

# September 2023-2024 Newsletter



## Message from the School

Welcome back John Black students and families! We are excited to start a new year with this strong, vibrant, and caring school community.

As we strive to keep our families up to date with important information, please ensure that your email is updated in your child's student information form that will be coming home on Tuesday, as my main communication tool with the community is through Friday email: Updates, Reminders and Upcoming dates. Our John Black school website <https://www.ugdsb.ca/jblack/> is also updated with board information and School Council Minutes. Additionally, email and phone communication through School Messenger will be shared as needed. For more information from the board about changes to this school year please visit this link to the board website:

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/welcome-back-ugdsb-to-the-2023-2024-school-year/>

At John Black PS, we believe that all students are capable of achieving success, especially if they have support from both home and school. We look forward to your participation in your child's education. If you have any questions or concerns at any time throughout the school year, please feel free to call the school.

We welcome and encourage communication between home and school and look forward to maintaining a strong community partnership throughout the upcoming year.

Sincerely,

*Sarah Schoettler*

Principal

## Calendar – [Elementary School Calendar 2023/2024](#)



### NEW! School Hours and Bell Times:

#### BALANCED SCHOOL DAY

Time	Event
8:55 am - 9:45 am	Period 1
9:45 am - 10:35 am	Period 2
10:35 am - 10:55	NUTRI-BREAK (eating portion)
10:55am - 11:15 am	NUTRI-BREAK (morning recess)
11:15 am - 12:05 pm	Period 3
12:05 pm - 12:55 pm	Period 4
12:55 pm - 1:15 pm	NUTRI-BREAK (eating portion)
1:15 pm - 1:35 pm	NUTRI-BREAK (afternoon Recess)
1:35 pm - 2:25 pm	Period 5
2:25 pm - 3:15 pm	Period 6

## Forms

Walking Trip, Media Consent and Student Verification forms will be sent home next week. Please sign and return all forms as soon as possible. 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:

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy/policy-518-students-with-life-threatening-medical-conditions/> and contact the school as soon as possible. We will work with you to develop a Plan of Care to support your child.

## What to Send to School:

Please only send necessary personal items to school. Grade 1-6 Students are asked to bring the following items clearly labeled with their name:

- Backpack or tote bag for personal belongings
- Personal water bottle
- Seasonal outdoor wear
- Indoor shoes
- Personal school supplies that are necessary for the day (e.g., pencil case, calculator, etc.) – Please note that each classroom educator will ensure families are aware of which personal school items are required.
- Toys and personal items should remain at home.

Kindergarten students are asked to bring the following items clearly labeled with their name:

- Appropriate-sized backpack or tote bag for personal belongings
- Change of clothing in a sealed bag
- Personal water bottle
- Seasonal outdoor wear
- Indoor shoes
- Toys and personal items should remain at home.

## Communication

Each teacher will have their own process for communicating with parents. This will be shared with families in the first weeks of school. All students, and their families, will continue to have access to Google Classroom.

We will be sending home our regular package of information and forms on the first day of school. Please complete the forms, and return them to your child's teacher prior to Friday, September 8th.

## Scent Awareness in the School

Please be aware that some staff and students in our school are extremely sensitive to scented products such as perfumes, colognes, aftershaves, body sprays, air fresheners etc. The presence of scented products can adversely affect a person's health, including life threatening reactions. Please do not wear or use scented products at any time in our school. Your participation helps to ensure that UGDSB is a healthy and safe learning and working environment for all.

## School Council

School Council would like to take this opportunity to welcome back all of our returning families as well as send a warm welcome to all our new families. The first 2023/2024 School Council meeting will be held on **Thursday, September 14th from 6:30pm-7:30pm** in our Library Learning Commons.

This meeting will be in-person and a link for people to access virtually if preferred will be shared next Tuesday through email.



We welcome all members of the school community, new and returning, to come and see what council is about. The night will consist of a Meet and Greet, elections and planning for the upcoming year. We hope to recruit a few new members this year. You can give whatever time you have available and there is never any pressure to sign up for anything.

