



# ELORA PUBLIC SCHOOL

288 Mill Street East  
Elora, Ontario  
N0B 1S0  
519-846-5999

**Curt McQueen, Principal**

**Dawn Airdrie-Donovan – Vice  
Principal**

## September 2020 Newsletter

### Principal's Message

Please check out this video! [A Video Message from Mr. McQueen.MOV](#)

Hello Elora families and welcome back! I hope you are all doing well and staying healthy. It has been a very difficult six months since we left the building on March 13th. Thank you for your patience around the communication of details about the upcoming school year. With COVID-19 still very much in the forefront of our minds, I entirely understand the concern and worry associated with our return to school. Hopefully bringing everyone up to speed will help with some of the concerns.

On August 28th, Mrs. Airdrie posted a significant amount of information on the Elora website. We have intentionally waited until this weekend to post further details as there has been the tendency for plans to shift somewhat. This newsletter will provide the most up-to-date information specific to this special return to school as well as general topics that are communicated each year. Please review carefully.

If you did not see Mrs. Airdrie's posting, please check it out here: [Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year](#)

Embedded in that document are links to the Parent Handbook and Parent Q and A.....also excellent sources of information.

Much of what has been and will be shared has to do with in-school return. I know the administrators working with remote learning will be contacting those families very soon, if they have not done so yet.

Our top priority for the school year is student safety and well-being. During the PD Days last week, staff took part in extensive health and safety training related to COVID-19, Mrs. Airdrie and I were supported in the development of our special plans for a safe return, prepared the necessary PPE, and participated in a workshop about the ongoing importance of mental health for all of us. We have all worked hard to set up the school, classrooms, and yard in a manner that is consistent with the expectations from the Board and from Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health. Many elements of our routines, teaching/learning strategies, and daily tasks will not be what we are used to....both for adults and kids. We have stressed with each other that, despite the barriers to making connections, relationships must be a main focus for Elora Public School. The staff are committed to connecting with students, being a positive support for them and making each student feel safe and comfortable at school. We are aware of and continuing to learn about the social and emotional impacts of COVID-19 and how to best support our students through this current reality.

We worked on class organizations until late Friday. With the shifting of some students to remote learning, it has been an enormous task to get classes in place. Given our change in numbers, we were

reduced by one class for in-school learning and needed to re-organize. You will see staff and the class organization in the table below. In a typical year, it would be rare for students to change classes after the first day. Given the cohorting of classes with our safe return to school, changing classes will not be possible whatsoever for any student. Thanks for understanding this circumstance. With the reorganization, we have 2 kindergarten classes of about 22 students each and 4 primary classes of around 17 students each. The remaining classes (grades 4-8) have either 25 or 26 students. These numbers may change slightly once school begins due to potential new registrants. While we expect this class organization to remain in place for an extended period, it is still considered temporary. The timeline and exact plan for families who wish to return to in-school learning from remote learning is not known yet. We will share more details about this as we receive them.

Please take time to review all “Return to School” related links found on both the top of our website and the UGDSB website. Many families have reached out to me directly with comments and great questions. Your kindness, patience and support for the Elora staff has been incredible as we work through this. This is a far from ideal circumstance for all of us, but we can get through it together. Despite the difficulties associated with such a return, we are all looking forward to seeing the Elora students later this week!

Sincerely,

Curt McQueen  
Principal

**Elora Staff**

KA Teacher - Ann Pellerin KA ECE - Sheila Bauman KB Teacher - Tara Lichty KB ECE - Chantelle Arseneau 1/2A - Anna Mark 1/2B - Linda deKleine 2/3C - Janet Stelter 2/3D - Jodi Lawson 4A - Kari McCracken 5A - Gary White 5/6B - Michelle Youngblood 6/7D - Gillian Siegwart 7G - Nola Spicer Gore 7B - LTO position (to be hired) 7C - Andy Speers 7/8A - Britni Scott 8B - Katie Muller 8C - Sonya Mason 8D - Laurel Farrell Intermediate Math (half-time) - to be hired Intermediate Sci-Tech - Eric Kristensen Intermediate Art - Donna Hull Junior/Intermediate French - Lanny Fleming	Library - Gillian Siegwart Music/French - Jennifer Andrews P.E. - Dave Gear/Nola Spicer Gore Intermediate French - Laurel Farrell Gr. 4-8 MID - Jennifer Rupnow Life Skills - Carolyn Farrell Resource - Cathy Abercrombie Planning Time - Josh Cranston Planning Time - Ruth Robinson CYC - Danielle Schwindt EA - Karen Pell EA - Becky Pyke EA - April Tindall EA - Sue Benham EA - Zdenka Uddin EA - Melissa Corbit Office Coordinator - Paola Malyk Admin Office Asst. - Linda Peyton Vice Principal - Dawn Airdrie Principal - Curt McQueen
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**Preparing for Back to School**

Student Supplies

The key theme for student supplies from home is “minimal”. Please send the basics in a labelled backpack with your child. The basic list can be found on the link posted August 28th on our website. Here it is again: [Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year](#)

Here are some additional details that go along with student supplies:

