

# École John McCrae School

## NEWSLETTER – MARCH 2016

189 Water Street, Guelph, Ontario N1G 1B3  
Phone: 519-824-0028 Fax: 519-824-7067 Website: [www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc/](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc/)



Principal: Leslie Newman

Vice Principal: Olivier Cutz

Office Co-ordinator: Kathy Lambkin

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### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

I think that many people will remember 2015-2016 as the winter that never was. Our students have really had only a few short weeks to build forts, create snow people and, when we weren't looking, throw snow at each other. So much of the winter has been so warm that we have had fields of mud. Our students have been terrific. They have understood that while we would prefer to have all of the students spread out throughout the fields, when it is so wet and muddy, we have no choice but to keep them on the hard top. It is crowded and not nearly as much fun for them, but they find things to do and make the best of it.

We know that many of our families will be leaving for warmer climates during the March Break. If you plan on leaving early or coming back to school later please let the school know. That way, we won't be calling you in Florida asking where your child is! Whether you travel during the holidays or stay close to home, we hope that you are able to enjoy some quality time with your family. As for me, my husband and I will be heading to North Bay and to Peterborough to visit our children who are away at University.

March to June will go by in a flash. If you have a chance, look at the school calendar (on the right-hand side of the John McCrae website). There is also a lot of information on the website (teacher sites, blogs, Twitter) that will help you keep informed and up to date. As always, call the school if you have any questions. Happy spring!

*Leslie Newman*

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### SCHOOL COUNCIL CORNER

\*Please join us for the next School Council Meeting on Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> from 6:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. (in the school library). Everyone is welcome! If you require childcare for the meeting, please contact Mme Newman at [leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca) by Monday, March 7<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to be on the School Council mailing list, please write to [johnmccraeschoolcouncil@gmail.com](mailto:johnmccraeschoolcouncil@gmail.com).

\*Family Fun Night – After the resounding success of last year's Family Fun Night, many of us are looking forward to June 2<sup>nd</sup> for this year's event. Lots of help is needed! Look for the violet information sheet that came home with your student last week. You may also contact Brenda MacDonald, [brendamacd@gmail.com](mailto:brendamacd@gmail.com), or Shannon Doyle, [sparkes\\_edu@yahoo.ca](mailto:sparkes_edu@yahoo.ca), if you can help in any way!

\*Thanks to everyone who attended School Council's Family Technology Night! It was a wonderful and informative event. A special thanks also goes out to our guests, Andrew Cloutier and Jen Apgar, who taught us so much.

\*Pizza Days – As you know, many of the kids at John McCrae enjoy a Friday pizza treat. Help is needed on these days to divide and distribute the slices according to what is ordered. Please review our "VolunteerSpot" site <http://vols.pt/8AUSKZ> to sign up for Fridays that you might be able to offer some assistance. Alternatively, you can contact Sheryl Gamble at [sherylinguelph@gmail.com](mailto:sherylinguelph@gmail.com).

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### NEW BELL TIMES FOR THE 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

We would like to inform you of a bell time change at our school that will be in effect starting in September 2016. Over the past year, our transportation provider, STWDSTS, has been reviewing its bus routes in Guelph, looking for a way to reduce the number of buses in school loading zones.

STWDSTS believes that routes should be efficient and cost effective without jeopardizing student safety and customer service. The transportation service is therefore moving to a multi-tier route system. Under the current 'one bus, one road' system, a bus will travel down a road to pick up students from multiple schools and either transfer them or drop them off at schools A, B, and C. The problem is that when the bus breaks down, a chain reaction of bus delays occurs. Also, having multiple schools on a run

may increase the time students spend on a bus and increases the number of buses in the school bus loading zones, causing congestion and delays.

The new 'multi-tier' model means that students from school A would be picked up and dropped off at school A. Then the bus would go out and pick up the students from school B and drop them off at school B, and so on.

