



HANDBOOK

ÉCOLE JOHN McCRAE PUBLIC SCHOOL

189 Water Street

Guelph, ON N1G 1B3

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Mission Statement

Our Mission, as a unique school community, is to foster confident, responsible, lifelong learners. We do this by developing our students' full potential within a stimulating, inclusive, equitable, bilingual environment. We do this so that our students will become positive, successful and contributing members of society.

"The World Awaits Us/Le monde nous attend"

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Welcome to our school! We look forward to working with you and your family, whether you are returning to our school or joining us for the first time. We value trust, respect, honesty, kindness and hard work. We will provide a safe and positive learning environment, where students are given the opportunity to reach their potential - in every way. We have an excellent staff, responsible and enthusiastic students, alongside an involved and supportive community.

A trusting relationship between school, home, and students is necessary to ensure success for all. Together as a collaborative team, we can support and encourage the growth and development of respectful, kind, and well-rounded individuals. It is important that we take the steps to build positive relationships between home and school. We value communication between home, school and the community. Please keep in regular contact with our school team, so that we can support one another to the benefit of each student.

This handbook has been prepared as a useful and helpful guide for our families and students. It will answer any questions you might have regarding the routines, expectations, and policies of our school and the Upper Grand District School Board. We encourage you to keep this reference handy throughout the year. We are looking forward to working together!

Thank you,

Farhan Hussain
Principal

Tiffany Mui
Vice Principal

A school community is stronger when everyone is kind, communicates and works together!

COMMUNICATION

Education is a shared responsibility between school and home. When parents and teachers work together, everyone benefits.

Effective, positive, two-way communication is essential. Throughout the school year, we will communicate with parents in many ways. For whole school communications, we will use Thrillshare alerts (emails and phone calls) to share important information with our families. Also, look to our school website to help keep you informed of news. Your child's teacher will share the best methods for communication with them (e.g., Google Classroom, email).

Parent involvement in our school is an essential component of an effective school and we invite you to work together with us. By working together, we can best ensure that the needs of your child are being met.

OUR SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE / SUPERVISION

The building and grounds are supervised for students starting at 8:20 am until 15 minutes after dismissal (3:05 pm). Supervision is also provided for school activities which may occur outside these times. **For safety reasons, students should not arrive at the school before 8:20 am since there is not any supervision on the yard before this time.**

8:20 - 8:35	School Yard Supervision
8:35	Entry Bell - Students line up with their class and teachers collect them
8:35 - 9:25	Period 1
9:25 - 10:15	Period 2
10:15 - 10:40	Primary Classes Nutrition Break Junior/Intermediate Classes Outside Recess
10:40 - 11:00	Primary Classes Outside Recess Junior/Intermediate Classes Nutrition Break
11:00 - 11:50	Period 3
11:50 - 12:40	Period 4
12:40 - 1:05	Primary Classes Outside Recess Junior/Intermediate Classes Nutrition Break
1:05 - 1:25	Primary Classes Nutrition Break Junior/Intermediate Classes Outside Recess
1:25-2:15	Period 5
2:15-3:05	Period 6
3:05	Dismissal Bell - Students report to their bus line or walk home
3:05 - 3:20	Busses depart

SPECIAL EVENTS, OPEN HOUSES, & LUNCHES

All information regarding special events (i.e., Open House) and lunch orders (i.e., milk, pizza, hot lunches, etc.) will be communicated to families using Thrillshare and our school website. Orders will be placed using SchoolCash Online.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, & LATES

Regular attendance is essential for student success. Persistent absenteeism or lateness creates a disadvantage for students and is taken very seriously. Attendance is taken in the morning and after the second break each school day. Students are marked late or absent. Students arriving late should check in at the school office before going to class.

