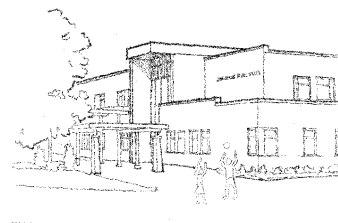


# École John McCrae School

## NEWSLETTER – SEPTEMBER 2021

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: Walter Vander Vaart

Vice Principal: Lynn-Michelle Fortier

Office Co-ordinator: Kathy Lambkin

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### PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Bonjour and welcome back to all students, staff, and parents! After an extended time away from school, learning virtually together, we are feeling the hope and normalcy that being in school brings. We are looking forward to a great year together. Our first day was very exciting, and full of positive energy.

While our last year was messy, to say the least, we know that our community did their best to take care of student safety and academics. We acknowledge things were less than ideal. Alas, we cannot change the past. We do have a long-term plan for the future. Working with students to see what they need academically, socially, emotionally, and physically (good nutrition and sleep routines). We know that working with our families, we can create a new and bright future and get things turned around for the positive (first day was a great example of great things to come). Our message to students: you are living through a pandemic, we already know you can do hard things, and we can get through this together, even on your tough days. We are here for you!

We know that students can and will learn. We know that over the long term, students will learn the most important lessons in school in regard to Reading, Writing, and Math (and other subjects) in a caring, respectful, and inclusive community. Our message to parents: we as a school community, are committed to learning what your child needs, giving them a great program to meet those needs, and then building on their success.

We know that student well-being is developed through awareness. It is about knowing and learning about ourselves. Solutions can be slow to come, they do come! We can build strategies together and use tools to deal with stress, so we can get back to learning and developing healthy relationships that enhance our well-being. Teachers will be talking about these strategies and tools, starting on the first day of school, with supports from programs like "First 10 days of School," that is supported by our province (School Mental Health Ontario) and our mental health department. We will be working, on purpose, to re-connect with students and develop trusting relationships first, that will support well-being and academics. Our message to students: we are going to show up, follow up, and take action to engage and motivate you to build a better future with us.

We know that the love of learning is driven by our students' interests and desire to learn together. We are learning today to prepare for a bright new tomorrow. We will be observing and having conversations with students about their strengths and building from an appreciative lens. Together in a community that builds on belonging and inclusivity, we are going to enhance the resiliency of our students. We know that resiliency is not a character trait, it is a community feeling of belonging, safety, and hope for a bright future. Our message to students: we believe in you!

We know that to build this belonging and safe future and environment, we need to build equity through student voice and experiences, in a respectful, inclusive, and safe space. We will do this by validating feelings, acknowledging feelings, listening, respecting others perspectives, being in the moment, and making time and space to build a brighter tomorrow. Our message: we are here to support you, you are not alone, we are all in this together. Sometimes this will happen in school and sometimes we will work with community supports.

We all look forward to learning, growing and building a better future together.

Yours in Education,

M. W. VanderVaart and Mme. L-M Fortier

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### SCHOOL START TIME / SUPERVISION

We would like to remind parents that there is supervision on the yard beginning at 8:20am. **We ask that you do not drop off your child before that time.** The bell goes at 8:35am. It would be great if everyone was on the yard when the bell goes.

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### ***CHANGES IN END OF DAY ARRANGEMENTS***

One important message that the office would like to convey is the importance of making sure any changes in end of day arrangements are communicated by a phone call with the office by 2:30pm. (Emails sent to the teacher may not be retrieved in time.) We are unable to make alternate arrangements for students past 2:30 pm, as we are well into our end of the day routines. Please communicate any changes in a timely manner.

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### ***SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM***

It is very important that you notify the school office if your child is going to be late or absent for any reason. There is an answering machine on 24 hours a day so please use this system to keep us informed. **Please call the office if your child is going to be late or absent from school.** You may leave a message on ext. 100. Please help us ensure that all students arrive at school safely. We also require a note (or in an emergency a phone call) from parents if you will be picking up your child(ren) during or after school.

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### ***LATE ARRIVALS***

School begins at 8:35 a.m. If a student arrives after this time, they must check in at the office for late sign-in. Please encourage your child to be on the school yard no later than 8:30 so that they can enter the school with their class.