With this model, fewer buses are on the road, leading to reduced congestion in bus loading zones. This model is also more cost effective, and eases the pressure to find bus drivers – as there is currently a shortage of drivers in the City of Guelph. Starting for the 2016-2017 school year, a number of schools in Guelph will have new bell times, including John McCrae.

**Bell time changes for the 2016-2017 school year:**

Current: 8:50am – 3:20pm

**New time: 8:35am – 3:05pm**

If you have any questions, please contact the school. Thank you for your understanding.

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**WELCOME MR. NORRIS-HAMILTON**

Mme Rankin is now on maternity leave and we wish her a safe delivery and healthy baby. Welcome to Mr. Norris-Hamilton who will be replacing her. We know you will love our John McCrae family!

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**UPPER GRAND FRENCH REVIEW**

The Upper Grand District School Board is holding four public meetings to provide the public with information on the board's French Review. The meetings will provide information on the problems, alternatives, and recommendations described in the report prepared by the French Review Committee. All are welcome to attend. For meeting dates and to read the French Review report, visit [www.ugdsb.on.ca/frenchreview](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/frenchreview).

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**NEWS FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL CLUB**

**LITTERLESS LUNCHES – TUESDAYS!**

Just a reminder to all parents that Tuesdays are litterless lunch days. Please help your child bring a litter-free lunch to school to reduce the amount of waste at John McCrae. Some litterless lunch items include tupperware containers (instead of plastic bags) and reusable water bottles (instead of juice boxes).

**BOOMERANG LUNCHES – EVERYDAY!**

Also a reminder that our school is starting a Boomerang Lunch Program which means that your child will be encouraged to bring home all their compostable items. This is because our school does not have compost bins and it is wasteful to be putting compostable items into the garbage instead of the green bin. It also lets you know what your child is not eating!

Thank you! Let's keep our school green and clean!

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**INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES**

In case of severe winter weather, with poor driving conditions and bus cancellations and delays, please listen for announcements on radio stations 1460 AM CJOY, 106.1 Magic FM, 900 AM CHML, 107.9 FM CJXY (Y108), Oldies 1090 AM, 105.3 Kool FM, News Talk 570 AM, 96.7 FM CHYM, 1150 AM CKOC, 102.9 FM CKLH, 820 AM CHAM and ,CKCO-TV. Announcements for John McCrae PS are included in “**South Wellington and the City of Guelph.**”

**Please note:** *If buses do not operate in the morning, they will not operate in the afternoon. If you elect to drive your student to school, you must make arrangements for them to be picked up at the end of the day (please communicate the arrangement with your student, or leave a note in their agenda, prior to drop-off). Likewise, if you choose to keep your “walking” student at home on an inclement weather day, you must notify the office (Attendance line #100) of the student's absence, otherwise the office will contact you to confirm your student's absence.*

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**SCHOOL SPIRIT WEAR**

Show your school spirit with some John McCrae apparel. Order forms have gone home, but please consider placing your orders online at [www.schoolcashonline.com](http://www.schoolcashonline.com) Samples are available in the office for viewing/sizing. **Orders are due, Thursday, March 10<sup>th</sup>.** No orders will be accepted after March Break.

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## MOVING IN? MOVING OUT?

If you are planning a move to another school this summer, or know of someone moving into our school area for the 2016-2017 school year, please notify the office as soon as possible.

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## COLD & FLU SEASON

Winter is far from over and so are the illnesses and contagious bugs that come with it! If your child has flu-like symptoms, cold, cough, sore throat, or a rash, please keep them home to rest and recuperate before returning to school. When our students come to school ill they do not work well and they pass on their illnesses to others. When we are sick, we all feel better at home in a warm bed with our favorite things.

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## SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

Thank you, John McCrae families, for signing up – 83% of our school population is registered to use this convenient and secure online payment method! However, we believe we can do better! Let's see more than 90% of John McCrae families signing up and USING this method of payment for school items, trip, and more! You will receive email notifications when items are available to purchase, and reminder emails before an item expires. Please visit [www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc) and follow the prompts through the link at right to sign up.



