

École Guelph Lake Public School



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February 2017

Happy February!

The days are already getting longer, and Willie the groundhog didn't see his shadow on February 2nd, which of course means an early spring should be just around the corner. If Willie is right, we will be happy to see signs of spring sooner rather than later. Having said that, it is important to mention that children still need to continue to dress appropriately for outdoor play periods. Students need to dress warmly. Winter jackets, boots, gloves and especially hats need to be worn to keep warm. Please assist us in ensuring that your child is prepared for the weather. Of course, be reassured that on very cold days, especially when wind chill factors are high, we may have shortened recess periods, or may even keep the children indoors when necessary.

As always, there will be many learning opportunities taking place at École Guelph Lake in February and we look forward to another exciting month.

Happy Valentine's!

David Marquis



Public input sought for draft policies

The Upper Grand District School Board has adopted a new approach to the development of policies and procedures, important documents that guide the board, staff and activities of our school system. Our goal is to improve policies and procedures at the draft stage, with your help. By providing an opportunity for input from parents, the community and stakeholders we are aiming for greater openness and transparency in our governance.

The first policy, procedures and guidelines to be posted for public consultation are related to “Equity and Inclusive Education”. You are invited to review the draft documents and submit online feedback at www.ugdsb.on.ca/policy. The deadline for public input is April 13, 2016. Persons without internet access may call 519-822-4420 ext. 723 to request a printed copy of the draft documents

Report Bullying



We take all incidents of bullying seriously. If your child is the victim of bullying or sees bullying behavior at school, please encourage him/her to speak with someone at school or use our board's online reporting tool. **Report Bullying** gives students and parents 24/7 access for reporting bullying. You don't have to identify yourself – just your school – and your message gets sent directly to the school principal for follow-up. You'll find the Report Bullying button on our school's website.

Safe Arrival Program

We appreciate your calls when your child(ren) are going to be absent or late. Please call the school at 519-822-9271 and leave a message. You do not need to speak to Mme Schaefer to report an absence or late arrival. The school's answering machine is available to the community 24 hours a day. Calling in advance also alleviates early morning telephone congestion. Thank you for your support.



UGDSB recognizes February as Black History Month

Every year Canadians are invited to take part in the festivities and events that honour the legacy of Black Canadians, past and present, during Black History Month. Black History Month exists to remind us all of the rich contributions within our society from people of African and Caribbean decent, and of their ongoing struggle for equity and social justice. This is a time to celebrate the many achievements and contributions of black Canadians who, throughout history, have done so much to make Canada the culturally diverse, compassionate and prosperous nation we know today. It is also an opportunity for the majority of Canadians to learn about the experiences of black Canadians in our society, and the vital role this community has played throughout our shared history. Attached to this newsletter is an insert that may provide a starting point for discussions at home.

Helping Your Child with Report Cards

Our school will be sending home report cards on Wednesday, February 15th. Here are some discussion ideas to help with sharing your child's report card:

- Set aside time to talk with your child. Ask your child why they think they earned the grades they did. It is important to help them see the connection between the things they did and the grades they earned.
- Ask your child whether they did their best. What is important is not that your child be the best, but that they do their best.
- Think about the messages you're sending to your child when you are discussing their report card with them.
- If grades are unexpectedly low, you may need to talk with the teacher. Now is the time to find out about and correct, any problems that may be interfering with your child's learning.
- If the report card is disappointing, try to find something positive to say. Children need to know that they are loved even when they make mistakes.
- If the report card is especially good, avoid giving your child a monetary reward. Instead, give them a chance to plan a special outing. Or, choose a book and write a note inside the front, telling them how proud you are of these accomplishments.
- Set specific goals for the next grading period. Review the goals set earlier in the year. Help your child make plans to improve in at least one area. Write out an action plan to be worked on over the next term.

School Routines

Thank you so much to everyone for making sure that your children are well prepared for the winter weather at school with warm mittens, scarves, hats and snow suits. These little steps go a long way to make their experience at school a happy one.

