



George Syme Community School Handbook

2025-2026

A Message From the Principal

I am excited to introduce myself! My name is Karen Naik, and I am the principal of George Syme Community School. I am looking forward to teaching and learning with your children and building relationships with you! Together we are going to collaborate to bring the best teaching and learning to our students and community.

Here is some information about me! I've been a principal for 12 years at various schools in the Toronto, Peel and Halton District School Boards. Prior to that, I was a TDSB teacher for 10 years. I'm excited to be back leading in Toronto schools while bringing my diverse experiences to the George Syme community. My leadership includes bringing an awareness of equity while dismantling oppressive structures for all students and families to access learning spaces and be successful. I also put processes and guidelines in place that reflect the TDSB, its students and the diverse needs of our school.

As an educator, I value reading, and have experience with data-driven instruction to move student achievement forward. I put appropriate supports in place to create a kind and caring learning atmosphere for all. I believe in continuous learning, improvement and providing resources for learning while building the capacity of educators and caregivers to meet the needs of our diverse students.

This year, as we build our George Syme Community School, we look forward to an engaging school year with teaching, learning, and engaging extracurricular activities for all students to become involved in. I look forward to learning and leading with you!

Together, let's bring our best to George Syme Community School!

George Syme Staff

English

JK/SK Kindergarten

Ms. Slack & Ms. Vigneswaramoorthy
Ms. Papa and Ms. Aslanadis
Ms. McLeod

Primary

Ms. Chislett - Grade 1
Ms. Hylton - Grade 1/2A
Ms. Dine - Grade 1/2B
Ms. Shaikh - Grade 2/3A
Ms. Coy - Grade 2/3 B
Mr. Stoia - Grade 3/4A

Junior

Ms. Kiroaska-Grade 4/5A
Ms. Srigaran - Grade 4/5B (AM)
Ms. Grzegorzcyk - Grade 4/5B (PM)
Ms Ruetter -Grade 5/6A
Ms. Bent - Grade 6/7A

Intermediate

Mr. Hogg - Grade 7/8A
Ms. Bianchi -Grade 7/8B

French

JK/SK Kindergarten - French

Mr. Smith/Ms. Khaddouj
Ms. Cowper/Ms .Amo

Primary

Ms. Lachapelle- Grade 1/2
Ms. Colin - Grade 2/3

Junior

Mr. Ouardi - Grade 4/5

Junior/Intermediate

Ms. Burtch - Grade 6/7/8

PREP SUBJECTS

Music - Ms. Hebert
PhysEd and Health - Mr. Grogan
Core French - Mr. Mozaffari
STEM - Mr. Gulamhusein

LUNCH SUPERVISORS

Ms. Mariapen, Ms. Date
Ms. Choudhury, Ms. Haji-Noor,
Ms. Islam and Ms. Hewitt.

RESOURCE

ESL/MART Resource -Ms. Soodeen
Ms. Osborne /ESL - Ms. Lee

LIBRARY

Librarian -Ms. Dawood

SUPPORT STAFF

SNA -Ms. Lawani
SNA -Mr. Mokonen

OFFICE STAFF

Office Administrator -Ms. Tekpeki
Secretary -Ms. Velji

CARETAKING STAFF

Head Caretaker -Ms. Marco
PM Caretaker -Mr. Malate

Important Dates and Information

PA Days

(No School)

September 27 October 11

November 15 November 29

January 17 February 14 June 6

Dates to Note

Sept. 3 First Day of School

Oct. 14 Thanksgiving

Dec 23 - Jan 3 Winter Break

Feb 17 Family day

Mar 10-14 March Break

April 18 Good Friday

April 21 Easter Monday

May 19 Victoria Day

June 27 Last day of School

George Syme Contact Information

Address

69 Pritchard Ave ,
York, Ontario
M6N 1T6
Telephone 416-394-2340

Email

Principal: karen.naik@tdsb.on.ca

Vice-Principal:

angela.jannetta@tdsb.on.ca

Office Staff

Mavis Tekpeki:

mavis.tekpeki@tdsb.on.ca

Salima Velji: salima.velji@tdsb.on.ca

Websites

School Site:

<https://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/georgesym>
e/ Toronto District School Board
(TDSB): www.tdsb.on.ca

Office hours

Office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4 p.m

Arriving to School on Time



Developing good habits by arriving at school on time supports the academic achievement and the well being of all students.