If you wish to nominate yourself or someone else for a position on the School Council Executive Committee, please follow the link below to complete the online nomination form prior to the first meeting: <https://forms.gle/ixVgReNFpadpEfsHA>

Look for upcoming information regarding our Fall Fundraiser! School Council fundraising is how we help support our kids and our school. Last year School Council was able to purchase new chromebooks, and resources for our classrooms. We appreciate all of the support our families give to our students and their success at John Black PS.

We look forward to a fun filled year and if you have any questions for School Council you can email us at [SC.JohnBlack@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:SC.JohnBlack@ugdsb.on.ca)

## September Open House

We are over the moon to invite families to our Open House on **Thursday, September 28<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-8pm.** More information will be shared about the event closer to the date.

### Late Arrival:

Students who arrive after 8:55 am will need to come through the main doors and check in at the office. If there is any



communication that needs to come to the office, please call 519-843-2665. Parents/Caregivers please remind your child to check into the office before going to the classroom.



## Occupational Therapy Support at John Black

Occupational Therapist (OT) from KidsAbility Centre for Child Development will be working with students and teachers in our school. A letter will be sent home to provide an overview of their services.

### BYOD – Bring your own device

Parents/students please make a cooperative decision about their child bringing technology to school. Laptops, tablets and hand-held devices are allowed within classrooms, for educational use only. They are not to be used without teacher permission. 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. The school is not responsible for damages that might occur to devices.

## Pizza Days will be Coming Soon

We are in the midst of setting up pizza days once again. More information will come out soon!



## Notifying the School of a Student Absence – Safe Arrival

The rules of the Safe Arrival program state that the school must know why a student is not present on any particular day. This means that school office staff will continue to try to contact parents until one is reached; we sometimes make four or five calls for one child. This takes an inordinate amount of time and often stretches the office staffs' ability to carry out other duties. Please assist us in speeding this process up and calling when you know if your child(ren) is/are going to be late or absent. Messages can be left by phoning the school (519 843-2665) and choosing extension 100. We prefer that messages are left as our morning entry time is very busy. Please send any notes or information about absences to your child's teacher if you are aware in advance and we will make sure it is noted. Thank you!

## Arrive Home Safely and Timely

After being dismissed from class at the end of the day, students are requested to go directly home or to a caregiver before proceeding to other activities. This includes playing after school on the playground. Please reinforce this message with your child.

## Student Safety on Lamond St.



As you may have noticed, we have a visual and physical barrier creating a walking pathway for our students. This has helped to highly improve the safety on Lamond St. All students with bikes/scooters are to walk their vehicles within this path coming to and from school. To ensure the utmost safety, we ask that parents/guardians drive slowly on Lamond St. during drop-off

and pick-up times.

## Lunch Time

Students are expected to stay at school during the lunch hour unless going home with a parent. We do not encourage students leaving the property without an adult.

**Allergies** Many students suffer from allergies. Reactions to allergic substances vary from relatively mild irritations such as itchy eyes, sneezing, scratchy throat, etc. to potentially fatal conditions where the sufferer experiences breathing problems and/or anaphylactic shock. A student who is allergic to peanuts often falls in this second category. Please be



aware that there may be restrictions in your child's class to protect a student with such an allergy. We ask you to abide by any restriction(s) that may be imposed in these cases and, in the case of nuts or nut products, we ask that you do not send any to school. We are a nut-free school. Parents of students with potentially life-threatening allergies are asked to inform the school and complete the required paperwork. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding as we work together to keep our students safe.

## Bus Riding Expectations

Students are expected to follow the rules of the bus by listening to the driver, remaining in their seats, refraining from eating or drinking anything while on the bus, and following the directions of the bus patrols when entering or exiting the bus. A newsletter has been sent home from the bus company along with their expectations for student behaviour. It is very helpful when parents review these rules with their children at home. Thank you for your partnership in keeping our students safe.



## Bus Reminder

Bus transportation is provided to students based on the distance their home is from the school. Such students are placed on a regularly scheduled bus route and must travel

on this route and no other. Bus students may not switch buses for any reason. In addition, students who walk to school may not travel on a regularly scheduled bus route. Courtesy seating is available this year depending on the number of seats available. Parents/Guardians need to fill in the courtesy seat form online, found on [www.stwdsts.ca](http://www.stwdsts.ca) under Communications, Forms, TF006. Courtesy seats become available in early October. Transportation to and from school, for students who qualify under school board policy, is provided by Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation Services/Services de transport de Wellington-Dufferin (STWDSTS).