SAFE ARRIVAL

Families need to call the office before the start of the day if their child is going to be absent or late. Messages can be left on our voicemail 24 hours a day, by sharing the student's name, class and reason for absence or lateness. We follow the [Board's Safe Arrival Policy](#) if we have not been informed by a parent/guardian of the reason for an absence. If students are absent without explanation, parents and caregivers will be contacted in the following order: at home, at work, caregiver (if appropriate), emergency contact, and if warranted, the police.

SAFE DEPARTURE

Please send authorization in **writing** if someone other than the legal guardian is going to pick your child up from school. Also, please let us know if a child who takes a bus is going to be picked up. The authorized adult may also be asked for photo identification. If students do not have a note or a phone call and we cannot confirm otherwise, it is our practice to **send the child home on the bus as usual. Please make after school arrangements prior to your child arriving at school.** If it is necessary for a child to leave early, please let us know. For the safety of your child, come into the school to sign them out at the office.

CUSTODY

Unless otherwise directed by a custody agreement, both parents have full access to the students and their records. If for some reason, these rights are restricted, legal documentation must be on file at the school. Although only a custodial parent can make educational decisions for a child, a non-custodial parent has the right to information about a child, and access to the child, unless denied by a court. If you have concerns about unauthorized access to children or information, it is essential that the Principal be informed and that verification of custody orders be placed in the student's OSR. Otherwise, the school assumes a situation of equal access exists.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE AT SCHOOL

We need to keep our students safe as they disembark and board buses, cars, and as they walk or bike to school. In order to facilitate this, please park in the designated areas and do not enter the staff parking lot. Please do not park in the bus zone, as this is where buses drop off students. **PLEASE DO NOT BLOCK THE BUS LOADING ZONES AND DO NOT CROSS THE ROAD WHERE THE BUSES LINE UP. Please use the crosswalk to cross the road.**

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Our School Council acts in an advisory capacity to make recommendations to the school Principal. The purpose of School Councils is to improve student achievement and enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. School Council places the overall interests of the school and students first.

A schedule of our meeting dates will be shared on the school website. We will work hard to keep meetings within the time frame.

VOLUNTEERS

We welcome volunteers! If you are interested in helping out, please contact your child's teacher. Our School Council also might also need help with various events throughout the year. Volunteers need to sign in at the office when they arrive. There is a [Volunteer Agreement](#) that will need to be completed and returned to the teacher. [Vulnerable Sector Checks](#) are currently required for trips.

[Annual Offence Declaration For School Volunteers](#)

Protection of Privacy Statement for Volunteers

The Volunteer's role in the school is one of partnership with the employees of the Upper Grand District School Board. In this capacity, it is understood that the volunteer will follow the terms and conditions relating to security and confidentiality of personal information according to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 89.

Pursuant to Board Policy 205, it is understood that the volunteer will work under the direction of an appropriate staff member and be privy only to that information that is necessary for working effectively with student(s) and/or for the purpose of performing the task assigned; e.g., office/clerical.

VISITING THE SCHOOL

If you are picking up your child before the end of the day, or are volunteering at the school, please come to the office. For safety reasons, all visitors must report to the office to sign in. Before school, please drop off students at the yellow line which designates the entrance to our yard. After school, please wait at the yellow line when picking up students.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips provide education beyond the classroom and support our curriculum. Notice about all field trips will be sent home in advance. In order for your child to participate, written confirmation is required to ensure that permission has been granted regarding details of the trip. Families are responsible for the cost of such trips. It is Board policy that no student will miss the opportunity to participate in a class trip due to financial constraints. If you have concerns about the cost of a trip, please speak to the teacher confidentially so that arrangements can be made to ensure participation in the trip.