For times when that is not possible, please refer to the below guidelines.

Arriving Late:

If your child/ren arrives after 9:15am, bring them into the office to get a late slip.

This will prevent the system from calling home.

Early Pick Up:

When coming to pick up your child early:

1. Try to email the teacher beforehand to let them know so they can have your child ready and not interrupt class time
2. Come to the office and we will call the classroom and the teacher will send them to the office..

Daily Schedule

9:00-9:15 Outside Supervision

9:13-9:15 Student Entry

9:15-9:45 Period 1

9:45-10:25 Period 2

10:25-10:35 RECESS

10:35-10:37 Student Entry

10:37-11:17 Period 3 11:17-11:57

Period 4 11:57-12:22 Lunch -

Eating

12:22-12:50 Lunch - Outside

12:47-12:50 Student Entry

12:50-1:30 Period 5

1:30-2:10 Period 6 2:10-2:25

RECESS 2:23-2:25 Student

Entry

2:25-3:05 Period 7

3:05-3:35 Period 8

3:35-3:50 Dismissal/ Outdoor supervision

Visiting the School

We kindly request that ALL VISITORS come directly to the office when you arrive.

If you have an appointment with someone in the school, or have arrived to volunteer, please sign in at the office and obtain your visitor or volunteer lanyard.

Thank you for helping to keep the school safe.





Lunch Procedures

Going Home for Lunch: If your child goes home for lunch, please pick them up outside the main doors by the office at 11:57am. Students in grades 6 to 8 who go home for lunch must have a signed lunch form. If you need this form, please come to the office. All students who are leaving the premises for lunch must **sign out and back in on the table outside the office**. When returning from lunch, please drop your child off in the playground. All students must return to school by 12:50 p.m. Students who eat lunch at school are not to leave school property during lunch hour.

Staying at School for Lunch: Lunch hour is from 12:00-12:50. Students will be supervised by lunchtime supervisors (LRS) and staff. Lunchtime Supervisors are responsible for more than one class. Therefore, it is very important for students to follow the lunch time expectations and safety rules.. Please support your child/ren with understanding the expectations at lunch.

All students eat lunch from 12:00am-12:22 and go outside for recess from 12:23-12:50pm



WE ARE A NUT-FREE SCHOOL - Please send a nut-free lunch and snack and pack your child's lunch in reusable containers when possible! All waste should be taken home for disposal.

Promoting A Positive School Climate



Progressive Discipline

George Syme uses a continuum of intervention, supports and consequences to address inappropriate student behaviours and builds upon strategies that promote positive behavior. When disciplinary action is required, it is applied within the framework of being corrective, restorative and supportive rather than punitive. Disciplinary action takes into account sensitivity to diversity, cultural and special education needs while keeping in mind the ministry and board policies on anti-racism, ethno-cultural equity and antidiscrimination education.

Bullying Prevention and Intervention

Bullying (including cyber-bullying) is typically repeated behaviour (physical, verbal, electronic, written where: the behavior causes harm, fear, distress to another individual (including physical, psychological , social or academic harm) and where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

At George Syme, we are educating our students to identify different forms of bullying, through a whole school approach. Students learn awareness, empathy, positive leadership and that bullying is unacceptable at our school.

Promoting A Positive School Climate

Protecting & Promoting Human Rights and Addressing Discrimination at George Syme

Discrimination: the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

What can you do if discrimination happens?

Talk to your child – Remind your child that they have a right to learn without discrimination. Affirm their different identities and abilities. If you or your child needs support, reach out to your school or community for resources that are available to help you. Remind your child that they should not discriminate against anyone.

Tell us - Report the incident to your child's teacher or school principal.

Learn more - TDSB policies and procedures ([Parent Concern Protocol, Caring and Safe Schools policy](#)) have more information about how to raise an issue or concern, and what the TDSB must do to address it.

