days	x	
8. Fighting*	1-19 Days	x	
9. Possession or misuse of any harmful substances*	1-19 Days	x	
10. Extortion*	1-19 Days		x
11. Inappropriate use of electronic communications or media devices*	1-19 Days	x	
12. An act considered by the school's Principal to be a breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct*	1-19 Days	x	
13. Immunization	20 Days	N/A	N/A
<i>* Any activity listed in section 306(1) motivated by hate, bias or prejudice based on the prohibited grounds of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and gender identity and expression will be considered suspendable under section 310(1) of the Education Act.</i>			

SUSPENSIONS PENDING POSSIBLE EXPULSION A principal shall suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at a school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate (Education Act s.310 (1)). After the suspension is issued an investigation will be conducted by the principal within five (5) school days.	Principal May Issue Suspension	Notify Police	
		May	Shall
1. Possessing a weapon, including a firearm	1-20 Days		x
2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person	1-20 Days		x
3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner	1-20 Days		x
4. Committing sexual assault (refer to Board Policy P045: Dealing With Abuse and Neglect of Students)	1-20 Days		x
5. Trafficking in weapons or illegal drugs	1-20 Days		x
6. Committing robbery	1-20 Days		x
7. Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor	1-20 Days		x
7.1 Bullying if, i. the pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying and, ii. The pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.	1-20 Days	x	x
7.2 Any activity listed in section 306(1) motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or any other similar factor	1-20 Days	x	x

SUSPENSIONS PENDING POSSIBLE EXPULSION A principal shall suspend a pupil if he or she believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at a school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate (Education Act s.310 (1)8. After the suspension is issued an investigation will be conducted by the principal within five (5) school days.	Principal May Issue Suspension	Notify Police	
		May	Shall
1. Possession of an explosive substance	1-20 Days		x
2. Sexual harassment	1-20 Days	x	
3. Hate-motivated occurrences	1-20 Days		x
4. Distribution of hate material	1-20 Days	x	
5. Racial harassment	1-20 Days	x	
6. An act considered by the Principal to be a serious breach of the Board's or school's code of conduct	1-20 Days		x
7. Trafficking in cannabis	1-20 Days		x
8. Extortions	1-20 Days		x

*subject to change

Note: The TDSB has implemented Retention Timelines. For information related to these timelines, please see PR 697 Promoting Positive School Climate.

Code of Conduct

At the TDSB, we encourage a standard of behaviour for all students, employees, parents/guardians/caregivers, permit holders and community members whether online or in person to:

- Ensure that all members of the school community, especially people in positions of authority, are treated with respect and dignity;
- Promote responsible citizenship by encouraging appropriate participation in the civic life of the school community;
- Maintain an environment where conflict and difference can be addressed in a manner characterized by respect and civility;
- Discourage all forms of discrimination, racism and oppression;
- Encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict;
- Promote the safety of people in schools;
- Discourage the use of alcohol and illegal drugs; and,
- Prevent bullying in schools.

Read the complete TDSB Code of Conduct (PR585) at www.tdsb.on.ca.

Code of Online Conduct

All students are expected to comply with the TDSB Acceptable Use Policy (P088) and the corresponding procedure, Code of Online Conduct (PR571), which protects the rights and safety of students and staff. All TDSB rules apply when using TDSB computing devices, connections, online systems and resources through a TDSB computing device or network. The Board has the right to monitor use of these systems, tools and resources. The Student and School Codes of Conduct also apply to social media.

Learning with Technology

Technology is used in classrooms to engage, enhance and support student learning. All TDSB students are provided with an account that enables access to the TDSB's technology resources including wireless network access and a variety of digital learning tools such as Google Classroom, Brightspace and the Virtual Library. This account is intended for educational purposes only and is not to be shared with anyone.

Students may choose to bring their own devices, such as smartphones and laptops, to school. It is important, however, to ensure that technology is used appropriately and responsibly and does not interfere with learning. Social media can enhance learning when used in a positive way, but also has a permanency. It is important to remember that online behaviour matters. As part of digital literacy, students will be taught strategies to engage responsibly on social media platforms.