VALUABLES

There are times when students bring items to school and they become upset when items are damaged or lost. The best prevention is to leave such items at home, or to bring them in for a temporary demonstration. **STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY ITEMS THEY BRING TO SCHOOL.**

CODE OF CONDUCT

Our school follows the [Code of Conduct](#) established by the UGDSB. This Code of Conduct is reviewed annually and is shared on our school website.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP & TECHNOLOGY

Parents/students will make a decision about their child bringing technology to use at school. Laptops, tablets and hand-held devices are allowed within classrooms with permission from the teacher, for educational use only. These electronic devices are not allowed in areas that are not directly supervised, such as the hallway, school yard, washrooms and the lunchroom. Please review the school Code of Conduct, Use of Technology section for more information or see [Policy 318 The Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#). The school is not responsible for damages that might occur to devices.

ROLLERBLADES/SKATEBOARDS/SCOOTERS

The Upper Grand District School Board does not allow skateboards, rollerblades, motorized vehicles, or scooters on Board property. To avoid the problems of theft and storage, we would appreciate parent support in having these items remain at home.

FUNDRAISING

Participation is optional and children are discouraged from door-to-door sales. Some parents prefer to make a donation to the student activity fund or to the Upper Grand Learning Foundation (*tax receipts are given for donations over \$20.00*), and donations to the Upper Grand Learning Foundation can be allocated to specific school sites.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Students must wear shoes in the school, and running shoes are required for physical education class. To minimize dust and dirt, students may not wear muddy shoes in their classrooms. In case of a fire alarm, students are not permitted to stop for footwear. Please ensure that students have a change of footwear available for indoor use. Running in the school halls is prohibited.

Our creative playground equipment is off limits to students when wet or snow covered. Clothing with long, exposed scarves or drawstrings that can pose a choking hazard needs to be avoided on play equipment. Bicycle helmets are not allowed in the creative playground area. Safety equipment (*i.e., safety glasses, batting helmets, skating helmets, knee pads, etc.*) is available for sports activities and should be worn when appropriate.

ACADEMICS/PROGRAM/ASSESSMENT

CURRICULUM

The Ministry of Education's Ontario Curriculum provides the basis for teacher planning and instruction, and for local provincial assessment. Directly linked to the provincial report card, it provides grade-by-grade expectations for classroom programming. Copies of the Ontario Curriculum are available on the [Ministry Website](#).

STUDENT RECORDS (OSR)

The Ontario Student Record (*OSR*) is a confidential, continuing record of a student's educational progress through schools in Ontario. The information in the OSR is available only to the Board's Supervisory Officers, the Principal, and teachers for the purposes of improvement of instruction.

REPORT CARDS

Your child will receive an electronic progress report in November. There will be checkmarks on this report (indicating if your child is progressing well, progressing very well, or progressing with difficulty) and comments from your child's teacher. At the same time, there will be an opportunity to schedule an interview with your child's teacher (*during the second PD day in November*). Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend this interview if possible, as this is an opportunity to find out how your child is progressing. The second electronic report card will be available in February and will contain marks and comments. The June report card will be available at the end of June.

ASSESSMENT

Assessment is used in a variety of ways at school. The Triangulation of Data is where we use observations, conversations, and products to assess student knowledge and understanding. Products can look different depending on the age of the student.

With parental permission, during the fall, all Grade 3 students complete the CCAT which is designed to help us identify strengths and weaknesses for each child. Students nearing the end of Grades 3 and 6 undergo standardized testing (*EQAO*) conducted under the direction of the Ministry of Education. The family of each individual student will receive a detailed analysis of their personal performance.

EXTENDED ABSENCES

If a student must be away for an extended period of time, please let us know. In the case of a prolonged absence, please feel free to contact the school. We will connect you with the website UG2GO which provides all kinds of curriculum related activities.

GOOGLE CLASSROOM

All classes will have a Google Classroom where notes, assignments, and upcoming activities will be posted. Parents/guardians are encouraged to join their child(ren)'s Google Classroom so that they can see what is happening in the class, and receive automatic notifications on assignments. Parents can assist by reviewing their child's Google Classroom stream daily to reinforce important dates and assignments. Parents are encouraged to use the Google Classroom, and/or email to write notes to the teacher. As students get older, they are expected to assume more responsibility for their learning.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Your child's teacher will utilize a variety of high yield strategies in the classroom to support all students. There might be times when your child experiences difficulty. Our teachers are ready to give extra help. It is important to encourage your child to ask for this help right away.

