



Brisbane Public School

April 2020 Newsletter

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Principal's Message

We hope you had a fantastic March Break with your children and are managing well and staying healthy during this challenging time with our global pandemic COVID-19. We survived the winter this year and have had some nice and wet spring weather. It is a great time to get outside while socially and physically distancing to help with mental health and being active.



Virtual learning has become a temporary reality demonstrating that we are creative and dedicated to teach our students to ensure they continue to learn. Continue to be resilient and positive and let us know how we can support you and your children during this time. All Upper Grand DSB schools are closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic until at least May 4, 2020 and this may be extended based on Public Health recommendation. We will continue to share updates as we receive them. All UGDSB buildings and grounds are closed to the public.

Our Gr 3 and 6 students will not write EQAO this year based on a Ministry directive. **Regrettably, our Grade 6 Trip scheduled for April has also been cancelled as a result of COVID-19 in order to keep our students safe.**

R. Anand

Upcoming Dates - April

April 2 nd April 14 th April 22 nd	Wear Blue for Autism Earth Day-Wear green Clean up outside and in the community	April 10 th -14 th Date to be determined	Easter Weekend PIC Event @ Brisbane - Anxiety Workshop **all Parents and community members are welcome
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Welcome Spring ...

We look forward to seeing some nicer weather now with showers and sunshine! When we return to school with the spring weather and muddy conditions, please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor recess. This may include splash pants and rubber boots. It may also be helpful to provide a spare set of clothes to keep in backpacks for students who particularly like to get active!



Distance Learning

The Education Minister Lecce signed a new school closure order extending to May 1. This order would allow schools to open for staff on Friday May 1 and for students on Monday May 4. This decision will be re-evaluated based on public health advice as these dates become closer. The closure may be extended if necessary to protect the health and safety of students, families and staff.

The government expects that every student will continue to learn while in-school classes are suspended. Given the range of circumstances of students and their families, the continuity of learning will require flexible program delivery options that are reasonable and practical. Teaching and learning in this evolving context will not look the same as the customary in-class experience so please be patient as we navigate this new method for programming. Staff are working hard on creating a quality distance learning program through the use of Google classroom. Plans are underway to look at how we can support students who may not have access to technology and the internet so please stay tuned.

Our shared goal is to ensure the successful completion of the school year for all students, and to support students to advance to the next school year. We also want to minimize anxiety and stress for students and families as we recognize some families are working from home and sharing a computer is challenging. Please inform your child's classroom teacher if you need assistance. Staff will be checking in and providing feedback to students. The school email is brisbane.ps@ugdsb.on.ca.

Kindergarten Registration

We are still accepting registration for new Junior Kindergarten and Senior Kindergarten students for September 2020 in both French and English. Register at <https://www.ugdsb.ca/kindergarten/registration/>



Moving?

If you are moving this year or know of a new family coming to Brisbane, please let the office know as we need to submit student numbers for next year. Likewise, if you are moving out of our school community please let the office know or respond to this email.

Playground Update

We are very excited to share some great news! We have purchased a new primary structure that we hope to have installed this May or June! A special thank you to the Playground Chair Claire Upton for all of her work on helping to choose an appropriate playground vendor and communicate regarding our school and Board requirements in consultation with Mme Anand. Thank you for your generous donations and kindness as we wouldn't be able to install this without your generosity! Merci beaucoup a tous les parents! Please share the photo of our primary structure with your children to share some joy :)



A reminder to all members of our school communities that in alignment with municipal closures around COVID-19, all Upper Grand DSB school yard play structures are closed.

Yearbooks

Our yearbook team is committed to producing a yearbook for this year. We have been taking photos throughout the year and have captured wonderful memories. While this year has been a challenge, we will make a great yearbook. Further communication on how to buy and the delivery of the book will be sent in a couple of weeks.

A sincere thank you to Norma MacDonald, Claire Upton and Melissa Brice for all of their tireless work and dedication to capture many photographs of our students throughout the year and putting them all together in the keepsake yearbook.

Grad Photos

We absolutely want to include grad photos in the yearbook for students who want to participate. At this point, the photos will not be taken at school and parents will have to submit a photo along with the grad questionnaire. Instructions will be communicated to grade 6 parents separately including the Graduation questionnaire.

Thank You to our Food & Friends Volunteers

Thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped to make our Food & Friends Student Nutrition program such a success this school year. The donation of time that you have given and your ongoing support says so much about your capacity for compassion and generosity. A special thank you to Kirsten Tugman and Carina Lentsch for being such outstanding co-ordinators and all the work you do to order fresh foods for our snack program.



UGDSB helping to give to the medical community

The Upper Grand District School Board is part of a community-wide effort to produce much-needed medical supplies in response to the pandemic.

After hearing about a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for hospitals and frontline health care workers in Ontario, Kitchener-based tech company InkSmith jumped into action, using their existing tools and infrastructure to produce PPE face shields.

The InkSmith team is producing as many face shields as possible and recently put out an urgent call to all 3D printer owners in the region to help them produce PPE face shields to combat COVID-19.

Of those offering to help were staff at the UGDSB. Staff worked safely to secure 3D printers from a number of UGDSB sites, and now the board has six 3D printers up and running, producing PPE face shield parts. The intent is that the parts will continue to be produced for as long as the need exists.

Caring for Yourself When Home with Kids

Here is a recommendation to have a look at called [Caring for Yourself When Home with Kids](#). It's full of tips for parents to enhance mental well-being during this challenging time, as well as activities to do with your own kids while home. Continue to have a consistent schedule and learning routine for children as much as possible. Where possible, get outside while physically distancing to be active and breathe in fresh air as learning outdoors has wonderful benefits and decreases stress.



