**ELORA PUBLIC SCHOOL**

**288 Mill Street East**

**Elora, Ontario**

**N0B 1S0**

**519-846-5999**

 **Curt McQueen, Principal Dawn Airdrie-Donovan – Vice Principal**

September 2019 Newsletter

# Principal’s Message

Hello Elora families and welcome back! I hope you had a wonderful summer break. I am the new principal, Curt McQueen. I am very happy to be joining the Elora Public School community. This is a familiar area as I have lived in Fergus for the past 20 years with my wife, Cara. We have 14 year old twins, Eden and Elijah, who are off to high school this week. I have worked as a principal in Drayton, Mount Forest and Guelph…….and now Elora…...pretty close to home! I am excited for the coming year.

Staff have been working hard during the last part of August to ensure classrooms and the school itself are ready to go. Thank you to our head custodian Rob Behling and his team for their cleaning work over the summer. The school looks great! Preparing for a new school year is always a busy time. I appreciate their time and effort getting things ready.

We continue to grow as a school. It appears that we will be starting the school year with approximately 462 students. As has been the case over the past several years, our school organization is tentative until after the second week of school. Both as a school and as a Board, we need to be compliant with certain class size provincial regulations. Because we do not fully examine our Board-wide situation until September 6th, there is always a chance that we may have to re-organize our classes somewhat following that date. Therefore, our classes are tentative until after the second week of school.

I look forward to connecting with Elora students and families and meeting our new families. Mrs. Airdrie and I are ready to jump into the new school year. We will work hard during the first week of school to address any questions or concerns. Please see below about our “Meet the Teacher” event on September 19th.

Sincerely,

Curt McQueen

Principal

**Information about our School and Newsletter Availability - Paperless Communication**

Please note that after this month, news from the school will be available on our website only. This will not be in the form of a traditional monthly newsletter. As items come up, they will be posted in our News and Announcements section. Our website is an important link to have in your favourites to stay on top of what is going on at the school. Please check it often

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/elora/>

There is a link on our website to follow us on Twitter, as well [**@**EloraPSGryphons](https://twitter.com/EloraPSGryphons)

As well, on our website, you will find a link to our school email address: elora.ps@ugdsb.on.ca

**School Messenger “App”!!! UG Connect!**

We continue to use a School Messenger App as a parent communication tool for your smart phone. Designed to streamline communication between schools and the communities they serve, the Upper Grand Mobile app provides parents with a simple interface with up to date information including news, calendars and social media feeds.

The Upper Grand Mobile App (called UG Connect) is available today for free at either the Google Play Store or at iTunes. Use the search term **“Upper Grand**” to find the app. Once you have the Upper Grand app on your device, go into “Settings” within the app and select Elora Public School. Information from our website can be seen in the News section of the app and our calendar details will show up there too.

**Paying for School Items Online - PLEASE REGISTER FOR SCHOOL CASH ONLINE**

For safety and efficiency reasons, we want to reduce the amount of cash and cheques coming into our school. School related expenses such as student agendas, pizza days, milk, field trips, spirit wear, yearbooks, etc. will be available for online purchase. Please take a few minutes to register so you can enjoy the convenience of online shopping now and into the coming school years.

Here’s How to Register for Online Payments

Step 1: Go to this website - [ugdsb.schoolcashonline.com](https://ugdsb.schoolcashonline.com/)

Step 2: Register by selecting “Get Started Now” and follow the steps

Step 3: Respond to the confirmation email, select the “click here” option, sign in and add each of your children to your household account

**Dates to Note**

September 19 - Barbecue and Meet the Teacher Evening (more details to come!)

September 26 - Terry Fox Run

September 27 - PD Day

Tuesday, October 1st - First School Council Meeting

Monday, October 14th - Thanksgiving Holiday

**Arrival Details**

All students except for kindergarten bus students will enter the school in the morning from the back doors. We have an early entry bell that rings for grade 7 and 8 students at 8:45 AM. The entry bell rings for kindergarten to grade 6 students rings at 8:50 AM. PLEASE NOTE: **There is no supervision on our yard before 8:35 AM**. Students should not be on the property until after 8:35 AM.

**Safe Arrival Procedures**

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, please phone the school at any time and leave a message on our answering machine at (519)846-5999. If your child is absent at 8:50 AM. or at afternoon attendance and we have not heard from you, a call home will be made from the school. If we are unable to reach you, we will then try the emergency contact number. If this fails, we must report to the police. When your child returns to class, or before a planned absence, a note of explanation is required. If it is necessary for your child to leave early, or to be absent for a period of time during the day, please send a note.

If your child is coming in late, please check in at the office first.

**Student Safety During Arrival and Dismissal**

If you are driving and dropping off or picking up your child, please remember that the entrance to the parking lot is one way only. Allow cars to move through the parking lot. Please do not block the entrance to the road, or park your car in the laneways of the parking lot to wait for your child.