- Everything is not needed for the first day. Homeroom teachers will send a list of specific class items once the school year is started. Don't worry if you have not picked anything up yet!
- \*In addition to the basics, our gr. ½ and ⅔ classes are recommending crayons/pencil crayons (already sharpened), large glue stick, scissors, a ruler, a hand pencil sharpener, a wipeable pencil box, travel sized kleenex box for personal use, non-scented markers, a small bath towel to sit on for outside learning
- With the exception of Kindergarten, students are only to come to school with one pair of footwear. This one pair should be **running shoes**. Once the weather changes, the Board will re-evaluate this rule
- Students are not able to change for gym class, however, deodorant in the backpack for our older grades would be appreciated
- Students will be eating lunches in their classroom. We are doing “boomerang” lunches. All garbage and recycling from snacks/lunches will be sent home. Keep this in mind when preparing lunches.
- Each student will bring a labelled water bottle. Our drinking fountains can only be used for refilling water bottles.
- Please label everything with your child's name
- Lockers will not be used and we have very limited access to any hooks or cubbies. Most classes will have students hang jackets and backpacks on their chairs
- Dress for the weather. We have a beautiful, spacious yard. All classes will be spending a lot of learning time outside, giving us mask breaks. Cool mornings can lead to warm days. Additional layers like sweatshirts and jackets will be helpful.
- Some classes hope to also take advantage of open spaces like Bissell Park. Please send your “walking trip permission form” back as soon as possible.

\*If you cannot provide your child with some general school supplies, no worries, we will make sure they are looked after.

### Masks and Lanyards

Each student is asked to bring a mask to wear on the first day of school. An additional mask would be helpful too. If students lose or forget their mask, we will be able to provide them with one. Each class has a colour-coded “break-away” lanyard to which they can clip their mask. The lanyards will help us identify the separate classes at recess.

### Recess Breaks

Each class will have a designated area for outdoor recess. The only exception to this may be our kindergarten classes, grade ½ classes, and grade ⅔ classes. These 3 groups may be paired to play in the same areas at recess because, when added up, they do not pierce the contact total of 50 for students. **Students do not need a mask at recess but they must maintain 2 metres of physical distancing from each other.** This will require lots of practice. Having your child spread their arms out as far as they can and talking about “wingspan” will help them gain an understanding of distancing.

For now, our climber and sand boxes are closed. Please give your child a heads-up about this.

### No Rotation of Classrooms

Typically our grade 7 and 8 students would rotate to a variety of classrooms for their specialized subjects. Student rotation will not happen this year. With the exception of going to the gym for physical education, all students will remain in their homeroom classroom for the day. Teachers will rotate to the various classrooms to deliver the specialized subjects.

### **Information about Communication**

For overall communication, information will be put on our website. Please check it often: <https://www.ugdsb.ca/elora/>

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

Email addresses for all teachers are available on our website. Within the first few days, teachers will let families know of the preferred mode of communication. This could include email or Google Classroom.

While we cannot get together face-to-face, we are still available to meet about your child. This can be done over the phone or in a virtual meeting using Google Meet. Don't hesitate to get in touch.

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

We continue to use a School Messenger App as a parent communication tool for your smartphone. 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.

## **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 when morning attendance is taken, 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 call the office. We will meet you at the front door to pick up your child.

## **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. **If at all possible, do not use our parking lot for pick up or drop off.** We strongly encourage you to walk your child to school or park on a side street and walk. This is for the safety of the children who will be arriving at and leaving a busy school. Thank you!

**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. Email to arrange this if you have not yet. [elora.ps@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:elora.ps@ugdsb.on.ca)  
Thank you.

## **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.

## **Meet the Teacher Night**

Stay tuned for a potential virtual option to Meet the Teacher Night! 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 October 30, November 27, January 29, June 4. Please note that the school year for students goes until Tuesday, June 29th. 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 virtual and will be held on Tuesday, September 22nd in the evening. Time and meeting access instructions will be posted on our website.

## **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.

### **CONSENT TO SHARE INFORMATION - MEDIA, WEBSITES, ETC.**

Please read completely and sign and return the back page.

## **Reminder for parents/guardians: Student Accident Insurance**

Parents/guardians are responsible for expenses related to student injuries on school premises during school activities. Accidents can happen and the costs involved might not be fully covered by Provincial Health Care or employer group insurance plans. The Upper Grand District School Board is empowered under the Education Act to offer Accident and Life Insurance for students.

Information will be sent home with respect to Student Accident Insurance offered by Old Republic

Insurance Company of Canada. You should receive:

1. An introduction letter from the Director of Education to parents/guardians
2. A brochure about Student Accident Insurance

Old Republic offers a variety of options, including family rates and multi-year plans, at affordable prices. The cost must be paid by parents/guardians. Insurance can be purchased online at [www.insuremykids.com](http://www.insuremykids.com) or by calling Old Republic toll free at 1-800-463-KIDS (5437). If you have questions, please contact Old Republic directly at the website or phone number listed here. For today's active children, Student Accident Insurance is valuable.

## **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.

## **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.

## **School Emergency Response Training and Annual Drills**

This is to provide you with some information regarding our emergency drills for this 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.

Fire drills will continue to occur this year. Classes will move throughout the building while maintaining physical distance between students in the classroom, hallway and at all exits. Locations on the school playground or field will be identified that would allow for a physical distancing between students to be maintained.

Lockdown, tornado, and bomb threat drills will not take place during COVID-19, however, students will participate in a modified drill and review of emergency procedures in case of a real life-threatening situation. The modified practice drill must adhere to physical distance requirements.

## **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