Supports for Students

We have some organizations providing critical and professional support for children facing mental health concerns or distress. For example, Kids Help Phone offers 24/7 counselling and referral services across the province. To use this free resource, children can call 1-800-668-6868, or text CONNECT to 686868.

Coping with stress and anxiety- A message from CAMH

The COVID-19 pandemic can cause stress and anxiety because it is disrupting normal life for many people all at once. While it is important to be informed and to take action to limit the spread of infection, the amount of information and attention on this topic can increase stress and anxiety.

Strategies to maintain your mental wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic

What has worked for you before that helps manage your stress and anxiety? Many of those strategies you can still rely on. One challenge is that the response to pandemics can disrupt routines; people may stop the activities they use to keep well (e.g., exercise) and engage in activities that can make things worse (e.g., drink more alcohol).

Here are some ideas that might be helpful. Some might apply to you and some might not – or they may need to be adapted to suit you personally, your personality, where and with whom you live, or your culture. Please be creative and experiment with these ideas and strategies.

Accept that some anxiety and fear is normal

COVID-19 is a new virus and we are still learning about it. The uncertainty about the virus and the changes that are unfolding can make most people feel a bit anxious. This is normal, and it actually can help motivate us to take action to protect ourselves and others, and to learn more about the pandemic.

Find a balance: Stay tuned in, but know when to take a breather

While staying informed is helpful, too much information may not provide extra benefit. Limit checking sources to once per day or less if you can. This includes reading or listening to news stories about COVID-19. Even though things are shifting rapidly, daily changes are not likely to affect how you should manage your risk.

Bring an intentional mindset to unplugging

Set aside some time to unplug from all electronics, including phone, tablets and computers.

Disconnect for a while from social media outlets. You may need to be scheduled.

Do something fun and healthy for yourself instead (e.g., read, work, exercise).

Practice relaxation and meditation

Relaxation strategies and meditation can help reduce or manage your levels of stress and anxiety. There are many options to consider:

Formal meditation practice such as yoga or mindfulness meditation

Informal or self-help approaches such as books and online videos

Relaxation through any activity that you find enjoyable and relaxing.

Choose an activity that works for you and that you are likely to continue doing. Start slowly and gradually work toward a regular practice.

Seek support

Social distancing does not mean you should break off all contact from loved ones. Being alone can lead to spending too much time thinking about the current situation, resulting in increased stress and anxiety. It can be helpful to connect with people who are a positive influence when you are feeling stressed.

Look for formal support, either online or by phone, that can help you during high-stress times. For example, you may turn to distress lines, online support groups, or resources in your community such as religious institutions.

Try to avoid people who are negative when talking about current affairs or events, or who generally increase your stress and anxiety.

Be kind to yourself

The strategies mentioned here can take some time to work. We need to practise them regularly and in different situations. Don't be hard on yourself if you forget to do something or if you are not feeling better right away.

Eat healthily

Eating healthily can help us feel better. When we are stressed, many people might choose comfort foods that are not actually good for stress and overall health. As much as is possible, choose more fruits and vegetables, and drink lots of water.

To find out more on how to support your family through this pandemic, refer to <http://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19>

Please read this article on how to Talk to your children about Covid 19 if you need support.

http://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/camh_covid19_infosheet-talking_to_kids-pdf.pdf

Anxiety Workshop for Parents

Brisbane P. S. Library

Date to be determined



How to support our kids in dealing with stress and anxiety

The following questions will be answered:

- What is anxiety?
- How to support kids from Kindergarten -Grade 6 with anxiety?
- When to seek support/help and where to go?
- What resources are available?
- What can parents do at home?
- Practical tips for stress and anxiety management



Help for parents with children in French Immersion

“Today a reader, tomorrow a leader” - Margaret Fuller.

In education, we strive to teach our students how to be critical readers so that they can flourish in their future endeavours whether in English or in French. Reading skills in French are not unlike reading skills in your first language, however, reading in French does require attention to a different sound system, different vocabulary and at times an understanding of contexts or cultures that may be different than those in another language.

How can parents support student reading at home when they don't speak French?

One way to do this is to read with your child in their first language. Research shows that reading behaviours and skills are transferable across languages. For example, understanding how to retell a story in English using the beginning, middle, and end structure is a skill that is transferable to French.

Opportunities for shared reading will support motivation and skills in reading no matter the language. Asking your child to predict what the text will be about or what will happen next, to visualise what is happening as you read, and to use picture clues to better understand the text are all activities that will positively impact reading.

Another way to support and motivate your child is to encourage them to read to you in French and then ask them to summarize or retell what they have read. This shows them that you are interested in, and value, their reading experience in French and may even teach you some new French vocabulary along the way. Simply having a conversation with your child about what they are reading in French and asking questions is an additional way to show your interest and support.



What happens when students are not moving forward in their reading or parents have concerns about student progress?

Research shows that interventions can be effectively delivered in the student's first language, as well as in French, at a time when the gap between strong and weak readers is still relatively small. Early intervention is key. Discussing your concerns as soon as they arise by speaking with your child's teacher and then examining appropriate courses of action and support as a team are important first steps.

It is important to remember that a student struggling in reading does not mean that the student is not a good fit for learning French. French as a second language programs are for all students. Promoting this belief helps to create a supportive environment where students feel more confident and can be successful.

Further Reading:

1. What Works? Research into Practice. “Supporting Early Language and Literacy. Dr. Janette Pelletier OISE, University of Toronto. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.
2. What Works? Research into Practice. “ Early Identification and Intervention for At-Risk Readers in French Immersion. Nancy Wise and Dr. Xi Chen. OISE, University of Toronto. The Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat.