Transportation Eligibility. Please note that if you do not wish for your child to take the bus, please opt-out at [www.stwdsts.ca](http://www.stwdsts.ca). Visit [www.stwdsts.ca](http://www.stwdsts.ca) for information about bus delays or cancellations, transportation policy, and answers to frequently asked questions. [Please subscribe for bus delays and cancellations notifications.](#) Your subscription for bus delays and cancellations does not carry over from the last school year. Look in the Blue Division for our area. The annual newsletters is available here: [STWDSTS 2023-2024 Newsletter – information on busing](#)

## Food & Friends Snack Program

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Again this year, we have received grant money from the Children's Foundation of Guelph and Wellington (Food and Friends) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, to support our snack program at John Black.



This snack program will continue to be offered to all students. Each classroom has a snack bin that contains healthy food choices such as applesauce and granola bars. Sometimes we also have fresh fruit and vegetables available.

In addition this year, we are able to bring back our special food days (i.e. salad day). If you would like to help with our special food days, we would love to have you. We could use help with things such as cutting and preparing vegetables in the morning, as well as



helping with set up and serving. Please let us know by emailing Miss Matheson at [terra.matheson@ugcloud.ca](mailto:terra.matheson@ugcloud.ca)

As always, thank you for your support.

## A Message From The Green Team

In our quest to make the planet greener, The Green Team is excited to announce that we are bringing back recycling of containers and compost! Each classroom is going to be equipped with 2 recycling bins (paper and container), as well as a green bin. Our green team will be working hard throughout the year to promote good environmental habits throughout the school and bring awareness to ways in which we can decrease our carbon footprint. Stay tuned for many new (and old) initiatives that the green team will be running throughout the year!



Thanks to everyone for supporting the Green Team!

## Reminder for parents/guardians: Accidents happen – be prepared with Student Accident Insurance

Parents and guardians are responsible for expenses related to student injuries on school premises or during school activities. Accidents can and do 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.

A letter from the Upper Grand District School Board will be sent home with students containing information with respect to two Programs available for the purchase of Student Accident Insurance. The Insuremykids Program is offered through Old Republic Insurance Company of Canada and the Studyinsured Program is underwritten by Certain Lloyd's Underwriters through AON Insurance.

Each program offers a variety of options, including family rates at affordable prices. The cost must be paid by the parent or guardian. Paper copies of the application are no longer available. Purchase is done directly online or by contacting the Provider:

**[www.insuremykids.com](http://www.insuremykids.com)** or call toll free **1-800-463-5437**

**[www.studyinsuredstudentaccident.com](http://www.studyinsuredstudentaccident.com)** or call toll free 1-833-560-0527.

For today's active children, especially those who participate in field trips, co-curricular and other school activities outside the school day, Student Accident Insurance is valuable.

## **Wellness Works: Handling the First 9 Days of School**

As students and parents/guardians prepare for the new school year, there may be a lot of different emotions. Transition and change can be hard for many and at the UGDSB we want parents and students to know that we have the resources to support you and your child's mental health as they go along their school journey. Students can check out our [Mental Health and Me](#) website for resources and tips about Mental Wellness and parents can check our [MHUG Parents](#) website. Students and parents can also look out for our Wellness Works: Handling the First 9 Days of School campaign on social media.

## **Back to school 2023-24: School operations and health and safety information**

The Upper Grand District School Board looks forward to welcoming all students, staff and families this September. Please click on the link for important school operations and health and safety information: <https://www.ugdsb.ca/blog/back-to-school-2023-24-school-operations-and-health-and-safety-information/>

## **Video Surveillance Cameras**

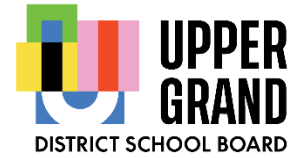
As an added security measure, please note that video surveillance cameras have been installed in several areas in our school. These areas are clearly marked with signage and video cameras are not being used in areas where students, staff and authorized

visitors have a high expectation of privacy including change rooms, washrooms and staff rooms. Information obtained through video surveillance provides us with an additional way to enhance the protection of students, staff, the public and property. Should you have any questions please refer to the Upper Grand School Board's Video Surveillance Policy #203.