Please note that the school day begins at 9:00 am and it is very important for all students to be at school and ready at this time. Routines are fundamental to the beginning of each day and help students succeed throughout the entire day.

Please remember, if your child is arriving after 9:00 am, they must report to the office to receive an admit slip prior to arriving in class and all late arrivals are documented in the school attendance files. In some cases, students also miss out on early morning tasks. Taking these steps now will establish routines and help to ensure that your child has a positive and successful experience throughout their school career.

Mark Your Calendars

All schools in the Upper Grand District School Board will be closed on Monday, February 20th, Family Day. Also, thinking ahead, the dates that schools will be closed for the March Break this year are from Monday, March 13th to Friday, March 17th.



Life-Threatening Illness

This a reminder that we have children in our school with potential life-threatening allergies (called anaphylaxis) to various foods and other materials. Anaphylaxis is a medical condition that can cause death within minutes. In recent years, anaphylaxis has increased dramatically among students. Although this may not affect your child's class directly, we are letting you know so that you are aware that we aim to create an allergy safe environment at our school. If your child is in a classroom with an anaphylactic child, or your child has anaphylaxis, you will be contacted by the classroom teacher. Our school has procedures in place for the prevention and management of anaphylactic reactions. 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. Thank you for your understanding in ensuring an allergy-safe environment for all of our students.



Engaging Your Child in Science at Home!

As parents we have the wonderful opportunity and responsibility for nurturing our children's growth. Parents play a key role in the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of their child. As parents we can usually find time to read a story to our children, thereby instilling a love of literature, but we are often at a loss as to how to instill a love and appreciation for Science. Science encourages problem solving skills, curiosity and questioning, creative and critical thinking, observational skills and reinforces both literacy and math skills....and it's FUN! Here are some ideas for fostering Scientific skills in your children.

6 Tips to foster Scientific Thinking at Home

1-See science everywhere. Parents can take opportunities to ask "What would happen if ...?" questions or present brainteasers to encourage children to be curious and seek out answers. Children need to know that science isn't just a subject, but it is a way of understanding the world around us.

2-Lead family discussions on science-related topics. Dinnertime might be an ideal time for your family to have discussions about news stories that are science based, like space shuttle missions, severe weather conditions, or new medical breakthroughs. Over time, children will develop a better understanding of science and how it affects many facets of our lives. Movies and TV shows with science-related storylines are also great topics for discussion.

3-Encourage girls and boys equally. Many girls are left out of challenging activities simply because of their gender. Be aware that both girls and boys need to be encouraged and exposed to a variety of subjects at a very early age.

4-Do science together. Children, especially elementary-age children, learn better by investigating and experimenting. Simple investigations done together in the home can bolster what your child is learning in the classroom. Check with your child's teacher on what your child is currently learning in class and what activities you can explore at home.

5-Connect science with a family vacation. Family vacations are a great way to explore science. It could be a hiking trip where you explore nature or a discussion on tides during a beach vacation.

6-Show excitement for Science!

Reference:

"NSTA Science Matters: Tips for Busy Parents - National Science"
<http://www.nsta.org/sciencematters/tips.aspx>.

Monthly Environmental Activities to help celebrate our planet



February 2nd is National Sweater Day!

It is vital to teach our children to respect and take care of the environment.

Celebrate International Sweater Day on February 2nd!

“National Sweater Day is a fun way to learn about the importance of saving energy and to inspire you to use less heat all winter. Heating accounts for 80% of residential energy use in Canada and is a significant source of emissions. If all Canadians lowered their thermostats by just 2 degrees Celsius this winter, it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 4 megatons – that’s equivalent to shutting down a 600 mega watt coal-fired power station or taking nearly 700,000 cars off the road!” http://www.wwf.ca/events/sweater_day/

“National Sweater Day is about valuing energy. It’s a chance to think differently about how we use energy, where our energy comes from and how we can play an important role in fighting climate change by using energy wisely, not wastefully. It is designed to help raise awareness about renewable energy and change behaviours around energy consumption in Canada.” -- World Wildlife Fund Canada

Ideas for your family to celebrate Sweater Day!