TDSB Code of Conduct

The following behaviours are not acceptable on TDSB property:

Violence, harmful or threatening acts, Possessing a weapon, Bullying or intimidation Verbal abuse,
Possessing, using or trafficking illegal drugs, unauthorized prescription drugs or cigarettes

Consequences:

The following list of consequences or interventions is intended to help students develop self-discipline and to promote positive behaviours. Inappropriate behaviour will result in one or more of the following consequences being applied, depending on the circumstances and age of the student.

*Encouraging talk and problem solving *Community service

*Apology *Restitution

*Class discussion/meeting *Consultation with TDSB Safe Schools Advisor *Parental contact

*Suspension from an activity, class, school *Reprimand/warning *Possible police involvement

*Remediation, restorative circle



Personal Electronic Devices (PEDs)

The TDSB has new policies for the use of cellphones and personal electronic devices on school property.

If a student brings a personal device to school, they must power it off immediately, upon entering the building.

While in the classroom setting, cell phones and PEDs should be used for **only educational purposes with permission and supervision of the teacher.**

Accessing social media, taking videos/photos and posting them onto the web is prohibited.

Cell phones and PEDs cannot be used during transitions or washroom breaks.

When on school property, students are not permitted to use their cell phones PEDs during the lunch hour. Failure to abide by these rules will result in the loss of these privileges, or other measures as appropriate to the situation. Please note, that the school cannot take responsibility for the loss, damage or theft of electronic devices.

Please see the full TDSB policy [HERE](#)

TDSB Dress Code

All students:

- Must wear a top and bottom layer of clothing of opaque material.
- May wear tops that expose arms, shoulders, stomachs, midriff, neck lines, cleavage and straps but must cover the nipples.
- May wear bottoms that expose legs, thighs and hips and expose straps and waistbands, but must cover the groin and buttocks.
- May wear any headwear that does not obscure the face.
- May wear dress requirements to support a creed practices and similar human rights accommodations.

- May not wear tops that expose nipples.
- May not wear bottoms that expose the groin and buttocks.
- May not wear any headwear that obscures the face.
- May not wear undergarments as outerwear.
- May not wear anything that promotes or symbolizes drugs, alcohol, illegal activity, hate or discrimination, profanity, pornography; or that incites violence or harassment; or threatens health and safety.

EXPRESS YOURSELF AND RESPECT OUR SHARED SPACES



• **Tops:** shirt, T-shirt, sweater, vest, midriff-baring shirt, tank top, spaghetti straps, halter tops, tube top, backless top

• **Bottoms:** pants, jeans, sweatpants, shorts, skirts, dresses, leggings, fitted pants, yoga pants, ripped jeans

• **Headwear (cannot cover your face):** hats, du-rags, bandanas, hoodies, creed-based headwear



Anything that promotes or symbolizes:

- Hate
- Discrimination
- Illegal Activity
- Profanity
- Violence
- Drugs and Alcohol
- or threatens health & safety



READ THE FULL STUDENT DRESS POLICY
(P042) ONLINE AT WWW.TDSB.ON.CA



HEALTH

Ontario Immunization and Health Record

The law requires your child to be immunized against measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis (whooping cough) and chicken pox.

Medical exemptions

Your child cannot attend school in Ontario without a record of these immunizations, unless they have been exempted on medical or philosophical grounds. Medical exemptions must be signed by a physician while philosophical exemptions need an affidavit sworn by a lawyer or notary public. Please see your family doctor to make sure your child is up to date on their immunizations or to get a copy of their immunization record.

Health Care Connect

If you do not have a family doctor, a free program called Health Care Connect is designed to help you find one. To register with the program, simply call 1-800-445-1822. You will need a pen, some paper, and your OHIP card when you call. You may also register for Health Care Connect online by entering your information at www.ontario.ca/healthcareconnect

OHIP cards.

If you do not have a valid OHIP card, contact the Service Ontario INFO line at 1-866-532-3161 for help.

