

APRIL NEWSLETTER

It has been some time since I wrote a formal newsletter message. With all the changes we have experienced this year, and the constant barrage of emails and videos coming your way, I thought you were probably getting more than enough information from the school. Newsletters have several purposes. While providing important information is clearly near the top of the list, I think they are also important to help build and strengthen our school community. This message has some important information for all of you, and I also hope it will contribute to building and strengthening our school community.

I want to begin by saying our students have risen to the challenge of this school year! These are middle years students who have responded to a huge increase in the number of rules to follow, and changing rules throughout the year, with a level of maturity that is truly impressive. While it is true that we need to remind students about the rules and why they are important, the attitude of the vast majority of our students is to listen carefully, and then make good decisions. I would say our students truly have been amazing!!

We are thrilled to have our Grade 7 & 8 students back at school. In order to keep our homeroom classes intact, we have created 4 classes (one for each cohort). Students will all spend about one day per week in these "Flow Classes", but their learning will continue to be directed by their homeroom teacher. So far, students have generally reported that the arrangement seems to be working. We are grateful for some additional funding which made this return to school possible!



Even as we have much to celebrate, we continue to be vigilant about our COVID protocols. As we hear about the challenges facing Ontario and Saskatchewan, we learn about variants of concern (VOCs), and we watch case counts in Manitoba, we remind ourselves of the importance of adhering to COVID protocols - regular hand washing, wearing masks when distancing is not possible, and staying distant. We are doing our best at school to follow the protocols, and appreciate that our school families are also remembering their responsibilities regarding when students can attend school.

<https://hsd.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/What-Should-I-Do-if-My-Child-is-Sick-Apr-7.-2021.pdf>

We also know that some of our students are struggling with mental wellness. This pandemic has put strain on so many in our community, and our students are also affected by it. If your child is struggling with mental wellness, please reach out to their teacher. We will do our best to provide support and/or connect your family to support in the community.

I also want to thank our school community on behalf of our staff. We have received so very many comments and emails of thanks and support from parents and caregivers. We are humbled by your expressions of support, and pledge to continue to provide the best care we can, the best learning we can, and to be the best school that we can be.

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A few procedural reminders.

1. Biking and walking safety. We have a crossing guard at the Hespeler/Barkman/Ashford intersection at 8:30. Please ask your child(ren) to time their walk to school in order to arrive at that intersection after 8:30.
2. Thanks to everyone for working with us on our heavy traffic days. On busy days, it can be a bit challenging to move all the cars as quickly as we wish, and we really do appreciate your patience and understanding.