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## SCIENCE NEWS

Intermediate Science Fair – Wednesday, March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9am-7:30pm

This year, a number of our intermediate students chose to present a self-run experiment at our science fair. The projects look great so far and parents are welcome to come out and see the great work.

Cardboard Boat Races

John McCrae sent two intermediate teams to the Skills Canada Cardboard Boat Race Challenge at the Centennial Pool this year. Our kids did very well, even if they got a little wet by the end. Team members were: Isabel M., Mandy B., Evan S., Jaida P., Jason ND, Chloe and Anna B. and Holly G.

Junior and Intermediate Chess Tournament – Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, Aberfoyle

John McCrae is running a junior and an intermediate chess club this year. We will be sending 12 students to this board-wide tournament.

Skills Canada – Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, College Heights and Centennial

This month, our junior and intermediate students are trying out for the Skills Canada Tech Challenge. It's a chance for kids to use their technological skills to design a device to solve a problem. There are events in wood working, Lego robotics and mechanics, green energy and construction. We'll be taking 28 students this year, so good luck to everyone.

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## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

Please remember that we turn our clocks forward one hour on Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>.

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## MARCH BREAK

Please remember that spring break for our students is from Monday, March 14<sup>th</sup> to Friday, March 18<sup>th</sup>.

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## CLASS PLACEMENT REQUESTS

In the past, we have received a number of class placement requests for the coming school year. This can make class building very difficult and sometimes hinder the process significantly. Due to our ever changing school population and the fact that our grade 7 and 8 students are on rotary, **we will not be taking any class placement requests for September 2016.** If your child has some exceptional circumstances that require consideration when doing class placements, please email Mme Newman directly, [leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:leslie.newman@ugdsb.on.ca). Please know that when placing your child in a class, we consider their ability, personality, friendships, learning style, and behaviour. Class building is a lengthy process that is given a great deal of thought by the staff. Thank you for recognizing that we do our very best for each and every student.

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## SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

During the week of Feb. 29 - March 4, students in grades 4-12 will be completing a School Climate Survey. The purpose of this survey is to determine whether or not our students feel that their school provides a safe and inclusive learning environment. The survey asks general questions about how the student is feeling at school, as well as specific questions about bullying. Staff and parents are also being asked to complete a climate survey about their school. Parents can use the following link to access the

survey, or the survey can be accessed through our school website.  
[https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV\\_87VAOCZ4TdwN52Z](https://uoguelph.eu.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_87VAOCZ4TdwN52Z)

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## **FEBRUARY HEALTH CORNER**

*Healthy School Committee helping your family eat well, move well and think well!*

The human brain is the fattest organ in the body and consists of at least **60 percent** fat. These fats must be obtained from what we eat.

How to add **healthy fats** and other brain-friendly foods to your family's daily meals.

1. Avocados: try in guacamole, in shakes, in salads, or on its own.
2. Taking omega-3 fats; or consuming cold-water fatty fish like salmon, sardines, trout, etc.
3. Green leafy vegetables: fresh in salad, stir-fry, steam and add a healthy fat.
4. Blueberries- fresh or frozen, in shakes, as a topping and on its own.
5. Pumpkin seeds; loaded with zinc
6. More tomatoes, fresh or cooked for lycopenes (brain action)
7. Olive oil: add to salads and to vegetables after they have been steamed.
8. Coconut oil: add to shakes, cooking, vegetables, popcorn, baking.
9. Nuts: raw is best. add to shakes, baking, topping for any dish, nut spreads on crackers. (at home only...no nuts at school)

**Lunch-box friendly trail mix** – Yields 12, ¼ cup servings (lasts one month)

1 cup roasted pumpkins seeds

1 cup sunflower seeds

1/2 cup raisins or dried cranberries

(Replaces a store bought granola bar to reduce added sugar, increase good fats and protein.)