**Do not enter the front driveway of the school during morning drop off and afternoon pick up times. This is for buses only.**

**Life Threatening Allergies and Medical Concerns**

Please connect with Mrs. Malyk or Mrs. Peyton in the office for the forms regarding your child’s life threatening allergy or medical concern. We need to ensure we have all pertinent medical information up to date in the office. Thank you.

**Elora Staff**

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| --- | --- |
| KA Teacher - Ann PellerinKA ECE - Sheila BaumanKB Teacher - Natalie Akrofi (LTO for Tara Lichty)KB ECE - Erika Palfi1/2A - Anna Mark1/2B - Linda deKleine2/3-C - Janet Stelter3/4A - Jodi Lawson3/4B - Kari McCracken4/5C - Gary White5/6A - Michelle Youngblood5/6B - Gillian Siegwart/Jennifer Rupnow7A - Nola Spicer Gore7B - Ruth Robinson (LTO for Melissa Miller)7C - Eric Kristensen7D - Kaela Anderson8A - Scott Montgomery8B - Daniel Diefenbaker8C - John Rupnow8D - Sonya MasonIntermediate Math/Sci-Tech - Britni ScottIntermediate Art - Donna Hull | Junior/Intermediate French - Lanny FlemingLibrary - Gillian SiegwartMusic/French - Caitlyn CraigP.E. - Dave Gear/Nola Spicer GoreIntermediate French - Laurel FarrellGr. 4-8 MID - Jennifer RupnowLife Skills - Carolyn FarrellResource - Cathy AbercrombiePlanning Time - Josh CranstonCYC - Desiree FrenetteEA - Kaelin BrittonEA - Karen PellEA - Becky PykeEA - April TindallEA - Sue BenhamEA - Zdenka UddinEA - Melissa CorbitOffice Coordinator - Paola MalykAdmin Office Asst. - Linda PeytonVice Principal - Dawn AirdriePrincipal - Curt McQueen |

**Pizza and Milk Programs**

Once again, we will be offering both pizza and milk programs. JK to Grade 6 students will have pizza on Fridays only and milk on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only. Grade 7 & 8 will have pizza and milk on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays only. PLEASE NOTE: we have reduced the amount of days milk will be available to JK-Grade 6 students. We have noticed a significant amount of waste with daily milk orders. We will monitor this until the end of January and determine how we proceed with our milk program after that. Information about ordering for these programs will go home this week. All grades will need to pay for milk and pizza in advance ideally by using School Cash Online. [ugdsb.schoolcashonline.com](https://ugdsb.schoolcashonline.com/)

**Student Agendas Delayed**

This year, students in grades 1 - 6 will be using agendas. Please note that due to an error by the agenda company, there was a delay in the delivery of the product. We hope to receive them in the next few weeks. More information to come.

**Healthy Snack Program**

We have again received funding through Food and Friends to continue a healthy snack program. This includes a Salad Days program. We are looking for volunteers to assist with food preparation. Please check in at the office if you are interested. Any financial donations toward this important program are much appreciated!

**Meet the Teacher Night**

This year, our Barbecue and Meet the Teacher Night will be on Thursday, September 19th. More details to come!

**Let’s Limit the Lost and Found! - Label Clothing Items Please**

Please label your child(ren)’s clothing. We have a Lost and Found that grows and grows daily.

**PD Days This Year and School Year Calendar**

All PD Days are full days this year. They are September 27, November 1, November 29, January 31, April 24, June 5, and June 26. The full school year calendar can be found at <http://www.ugdsb.ca/schools/school-year-calendars/>

**School Council**

School Council is an excellent opportunity for parents to become involved in school life. It is an opportunity to discuss school programs, support the purchase of resources through fundraising, and be an advisory group for the administration and staff at the school. Anyone can be involved. We will have approximately five general evening meetings through the year, plus committee meetings if you are interested. Our first meeting will be on the evening of Tuesday, October 1st in the Learning Commons.

**Forms Coming Home in the First Week**

STUDENT VERIFICATION FORM

The Student Verification Form contains the most recent information from our computer. We request that you update and correct the information, sign and date the form and return it to your child’s teacher as soon as possible. Please provide the Lives With and/or Guardian information on the blank line in the Student section at the top of the form.

Please return a signed and dated form **even if there are no changes** **as soon as possible. Thank you.**

PARENTAL INFORMATION/BLANKET CONSENT FORM FOR EDUCATIONAL FIELD WALKING TRIPS WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

Please complete the blue two-sided form and return it to the school as soon as possible.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Please read completely and sign and return the back page.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

BUS CONDUCT AGREEMENT

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

MILK AND PIZZA INFORMATION

**Forms Coming Home Grade 4 - 8 Only**

COMPUTER INTERNET USE AGREEMENT

**Reminders**

Skateboards, roller blades, and roller shoes are not permitted on school property at any time. If students are riding bicycles or scooters to school, they must be walked on the property and locked at the bike racks. They may not be stored anywhere in the school.

**Volunteers**

WE NEED YOU AT ELORA PUBLIC SCHOOL!!!