School Records

Please help George Syme keep its school records current by letting your child's teachers and the office staff know about any communicable diseases your child contracts and booster shots they receive.

HEALTH



Illness or Accidents

TDSB Concussion Policy:

If a concussion is suspected at school, we will notify parents/guardians and follow TDSB protocol for concussions. Students with a suspected concussion require a form completed by a doctor before they can return to school. The office staff will provide the necessary forms. Please note, if your child suffers a concussion while OFF school property, please notify us so that we can provide you with the necessary paperwork for your child to return to school.

Minor Accidents:

If your child is involved in a minor accident, a staff member will assess what action needs to be taken. If a child hits their head for any reason, it is school policy to call home to alert the parents.

In a life-threatening situation, the school calls 911 first.

Please make sure that the school has all up-to-date phone numbers at which to contact you during the day.

HEALTH



Medication

A designated staff member can only give your child prescribed medication when the medication is essential for a student to continue to attend school, the child cannot self-administer the medication and the appropriate TDSB form (available in the office) is completed and signed by a parent and a physician.

Pediculosis (Head Lice)

The head louse is an insect that lives and breeds on your head. This commonly occurs in school- aged children and is not a reflection of cleanliness. It is spread directly by head to head contact and indirectly through contact with or between personal belongings. You should check your child regularly for head lice. If any are found, please report it to the child's teacher immediately. Following TDSB policy, Perth will give you instructions on how to treat your child's head lice. Office staff will also send letters home to classes in which a student is found to have lice. A Toronto Health nurse periodically comes in to check all classes/students on an as-needed basis.

Allergies and Special Medical Needs

If students have special medical conditions or suffer from severe allergic reactions, parents **MUST** inform the teacher and the school office. Many students suffer from food or environmental allergies. It is imperative that the school be aware of the procedure or medication required in an emergency. This is communicated on the Medical Alert form that is sent home with students to whom it applies. Students are strongly encouraged to carry their own epi-pens in a fanny pack around their waists. Also, students who require the use of an inhaler should carry one with them at all times.

Please read food labels and look for the "peanut free" or "nut free" symbols when sending food to school. Do not send your child to school with peanuts, tree nuts or any products containing them. Please remind your child not to share their snacks or lunches with other children.

COMMUNICATIONS: PARENT CONCERN



Parent Concern Protocol

Classroom Teacher

STEP ONE

If you have any questions or concerns, the first person to go to is your classroom teacher.

School Principal

STEP TWO

If you would like more information or you have questions that are beyond the classroom, the school principal can help.

School Superintendents

STEP THREE

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 at the school level.

Trustees

STEP FOUR

Trustees are your elected community officials. They are available to help you with concerns about your community, as well as address questions related to the Board and its operations.

PROTOCOL Communications – Classroom

What's happening in your child's classroom?

Your child's teacher is your first point of contact and there are several ways for you to stay in touch:

- EMAIL/PHONE CALL – teacher firstname.lastname @ tdsb.on.ca Or call the school at 416-394-2340 and leave a message for the teacher to call you back
- Google Classroom/Brightspace

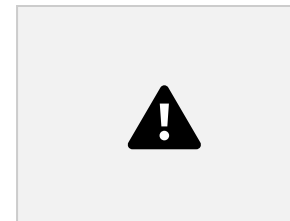
Some teachers may adopt Google Classroom, Brightspace as a communication tool for students and families.

This provides a weekly update to parents and is also a way to contact the teacher and see what work is being done in the classroom and also what homework is assigned



Google Classroom

Communications – Student Progress



Progress Reports/Report Cards/Kindergarten Communication of Learning

Fall George Syme follows the Ministry's reporting dates. Progress reports to all students in November. Soon after, teachers schedule parent-teacher interviews. IEPs (individual education plan) sent home 30 school days after the first day of school.

February

In February, provincial report cards go home for students in JK to Grade 8. IEPs for Term 2 sent home with their report card. Teachers will schedule interviews for students needing additional support.

June

Final, provincial report cards go home during the last week of the school year – in June. IEPs sent home (final review) with their report cards.