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## **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 feedback at [www.ugdsb.on.ca/policy](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/policy). Deadline for public input is April 13<sup>th</sup>. Persons without internet access may call 519-822-4420 ext. 723 to request a printed copy of the draft documents.

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## **NO CHILD WITHOUT – MEDIC ALERT**

Did you know that one in five children lives with a medical condition, allergy, or special need that must be communicated during a medical emergency? In many cases, children are the most vulnerable because they are often too young, too afraid, or too hurt to express themselves. “No Child Without” is a charitable program that protects children and supports school officials to address concerns about students living with chronic medical conditions, allergies or special needs. For information on FREE medical identification services, please see the office for a brochure.

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## **UGDSB INVITES PARENTS TO LEARN ABOUT CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY AT “DIGITAL SATURDAY”**

The Upper Grand District School Board is hosting an open house featuring displays and workshops on how students are using technology to learn. “Digital Saturday” takes place on March 5, 2016, from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Westminster Woods Public School in Guelph.

“In the last few years there has been exponential growth in the use of technological tools and resources in Upper Grand schools,” said Brent McDonald, Superintendent of Education responsible for Information Technology. “Students don’t stop using what they’re learning as soon as the bell rings at the end of the day. A good number of these resources are available 24/7, so they’re used at home and school.”

A presentation on technology in the classroom to the board's Parent Involvement Committee was the inspiration for the idea of hosting a technology open house for all parents. "We thought a Saturday morning would be the best time for parents to come out and see what we're doing," said McDonald. "Students can come too."

Digital Saturday will be an opportunity to explore and learn about:

- New technologies in the classroom like Chromebooks, UGCloud
- Assistive technologies to support all learners including Kurzweil and Read&Write for Google
- Robotics and coding and virtual reality in the classroom demonstrations
- Online digital resources for assisting student learning such as UG2GO, UGCloud and Homework Help

There will be lots of opportunities for interaction and co-learning. Older children (8 and up) may find the display tables and workshops informative and engaging. We hope to see you there as partners in education!

#### Event details:

- **DATE:** Saturday March 5, 2016
- **TIME:** 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Open house closes at 12 p.m.
- **LOCATION:** Westminster Woods Public School, 140 Goodwin Drive, Guelph

#### For more information:

Heather Loney, Communications and Community Engagement Officer

519-822-4420 ext.725

[heather.loney@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:heather.loney@ugdsb.on.ca)

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### MARCH ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS: REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

The environmental theme for this month is not a new one. We are talking about Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. These are the 3 R's of environmental stewardship and by practicing them we will help planet Earth. Did you know all of them are not created equal? The best one of the three is: Reduce.

Reduce means to use less of something. This is the best of the 3 R's because we don't even use our natural resources to begin with! What could we use less of? There are many things you can think of. Use less water, or use less paper, or – very important - buy less 'stuff'.

Recycle is critical if we want to keep things out of the landfill. More and more items are starting to be recycled, so be responsible and put them in the proper containers provided. If you don't, they end up in the regular garbage and harm nature by forcing us to create more garbage dumps that pollute our planet. We also need to make sure toxic items like paint and batteries don't end up in the garbage, but are brought to the hazardous waste depot. And never throw out your old smart phone. Take it back to your cell phone company for recycling. It contains minerals that are being mined in areas that are destroying precious habitats.



The Möbius loop is the universally recognized recycling symbol. It consists of those 3 circular arrows. We can put compostable items into our organic bins, like food scraps including fruit & vegetables, dairy, meat, breads, as well as paper tissues and paper towels. We can recycle containers including plastics, glass, metals and tetra paks and milk cartons. And we can also recycle paper, boxboard like Kleenex boxes, and cardboard. So **DO NOT** throw these items into the garbage at home or the garbage containers here at school. Find the right recycling bin. Let these items be turned into something new again!