We have additional staff members who might help students who might continue to experience difficulties with the curriculum despite support utilized in the classroom, including our SERT and CYC. When a student experiences ongoing difficulties, our first step is to consult our in-school team to discuss data and classroom strategies. After careful consideration, the team makes suggestions that may help your child. If students continue to struggle, we might discuss them at CST (Consultant Support Team) which includes board consultants who have special skills in speech, special education and psychology who can offer additional support and ideas. Ongoing communication will occur with families of students who are experiencing difficulties at school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The development of fitness, motor skills, co-operation, and sportsmanship is an important part of the curriculum. All students should come prepared to participate in the physical education program. All students need indoor running shoes for the gymnasium.

INTRAMURALS

During the nutrition break, students will have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of indoor and outdoor, noon athletic activities. Although some friendly competition will be involved, the emphasis will be on participation, fitness, and enjoyment. Example: floor hockey, volleyball, basketball, badminton, etc.

TRANSPORTATION

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Please visit the [Transportation Website](#) to see if your child is eligible for bus transportation.

ASSIGNED BUS ROUTE

You can visit the Parent Portal on the [Transportation Website](#) to learn more about your child's assigned route. Students must travel to and from school on their designated bus. Arrangements cannot be made for students to take another bus for social reasons (*i.e., go home with a friend, birthday parties, etc.*).

ARRANGEMENTS INVOLVING A DAYCARE PROVIDER

Parents who wish to arrange transportation service at a care-giver's address must contact Transportation, as this is Courtesy Transportation, and these requests are considered by transportation.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Bus students are reminded:

1. To follow the directions of their driver.
2. To be at their stop 5 minutes before pick-up time.
3. To stay seated while the bus is in motion.
4. No smoking, eating, drinking, chewing gum or swearing.
5. To keep books, lunch boxes, and other bulky items on their lap.
6. Students are responsible for any deliberate damage done to the bus.
7. Whenever possible, leave the last row of seats vacant.
8. Personal radios and recorders may be used with headphones. Radios with speakers are not permitted.

EQUIPMENT

The following regulations guide the transportation of equipment:

- No firearms or anything of a dangerous nature.
- Skate blades must be covered by guards, tied together, carried in a bag, and placed on the floor of the bus at the student's feet.
- Skis and poles may not be transported unless the bus is equipped with suitable storage space under the floor.
- Musical instruments must be kept on the student's lap.
- The decision to transport other objects shall be determined in advance by the principal, the bus driver, and the Transportation Department.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

There may be times during the school year when it is necessary to cancel student transportation services. In some cases, the decision may also be made to close schools. Bus cancellation days have the potential to significantly impact student learning for students who are unable to attend in-person. Students affected by bus cancellations will be supported in their learning through activities provided by their teacher in their Google Classroom. Just a reminder that if a bus route is cancelled in the morning, it will not run in the afternoon.

The [Transportation Website](#) contains the most up-to-date information on school bus delays and cancellations. An email will be sent to those subscribed to STWDSTS delays and cancellations. STWDSTS will post information on bus cancellations on the [Transportation Website](#) by 6:30 a.m. Information on school closures due to bus cancellations (i.e., schools that are dependent on bus transportation) will also be posted to the STWDSTS website. Information on transportation cancellations due to severe weather is also made available through local radio stations.

On the rare occasions when schools and board sites are closed to staff and students (e.g., power outages, weather closures formerly known as "System Shutdown"), all students will pivot to remote learning for the day and will be supported by their teacher.

If schools and board websites are closed to students and staff, this information will be posted on the [board website](#) and on our [school website](#).