- **Turn down your thermostat and wear a sweater!**
- **Ask your children to brainstorm with you about ways to save energy at home.** Make a pledge to implement as many as you can.
- **Research the differences between climate and weather.** Ask your child to characterize some different climate types (polar, tropical, coastal, etc.).
- **Read a children’s book on conservation** such as: *Why Should I Save Energy?* by Jen Green. Encourage lots of discussion and questions.
- **Valentine’s Day is just around the corner** - use recycled materials to create a your cards this year!

Lost and Found

As is often the case by mid-winter, our school’s Lost & Found Bin is overflowing with student clothing. Over the new few weeks we will display the items from the bin on tables and students will be encouraged to take a look and gather any clothing that belongs to them. Unfortunately, clothing items that remain unclaimed will need to be bagged and sent to a charitable organization. Please continue to encourage your children to visit the Lost and Found bin when clothing items are missing.

Physical activity can make you smarter?

Yep! It's true! We have heard a lot about how exercise is important for children to remain healthy but research from Harvard Medical School (and many other studies) has shown that children do better in school if they get plenty of exercise. As it turns out, exercise has a positive influence on concentration, memory, behaviour, sequencing, and making priorities. According to one study in the Journal of Pediatrics, "school-age youth should participate daily in 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity that is developmentally appropriate, enjoyable, and involves a variety of activities". But other studies have found that even 20 minutes of activity such as walking can increase brain functioning. There are so many fun physical activities to do in the winter, tobogganing, skating, snow-shoeing, hockey. Why not build a snow man, a snow fort or make snow angels? Whatever you and your family decide it is important for children to exercise every day, the more, the better. It's good for the brain and the body! (Information adapted from Journal of Pediatrics, Edutopia, Everydayhealth.com and Globe and Mail online)

Keeping Our Children and Youth Safe Online

Over the last few years, there has been a significant increase in the number of reported cases of young people involved in self/peer exploitation. This is generally defined as youth creating, sending or sharing sexual images and/or videos with peers via the Internet and/or electronic device. The Board recently purchased a resource for every elementary and secondary school called Self/Peer Exploitation, School and Family Approaches to Intervention and Prevention. The resource was created by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection, which is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to promoting safety of all children. Principals and Vice Principals also received an in-service on the guide.

The following two links may assist youth and families who have been impacted by child sexual exploitation:

Cybertip.ca may be used to report child sexual exploitation

NeedHelpNow.ca is a website that offers find some practical information for youth on how to deal with this (for example, how to get pictures removed from the internet, how to deal with peers, how to talk with someone, etc.).

The Canadian Centre for Child Protection also produces several useful resources for parents that may be found using the following links:

https://www.cybertip.ca/pdfs/C3P_SafetySheet_SelfPeerExploitation_en.pdf

https://www.cybertip.ca/pdfs/C3P_SafetySheet_Cyberbullying_en.pdf

Concussions Outside of School Hours

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. It can affect a student's performance in both school work and physical activities. Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain heal. While a child has a suspected or diagnosed concussion, full participation in school academic and physical activities can worsen symptoms and make for a longer recovery period.

In the best interest of your child, parents and guardians are requested to contact the principal when a suspected or diagnosed concussion occurs outside of school hours (i.e. during outdoor play, sports, or a car accident). The principal will work with you to develop a plan for an individualized, gradual return to full participation in school activities. For more information, visit www.ugdsb.on.ca/concussions.

Self-regulation

Does your child struggle to calm his/her body and mind in order to cope with challenges or solve problems? The ability to be calmly focused and alert can be difficult for many children, as well as adults. The ability to self-regulate may change in different situations and stages of life. As parents, you can help your child use strategies to calm his/her body and mind by modelling what works for you. For example, when frustrated about being caught in traffic, you may use self-talk and listening to music to help calm the situation. You may say, "This traffic is terrible and I am feeling very frustrated. I know that I can't do anything about the traffic so I am just going to tell myself to relax, this will pass, I can turn on some of my favourite tunes!" Strategies that may work for your child as calming or focusing strategies include: exercise (e.g. a short run), reading a book, listening to music, talking to someone, self-talk, counting to 20, getting a drink, taking a break, or deep breathing. Generally speaking, calming the body and mind is necessary before challenges or conflict can be successfully handled.