Literacy and Numeracy Programs Outside of the School Day

Literacy and numeracy programs are available to elementary students who require support with reading, writing or math to build their skills and understanding. These programs occur outside of the regular school day and focus on acquiring the tools and confidence required to be successful. Through the elementary summer program, all students from Kindergarten to Grade 8 can enhance numeracy and literacy skills through creative, active and locally-driven programming. For more information, please contact your child's school.

International Languages Elementary & African Heritage Program

The International Languages Elementary Program combines language and culture learning with engaging language skill focused activities like group writing, guided reading, games, songs, dance, storytelling, and arts for students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. No language background knowledge is necessary. The African Heritage Program connects students to the contributions, histories, legacies, cultures and traditions of people of African descent through inquiry and experiential learning. For more information, please visit www.ileprograms.ca.

Future-Ready Learning Through Global Competencies

Global Competencies and deep learning through technology form a foundation of the TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan. Improving student achievement, equity and well-being, as well as strengthening literacy and numeracy skills, can be developed explicitly through a variety of teaching and learning processes as part of student learning in all subjects of the curriculum. Global Competencies prepare students to navigate through the dynamic modern world and provide the ability to thrive with a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of themselves and their communities, as well as their impact on local and global communities.

TDSB Virtual Library

The TDSB Virtual Library provides online access to a collection of digital resources that support learning for all students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Available 24/7 at school and home, it is a great starting place for any learning as well as reading for fun. Investigate the 'Read Watch Learn' button to find: eBooks, encyclopedias, educational videos, and information portals for inquiry and research. To search for resources by curriculum area, click the 'Find' button and select the subject and grade of interest.

Most TDSB Virtual Library resources include accessibility features, translation tools and are compatible with TDSB assistive technology tools. To access the TDSB Virtual Library, visit www.tdsb.on.ca/library. TDSB staff and students can access required passwords through the orange 'Passwords' button when logged into TDSB credentials. Ask your school's teacher-librarian if you need help or have questions about using the TDSB Virtual Library.

Create an Allergen-Safe Environment

For anaphylactic students, allergies can cause serious health concerns. If your child has an allergy or if you need to be given special medication throughout the day, speak with your principal about developing a safety plan for the health concern.

Student Mental Health and Well-Being

Student mental health and well-being is an important part of student success and a priority at the TDSB. At school, feeling safe, engaged and honouring identity and student voice all contribute to a positive sense of well-being. Equity, mental health and well-being are interconnected and our priority is to centre identity affirming and culturally responsive and relevant resources and practices to all students and families from an anti-oppressive and anti-racist stance. Students need our collective support to be healthy individuals which includes positive and strong relationships students have with each other and adults.



Finding Help When You Need It

For students who need additional support, there are many resources. You can connect with a teacher or principal as they are a well-positioned partner who can share what they notice during the time your child is in school. You can also contact any of the Managers of Professional Support Services at www.tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/Professional-Support-Services/Contact-Us.

This team is here to support student success by offering a wide range of identity affirming and culturally relevant services, such as individual or group counselling, as well as connecting students, parents/guardians/caregivers with community resources.

Need Help Now?

Kids Help Phone

1-800-668-6868

kidshelpphone.ca

Distress Centres of Toronto
@DC_TO

www.torontodistresscentre.com

What's Up Walk-In

www.whatsupwalkin.ca

Culturally Responsive Community Supports

www.tdsb.on.ca/Culturally-Responsive-and-Relevant-Resources

Getting Involved in Your School Community

Parent/guardian/caregiver engagement is an important part of student achievement and well-being. When schools, families and communities work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer and enjoy school more.

There are many opportunities for parents/guardians/caregivers and families to get involved, including:

- Connecting and communicating with your child's teacher or Community Support Worker (where applicable)
- Participating in the local school council
- Volunteering in a school
- Taking part in a Community Advisory Committee

Learn more about each of these ways to be involved in your school community through your school principal or by visiting www.tdsb.on.ca/Community/How-to-Get-Involved.