Ontario Student Records

Original copies of all report cards are placed in your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR) folder which is kept in the school office.

Every student has an OSR that follows them from school to school. Access to school records can be arranged through the school's principal.

Communications – Information about George Syme Community School

Please bookmark the school's website and check it regularly for the calendar, notifications, School Council updates and the archive of George Syme newsletters for the year.

<https://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/GeorgeSyme>



Supporting Your Child's Success

Special Education:

Special Education support is based on tiered intervention.

In School Team (IST) The first level of support, in communication with parents, is where staff collaboratively develop, review and monitor plans of action to support students. This is done at an IST meeting.

The School Support Team (SST): The second level support involves accessing the support of the Professional Support Staff (PSS) to assist with student programming needs. PSS staff include the school psychologist, speech and language pathologist, special education consultant and school social worker. We cannot proceed to this meeting without parent consent. This team meets on a monthly basis. The team's role is to provide support and services to students, teachers, and parents about academic, social, and/or emotional concerns.

An Individual Education Plan (IEP) In consultation with parents, an IEP may be developed for students who require accommodations and/or modifications to their learning program. English Language Learners (ELL) Students whose first language is not English and who require additional support may be provided with more intensive English instruction. They may be withdrawn from their regular classroom for individual or small group instruction by an ELL teacher. teacher.

Supporting Your Child's Success

Get Involved

Your child's love of learning starts with you. Research shows very clearly that the more parents are involved in the learning of their children, the better they will do at school.

- Ask your child specific questions about school: “What did you read? What did you learn in Math?” •
- Read to and with your child. Share your own love of reading: books, magazines, newspapers, recipe books, comic books. Read in any language. Reading is the key to learning.
- Talk to your child's teacher if you have any questions or concerns.
- Attend parent-teacher meetings, ask questions

Global Responsibility and Awareness

During the school year, students and teachers raise funds for charitable causes. Students also participate in events like the Terry Fox Run.

Community Services to Support Families

Before and After Care Programs

Macaulay Daycare

Toh@macaulaycentres.org

416-572-1030 ext 662

Early-ON

tanika.hewitt@tdsb.on.ca

Snack Program

George Syme has a snack program in the morning. All students receive a healthy snack containing at least 3 food groups.

Community Based Resources

The Child and Family Services Act

Under the Child and Family Services Act, school staff must notify the Children's Aid Society if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is, or may be in need, of protection (e.g., they are being physically/sexually/emotionally abused or neglected)

School staff are also required to cooperate with any investigation by the Children's Aid Society or the Toronto Police Services

Community-Based Resources

There are a number services that provide assistance to families in times of need. Here are a few if you ever need them:

- Family Service Toronto: 416-595-9618
- Yorktown Child and Family Services: 416-394-2424
- Single Parent Support: 416-489-2221
- Assaulted Women's helpline: 416-863-0511
- Toronto Distress Centre helpline: 416-408-4357

Inclement Weather Procedures

When we have rain/ice rain/extreme cold weather (-20 to -28) prior to the start of the school day, students will be allowed to enter the school and line up outside of their homeroom classroom in the hallway. Students will be supervised by staff during this time. On these days, we recommend arriving at school for 9:00am
All students would enter through their designated door.

Students stay indoors for recess and lunchtime when temperature and wind chill measure -28°C or lower or if it's raining heavily. If the temperature and wind chill readings hover between -20°C and -28°C , we may choose to shorten or cancel recess. Also, students may be kept indoors if playgrounds and pathways are too icy.

During the lunch period if the weather changes and students need to return inside, students must wait to hear the outdoor bell ring, line up and then proceed inside. Please remind your child/children to always wait for the directions of the lunchroom supervisors during these situations. At no time are students allowed to enter the school without lining up first.

Fire Drills/Lockdowns:

Fire drills occur 6 times in a school year.

Lockdown: A lockdown is called by the Principal, Vice Principal or designate using the PA system. A lockdown would occur in the event of an intruder in the school or a situation outside of the building deemed to be a danger to students and staff. In a LOCKDOWN situation it is important that students follow their teacher's instructions.