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### ***THANK YOU***

As always, after a summer of hard work, the school is spotlessly clean. We are so thankful to Mrs. Denise Bell and her staff who spent the summer cleaning chairs and desks, shining floors, polishing windows, moving furniture, unpacking boxes, moving more boxes, and an endless array of other jobs! We are very grateful. We know that you will show your appreciation of their hard work by encouraging your children to do their part to help keep our school and grounds clean and free from garbage.

We would also like to acknowledge all the extra time and commitment our teachers and staff have put into getting their classrooms and our school ready. During our first three PA days this year, we worked on: developing a welcoming, safe, inclusive, and respectful classroom for all our students; healthy and safety training for all staff; literacy and numeracy assessments; and creating a mentally healthy environment.

Thank you for reading this newsletter. For the remainder of the year, please go to the school website at <http://www.ugdsb.ca/jmc/> to view future newsletters. We are a Gold-Eco School and are working really hard to reduce our paper consumption. For that reason, **we will only send a hard copy of the newsletter to your house if you send a note to the office indicating that you require such.**

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### ***WELCOME***

Welcome to our new staff: Mme C. Miller (gr.1), Mlle A. Breckles (Primary Special Ed), Mme N. Theodor, (gr. 2), Mme L. Di Lilio (gr. 3/4), Mme E. Smyth (gr. 6/7 English and planning), Mlle C. Thompson (gr. 7)

Welcome back: Mme. J. DiMartile, Mme. Z. Henry, Mlle. M. Barker, M. R. Bennett, Mme. C. Wilson, Mlle. C. DiFrancesco,

The 2021-2022 staff list is posted on the school website and will be updated each year in the summer and after the staffing process is complete.

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### ***SCHOOL REORGANIZATION – Message from the Human Resources Department***

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 remain compliant with Ministry parameters (see attached). Any changes would be implemented as quickly as possible. 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 via letter by the school. We know that children are adaptable and while there may be some discomfort with class changes, this rarely lasts longer than a day or two. **We ask that you please do not call asking for a specific class or requesting that your child not be moved.** If we all work together and encourage our children to have a positive attitude it will go smoothly and everyone will be happy.

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### ***SCHOOL COUNCIL***

A very important and necessary part of parent and community involvement is the John McCrae School Council. Every year a dedicated group of parents meets once a month to discuss the learning goals of the school, collaboratively explore where support can be provided to enhance student learning, and create opportunities to increase parent involvement through special events and programs. Our first meeting will be held virtually on Tuesday, September 14<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-7:00 pm. New members are always welcome. Can't make a meeting? Stay in touch and come volunteer at one of events this year when we return to fundraising and community events.

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### **MEDICATION**

Please remember that all student medication must be stored and administered from the office. In order to give any medication we must have the appropriate form completed and signed by a parent or guardian. If your child requires medication at school, please contact Mme Lambkin in the school office so that she can make sure that you have the appropriate form to fill out. We require updated and signed forms each year.

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### **CALL-OUT AND EMAIL COMMUNICATION**

We often communicate important school news through a call-out system and/or email blast. If you need to change the phone number we use, please contact the school office. To receive emails, please sign-up on our school's website: [www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc/](http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc/) The link is at the bottom of the home page, "Subscribe to Email Notifications."

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### **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.

Children requiring medication such as EPI-PENS for life-threatening medical conditions are required to carry this medication with them at all times. We suggest a fanny pack. Additional EPI-PENS may be kept in the school office. Please call Mlle Fortier (ext. 224) if you have any questions.

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### **PARKING LOT – NO PARKING ZONES – Street Patrol**

There will be no parent access to the parking lot during school arrival and dismissal times. Take note of the clearly marked no parking zones and do not park in the handicapped spaces if you are not eligible to do so. Please observe the no parking areas on the street. Plan your visits and pick-ups accordingly, allowing for extra time to find appropriate street parking. Please note: Water Street is in a school safety zone. Please drive carefully, slowly watching out for all our children.