STWDSTS defines four divisions across Upper Grand for transportation services and notifies the public of delays and cancellations by division:

- Division One (Yellow) – "South Wellington and the City of Guelph"
- Division Two (Blue) – "Centre Wellington, the Town of Erin and the Town of Rockwood"

- Division Three (Pink) – “North Wellington”
- Division Four (Green) – “Dufferin County”

PLANS OF CARE – ANAPHYLAXIS, ASTHMA, EPILEPSY, & DIABETES

It is the policy of the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) to support students with a life-threatening medical condition to access school in a safe, accepting, and healthy learning environment that supports well-being, and empowers students to reach their full potential for self-management of their medical condition(s).

The UGDSB is committed to minimizing the risks for students who have asthma, diabetes, epilepsy/seizure disorder, life-threatening allergies and/or other serious health conditions through the development and implementation of individualized Plans of Care.

If your child has health concerns of any kind, please tell your child’s teacher or the office and we will take the necessary health protection steps, including the possibility of creating a [Plan of Care](#) to share with school staff who might interact with your child.

EPI-PENS AND INHALERS SHOULD BE CARRIED ON THE PERSON, AND IF POSSIBLE ONE KEPT IN THE OFFICE AS WELL. ALL STUDENTS WITH ANAPHYLAXIS AND/OR ASTHMA MUST HAVE A PLAN OF CARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE.

ILLNESS & INJURY

It is our practice to make a sick child feel comfortable while parents are being contacted. When an illness or injury seems serious, the principal or designate may take the child to the hospital or call an ambulance. Please ensure that the office always has up-to-date information on how to reach you or an emergency contact.

MEDICATIONS

Medication for pupils should be administered at home whenever possible.

Where oral medication must be administered to pupils by school personnel, the parent/guardian must:

- Provide written authorization on the Consent for Administration of Oral Medication, [509-1 Consent for Administration of Oral Medication](#); deliver to the Principal or Designate the required medication in a labeled “tamper-proof” container;
- Ensure the container has a pharmaceutical sticker attached indicating the name of the child and directions for the administration/storage of prescribed medication;
- Instruct their child to attend the school office for medication as per the schedule for administration as established in conjunction with the school Principal.

CONCUSSIONS

Please let us know if your child suffers a [concussion](#) and requires accommodations at school.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Provincial law requires that every student have evidence of an [up-to-date vaccination profile](#). Consult your doctor or the local Health Unit if you wish to update your children’s records.

HEAD LICE

Head lice spreads directly through contact and indirectly by sharing items. Information on head lice (and its treatment) can be obtained from Telehealth, consulting a pharmacist, or consulting with your family physician.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Should your child contract any communicable disease, please let us know at the school office. We also advise you to consult your family doctor.

Fifth Disease

It is important for pregnant women and for children with weakened immune systems to know if they have come into contact with Fifth Disease. For this reason, we ask your cooperation in reporting to the school if your child(ren) is/are diagnosed with Fifth Disease.

SMOKING & VAPING

It is the policy of the Upper Grand District School Board to provide a smoke-free and vape-free environment for its students, staff, and others while on school Board property. The smoke-free policy is in accordance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. The principal may suspend all students found smoking or vaping on school property. Also in accordance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, the Upper Grand District School Board will permit smudging and the use of sacred medicines in connection with Indigenous cultural practices at cultural and educational events, meetings, and relevant classroom presentations.