If you are interested in volunteering on a regular basis at the school please send us an email. elora.ps@ugdsb.on.ca

**Smoke and Vape-Free Environment**

The Upper Grand DSB provides a smoke and vape-free environment for its students, staff and others while on Board property, in accordance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and Board policy 208. This policy refers to all forms of tobacco, and any processed form of tobacco that may be smoked, inhaled or chewed, including e-cigarettes.

Smudging is the tradition of using sacred smoke from sacred medicines (e.g., tobacco and sage) that forms part of the indigenous culture and spirituality. Smudging is allowed in schools under the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. Parents will be informed using the school’s usual forms of communication when smudging is going to occur in our school. Participation by staff and students is optional in a smudging ceremony.

**Students with Life-Threatening Medical Conditions**

UGDSB Policy 518: Students with Life-Threatening Medical Conditions, outlines the roles and responsibilities for all in the educational community to support students with possible life-threatening medical conditions. The prevalent medical conditions covered under this policy are Asthma, Anaphylaxis, Diabetes and Epilepsy/Seizure Disorders. If your child has one of these, or any other life-threatening medical condition, please visit: [www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy](http://www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy) (and look for Policy 518) or contact the school as soon as possible. We will work with you to develop a Plan of Care to support your child.

**Life Threatening Allergies**

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 informed 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.

**Transitions to School in the Fall**

Returning to school is both an exciting time as well as one that can be challenging for some of our students. As our students get ready for new September routines, here are some tips to support parents on things to consider when the new school year is beginning:

* If you are new to the school community, make an appointment to meet your child’s school team so that you can develop a relationship with the school and learn the school based routines alongside your child.
* Connect your child with neighbourhood friends that are in their class to help them get to and from school with a peer to make the transitions more fun.
* Consider adapting your child’s bedtime routine by returning to an earlier ‘school day’ schedule before school starts, aiming for 10 hours of sleep a night.
* Sit and plan what your child would enjoy eating as part of a healthy lunch while at school. Including kids in these routines helps them build their independence in packing a well-balanced lunch and snacks.
* Sometimes when kids are older and have more things to remember like locker combinations and schedules for classes, they can get worried about remembering it all. Talk through their concerns and make some plans for how they can remember these items during a busy day.
* Walk with your child to school to remind them of the safety rules and routines. The summer is a long time and this needs to be refreshed from time to time.
* Spend time each night checking in on how the first few weeks of school have gone. If your child is facing some concerns that do not seem to be ironing out, connect with the school to see if together something can be done to support them to be happy in their new school year.

**School Emergency Response Training and Annual Drills**

This is to provide you with some information regarding emergency drills that we will be conducting this school year.

The safety and well-being of our students is our highest priority. Although we hope that an incident that requires 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 conduct drills to ensure staff and students are prepared in the event of a real emergency.

The following number of 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) bomb threat drill

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.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

**Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol and Suicide Protocol Notification**

**A Message from Director of Education Martha Rogers**

# The Upper Grand District School Board is committed to providing safe learning environments for all students, staff, school visitors and community members. When a student behaves inappropriately, principals use progressive discipline to help a student take responsibility for their actions, change their behaviour, and learn from their mistakes.

When safety is threatened by the potentially violent or dangerous behaviour of a student, which places either the student or others at risk, school staff follow specific protocols for the protection of all. It is important that you and your child(ren) are aware of these protocols as, in times of imminent risk, they will be followed and might include, a) the immediate involvement of emergency services or supports and, b) sharing of private information.

Community Violent Threat Risk Assessment Protocol (VTRA): This is a community-wide protocol that details the steps by which school staff quickly respond to threatening incidents, such as: possession of a weapon or replica, bomb threat or plan, verbal, written, or electronic (internet) threats to injure or kill oneself or others, or other threats of violence. The first step involves gathering the Principal/Vice Principal, Social Worker, Psychological Consultant and/or Child and Youth Counsellor and police to assess the immediate threat. If the situation is deemed one of imminent risk, the Superintendent is informed and community agencies that are part of the VTRA protocol, such as local mental health organizations, are consulted. For more information about the VTRA Protocol please check <https://www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy/violence-threat-assessment-protocol/>

Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocol: The Suicide Protocol details the steps by which school staff respond to a student at risk of suicide. The protocol details steps for responding quickly, sensitively, and effectively to ensure the student’s safety. The steps include having a trained staff member interview the student and taking the necessary steps to ensure safety and arrange appropriate support for the student. For more information about the Suicide Protocol: <https://www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy/suicide-prevention-intervention-and-postvention-protocol/>

Contact with Parents and or Guardians: Parents and guardians play a vital role in maintaining the safety and well-being of their children. When a student is involved in a VTRA or Suicide Intervention protocol, every effort will be made to contact parents/guardians unless circumstances prevent us from doing so. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, or if they choose not to provide consent but a safety risk still exists, the processes outlined in the VTRA or Suicide Intervention protocols will still be followed.

As always, student safety is our first priority. If you have any questions regarding the Upper Grand District School Board Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol or Suicide Protocol, please contact the Superintendent of Education for your school at 519-822-4420.

Sincerely,

Martha Rogers

Director of Education and Secretary-Treasurer