**Slogan of the month:** *Don't trash our future! Recycle!*

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### TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH: Kids Do Well If They Can - Collaborative Proactive Solutions

In our schools we use a positive supportive approach with all our students. One such approach that we follow in our schools is Collaborative Proactive Solutions (CPS). This is a very effective way to help children and youth who are struggling by working with them to building skills and resources.

Dr. Ross Greene, who developed Collaborative Proactive Solutions, believes that **Kids Do Well If They Can**. If they are not doing well it is because they're lacking the skills, not to be challenging. If they had the skills, they wouldn't be challenging. Dr. Greene also stresses that **Doing well is always preferable to not doing well** (*if a kid has the skills to do well in the first place*).

When children and youth are faced with challenges that are too much for their skills and resources, they often engage in challenging behaviour because they do not have the skills to engage in positive behaviour.

Challenging behavior in children and youth is best understood as the result of lagging skills (in the terms of flexibility/adaptability, frustration tolerance, and problem solving) rather than as the result of lack of motivation on the child/youth's part. And second, the best way to reduce challenging behaviour is by working together with the child/youth – collaborating – to solve the problems setting them in motion in the first place.

Dr. Greene's Collaborative Proactive Solutions is a very successful approach for children and youth presenting with a variety of challenging behaviours, which is why we use this approach in our schools.

Dr. Greene also has many tips for parents, so they can use Collaborative Proactive Solutions at home. If you are interested in learning more, please see his website: <http://www.livesinthebalance.org/parents-families> Information for this article has been taken from Dr. Ross Greene's website.

*Dr. Lynn Woodford, Psychologist, is the Mental Health and Addiction Lead for Upper Grand District School Board  
Follow me on twitter: @drlynnwoodford*

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## **ENGAGING YOUR CHILD IN MATHEMATICS 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 mathematics.

Like reading, mathematics is a subject that is indeed necessary for functioning adequately in society. More than that, mathematics is a subject that should be more enjoyable than it is perceived to be. Parents' attitudes towards mathematics has an impact on their children's attitudes. Children whose parents show an interest in and enthusiasm for mathematics around the home will be more likely to develop that enthusiasm themselves.

**Activities in the Home** If you have dice, playing cards, and a bit of time....oh the "number sense" fun you can have.

1. Work on Place Value – Use a grade appropriate number of dice and use the numbers rolled as digits to "make the biggest number you can, make the smallest number you can, make a number close to 100" etc.
2. Work on Number Sense – Use 2 die to add numbers together....to make it harder, you can use the 2 die to subtract, and multiply.
3. War – Use a deck of cards to compare numbers. Each person flips their cards at the same time, the person with the higher number gets both cards.
4. What's my number? Someone holds a card on their forehead and asks the other person questions to try to guess their number (for example, is it greater than 5, is it odd or even).

Give it a go and have fun building number sense fluency together.

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## **TRANSITION PLANS**

While it may feel like it is early in the year to think about moving on to the next school year, plans are underway to ensure that students have a successful transition in September. For students that are changing schools, visits may have already begun. Specific transition plans are often particularly important for students with an Individual Education Plan and therefore are a required component of any IEP. For many students, the support provided to the whole class is all they need to have a successful transition, however other students may need more specific goals and support to help them deal with a variety of changes throughout the day.

**Common transitions that can be addressed on a transition plan include:**

- entry to school
- move to a new school or new grade/teacher
- transition to post-secondary: workplace, apprenticeship, college, university, community etc.
- in-school transitions could include: starting/stopping activities, leaving the classroom, going to recess/gym, going on field trips

**As a parent, you can play an important role in transition planning for your child by:**

- working together with school staff to discuss the transition goals

- providing visits to the new school
- talking about the transition in a positive way
- looking at pictures of the new teachers and school building
- reading social stories to give your child the reassurance they need

***Preparation is crucial for transitions to be successful, and a team approach between home and school is key.***