## **Mabel's Labels**

One way to help keep you and your family organized and prevent your child's belongings from getting lost is to label them! Right now, is a great time to get back to school label packages from Mabel's Labels and contribute to our school fundraiser by searching "John Black" at check out! [https://mabelslabels.ca/en\\_CA/](https://mabelslabels.ca/en_CA/)

## Professional Activity Day Description 2023/24



**Date:** September 18, 2023

**Length:** Full Day

**Topic 1:** AM - Literacy

**Entity Hosting:** School board

**Presenter(s)/Facilitator(s):** School Administrators

**Description:** Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers will receive professional learning on early reading instruction, universal design for learning, and screening. to ensure educators are prepared to support their students in a manner consistent with the recommendations in the [Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read](#) report for the full school year. Additionally, staff will focus on the implementation of the new Language curriculum in grades 1 - 8 and on embedding high yield strategies in reading across the various subject curriculum areas. In Secondary schools, teachers will continue professional development on the de-streamed grade 9 course and on effective practices for teaching reading across various subject areas. Furthermore, enhancing teacher efficacy in supporting students to consolidate foundation knowledge and skills in Grade 9 destreamed English will be a focus of this professional learning time.

**Topic 2:** PM - Student Well-being, School Safety and Violence Prevention

**Entity Hosting:** School board

**Presenter(s)/Facilitator(s):** School Administrators and Online Learning Platforms

All staff will receive training related to *PPM 161 - Supporting Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions*. Additionally, educators will engage in continued learning regarding detection and intervention of sex trafficking related to students. Finally, staff will review procedures and policies regarding school safety and violence prevention including but not limited to emergency response, child abuse and protection, student crisis response protocols and suicide intervention.

September 5, 2023

UGDSB Threat/Risk Assessment and Suicide Protocol

Notification Dear Parents/Guardians:

The Upper Grand District School Board is committed to providing safe learning environments for all students, staff, school visitors, and community members. 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. The VTRA Protocol (P11) can be found via this link: <http://www.ugdsb.ca/board/policy/violence-threat-assessmentprotocol/>

Suicide Prevention, Intervention and Postvention Protocol: This 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. The Suicide Intervention and Postvention Protocol (P12) can be found via this link:

<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 a suicide risk or threat, 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 Protocol or Suicide Intervention and Postvention Protocol will still be followed.

**Upper Grand District School Board**

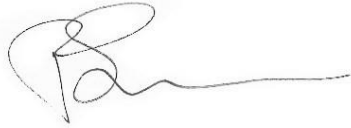
- Ralf Mesenbrink; Chair
  - Jen Edwards
  - Irene Hanenberg
  - Martha MacNeil
  - Kenn Manzerolle
  - Katherine Hauser; Vice Chair
  - Robin Ross
  - Luke Weiler
  - Laurie Whyte
  - Lynn Topping
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As always, student safety is our first priority. If you have any questions regarding the Upper Grand District

School Board's Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol or Suicide Intervention and Postvention Protocol, please contact the Superintendent of Education for your school at 519-822-4420.

Sincerely,



Peter Sovran  
Director of Education

September 2023

## Elementary School Organizations

Schools have built class lists based on their tentative organizations. Changes may be necessary at your child(ren)'s school in order that our Board remains compliant with Ministry parameters (see below). Any changes would be implemented by Monday, September 18th. Principals do not have the option of changing the school organization that is set by the District Staffing Committee of the Board. If changes affect your child(ren), you will be informed by the school.

### Ministry of Education Parameters

- Full Day Kindergarten Class Size Average for the Board is 26 students
- 90% of Full Day Kindergarten classes with 29 or fewer students
- 10% of Full Day Kindergarten classes with up to 32 students, under certain circumstances
- 90% of the Board's primary classes with 20 or fewer students
- 10% of the Board's primary classes up to a maximum of 23 students
- Grade 3/4 classes have a cap of 23 students
- Junior/Intermediate Class Size Average for the Board is 24.5 students
-