Resources for Parents -

Book: Zones of Regulation by Leah M. Kuypers

Zones of Regulation <http://andersoncarla.blogspot.ca/2014/08/zones-of-regulation.html>

Relaxation Techniques http://visuals.autism.net/main.php?g2_itemId=138

Today's Parent: Easy Ways to Teach Your Child to Self-Regulate

<http://www.todaysparent.com/kids/preschool/easy-ways-to-teach-your-child-to-self-regulate/>

Responsive Classroom: Teaching Self-Calming Skills

<https://www.responsiveclassroom.org/blog/teaching-self-calming-skills>

Video: A story: Staying Calm When Angry

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnmFfxWjsvs>

Self-Regulation <http://andersoncarla.blogspot.ca/2013/12/self-regulation.html>

Talking About Mental Health – February 2017 Tests and Stress

Taking tests is stressful for most students. However, there are lots of ways that your child and youth (and you!) can decrease the stress related to tests.

Anticipate stress and be ready for it.

- ✓ Practice relaxing activities every day so during stressful times you already know how to cope.

Eat well

- ✓ Learning and remembering takes a lot of energy. Keep healthy snacks close by so you can refuel easily with what your body needs to feel good and think clearly.

Sleep

- ✓ During sleep, our brains make connections and consolidate our learning. Research has shown that during sleep, our brain cleans out toxins to allow for more learning to occur the next day.

Drink lots of water

- ✓ Hydration is very important for good brain function. Cut down on caffeine, which contributes to the stress response and to poor sleep.

Move

- ✓ Activity increases energy, stimulates brain growth and increases mood. Take regular active breaks; even 5 minutes of walking outdoors can make a difference.

Pause and relax

- ✓ Take time to relax. Do some deep breathing. Listen to music. Meditate. Go outside. Write in a journal. Do some stretches. Go for a walk. Draw or doodle.
<http://youth.anxietybc.com/relaxation> has some great examples of how to relax.

Connect

- ✓ Talk to your friends.
- ✓ Talk to your parent or a caring adult about how you are feeling.
- ✓ At school, you can talk to your teacher, principal or CYC for support.

Laugh!

- ✓ Laughter is a great release and allows our brains to recharge and reset.

*Dr. Lynn Woodford is the Mental Health Lead for the Upper Grand District School Board.
Follow me on Twitter @drlynnwoodford.*

TESTS CAN ADD TO YOUR STRESS LOAD!

Below are strategies for increasing your well-being:

Anticipate stress and be ready for it.

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- ✓ Laughter is a great release and allows our brains to recharge and reset.

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

Mind your Mind (online)
www.mindyourmind.ca/Interactives

Has many fun, interactive options for de-stressing.

Mind Shift (Free App)
www.anxietybc.com/resources/mindshift-app

An app designed to help cope with anxiety.

Smiling Mind (Free App)
smilingmind.com.au/
An app that guides you through simple, calming meditations.

Relaxing Sounds of Nature
(Free on iTunes)

If you need someone to talk to, you can call: KidsHelpPhone 1 800 668 6868 or go to <http://www.kidshelpphone.ca/>

Stay Well Month

Reduce the risk of serious infections - proper hand-washing is one of the best ways to avoid getting sick.

Stay home when you are sick and limit contact with others -Children should not be in school with a fever, undiagnosed rashes, vomiting, or diarrhea and should stay at home at least 24 hours following the end of symptoms.

Cover your mouth and nose - when you sneeze or cough; use a tissue or the bend of your elbow.

You can prevent many serious illnesses by keeping immunizations up-to-date for you and your children. Call 1-800-265-7293 for more information.