CHILD ABUSE PROGRAMS AND PREVENTION POLICIES

The Upper Grand District School Board places a high priority on the safety of our students. The Child Abuse Prevention Policy is evidence of our commitment to this priority. The following is a quote from the policy: *“Every citizen in the community shares a responsibility for children’s well-being. School officials and all board employees share in this collective community responsibility for creating safe and nurturing environments for children. Under the Child and Family Services Act, this responsibility includes the legal requirement to report to the local Children’s Aid Society any suspected child abuse or neglect. Teachers and other Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) employees have a special opportunity to know and understand children during their most influential years of development. They are in a unique position to be able to see the early signs of abuse and/or neglect.”*

As required in the Policy, we will be teaching age-appropriate lessons to help our students identify abuse and protect themselves from abusive situations. The goal is to provide children with the tools they need to keep themselves safe. The lessons cover a broad range of safety issues including bullying, stranger danger and abuse by a known and trusted adult. These lessons will occur during the school year in Grades 1, 3, 5 and 7. You will be notified before these lessons are taught. The lessons will be taught by our classroom teachers, with support from the school CYC.

SCHOOL EMERGENCIES

The safety and well-being of our students is our highest priority. Although we hope that an incident that requires a response from emergency personnel will never occur in our school, we must be prepared to respond quickly and effectively in case it does. Each year our school must review and conduct drills to ensure staff and students are prepared in the event of a real emergency. For each of these drills, there is an education component to explain why they are necessary. All drills are conducted in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of our students.

The following drills are required each school year:

- Three (3) fire drills in the Fall and three (3) fire drills in the Spring
- Two (2) lockdown drills
- One (1) tornado drill
- One (1) evacuation/bomb threat drill

Lockdown:

- A lockdown is used in response to a major incident or threat of violence within the school or school area. Building occupants are secured in the rooms they are currently in, and no one is allowed to leave or enter

until the situation has been resolved.

Hold & Secure:

- A Hold & Secure is used when there is an event outside of the school that is not related to us (*i.e., a bank robbery, someone in the neighbourhood, a rabid dog*) where we lock the doors, but proceed with the day as usual. Nobody goes inside or outside of the school until police/authorities tell us it is okay and safe to do so.

Shelter-in-Place:

- This is the term to use when we have an environmental or weather situation, like a chemical spill, blackout, explosion, hurricane, etc., where keeping everyone inside is keeping them safe.

ORAL FRENCH LANGUAGE EXPECTATIONS

Given our status as a French Immersion Centre, we would like our students to take advantage of the unique opportunities available to them at John McCrae. Curriculum expectations for French Language instruction are found by grade level in the Ministry Guidelines, [*French as a Second Language: Extended French Grade 4-8, French Immersion Grades 1-8.*](#)

To support these provincial expectations, we will be reinforcing the following guidelines with our students (as **appropriate** to the grade level):

- 1) Use of French to address teachers
- 2) Use of French between students in classroom conversation
- 3) Use of French by students in the hallways
- 4) Use of French by students on school trips and tournaments as appropriate

Classroom teachers will regularly check student comprehension. With these guidelines in place, students will have the maximum opportunity to practice their oral French and improve their fluency. Report card grades for oral language will reflect the daily use of French by the student.

We will, at all times, be mindful that we are serving an English speaking community within an English language Board of Education. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school or your child's classroom teacher.

SAFETY PATROLS

John McCrae maintains a large patrol team, consisting of both bus and street patrols. Safety Patrollers are volunteers who demonstrate reliability and a strong sense of responsibility and commitment. Safety Patrollers assist parents and caregivers by helping at road crossings and with keeping students safe on the bus. Safety Patrollers are maintained on all buses, the crosswalk in front of the school and at the front of the school parking lot.

Please make sure that your child comes to school via the same route every day. It should be the route that makes use of the Safety Patrols, where appropriate. Please encourage your child to leave home early enough to ensure the opportunity of crossing with the Patrollers. Walking the route with a young child, or reviewing the route in discussion with an older child, are excellent ways to:

- a) ensure that the route is appropriate and
- b) know the route that your child always takes

Bus Patrollers or helpers are assigned to accompany Kindergarten and Grade 1 students to and from the bus on a daily basis. Please ensure that an adult is available to meet your child OR if you have a young child and know of an older student who could assist your child on the walk or bus ride, please feel welcome to organize a buddy system (with parent's permission) or contact the school for assistance.