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### **STREET PATROLS**

Street patrols will continue to be at the crosswalk in front of the school on Water Street and at the parking lot entrance between 8:20 and 8:35am, and again from 3:05 to 3:20pm. Student street patrollers are in place to help our community safely cross at the intersection in front of the school. Please model for our whole community the proper way to cross the street: at the intersection, between the lines, showing respect to our student helpers.

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### **BUSSING UPDATES**

If you have a bussed student, please sign up for delay/cancellation notifications at <https://stwdsts.ca/bus-subscription/> You can also follow the Transportation Consortium on Twitter for information on bus delays/cancellations @STWDSTS.

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### **BALANCED DAY SCHEDULE**

8:20- 8:35	Supervision begins on the playground
8:35	School Entry
10:15 - 11:00	1st Nutrition Break (outside first, then lunch)
12:40 - 1:25	2nd Nutrition Break (outside first, then lunch)
3:05	Dismissal

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### **SCHOOL CASH ONLINE**

Please register for School Cash Online TODAY! For safety and efficiency reasons, we want to reduce the amount of cash and cheques coming into our school. You can pay for field trips, spirit wear, yearbooks (almost everything) ONLINE! Here's how to register:

- Step 1: Visit <https://ugdsb.schoolcashionline.com> or find a direct link from our school's website (using the above icon).
- Step 2: Register by selecting "Get Started Now" and following the steps (to register yourself as a parent user).
- Step 3: After you receive the confirmation email, select the 'click' here option, sign in and add each of your children to your household account. (Do NOT input a "Student Number.")



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### **NEWSLETTERS & HANDBOOKS**

You can access the Parent Handbook and monthly school newsletters online. Visit our website <http://www.ugdsb.on.ca/jmc/> to view.

Grade team curriculum newsletters will be posted on our website or in your child's google classroom at the beginning of each term (usually by mid-October). These newsletters will include the curriculum expectations to be covered in the classroom during that time period, the teaching strategies being used and the assessment practices teachers will be implementing.

We encourage you to read our Parent Handbook and Code of Conduct on our website for additional information.

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### ***STUDENT VERIFICATION FORMS***

A computer-printed form showing our current data for each child is being sent home with this newsletter. **Please check the information carefully making any necessary corrections and additions.** Please remember to sign and date the bottom line and return it to the school as soon as possible. The first class to submit a complete set of verification forms to the office will receive a popsicle party!

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### ***BUSES AND ARRIVAL PROCEDURES***

At John McCrae we have a number of buses taking students to and from school safely. All buses will be loaded and unloaded on Water Street at the Bus Loading Zone at the front west side of the school. This zone is reserved for buses only. Each bus has a number associated with it and bus patrols have been assigned to help our younger students get safely off and on the correct bus. Teacher supervision at bus arrival and departure times is also a constant at John McCrae.

Please remember that students need to enter the playground off Water Street at the west side of the school (maple bush) and that the parking lot is reserved for our staff. Designated stopping and parking zones for our McCrae families are available to the east and west of the school or on Maple Street.

If you do park at the end of Water Street, please **do not pass through the school busses** to get to and from your car. This is a safety concern to all of us, but quite worrisome for the bus drivers.

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### ***ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS POLICY***

Asthma is a very common chronic lung disease that can make it hard to breathe. The Upper Grand District School Board has a policy to provide support for students with Asthma. If your child has asthma, the policy requires an "Asthma Plan of Care" to be completed by parents, a child's doctor, and the principal of the school. A copy of this plan is available on the Board's website under Policy 518. Parents are requested to complete the Plan of Care and return it to the school as soon as possible at the beginning of the school year.

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### ***SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT***

The Upper Grand DSB provides a smoke-free environment for its students, staff, and others while on school Board property, in accordance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act. 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.

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### ***LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIES***

We have children in our school with potential life-threatening allergies to various foods and other materials called anaphylaxis. This 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.

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### ***STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE***

Parents or guardians are responsible for expenses related to student injuries on school premises 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. Information is being sent home with this newsletter with respect to Student Accident Insurance offered by the Old Republic Insurance Company of Canada ("Old Republic") and "Certain Lloyd's Underwriters." Please visit the Provider website directly, or visit the Board's website for more information: <https://www.ugdsb.ca/parents/accident-insurance/> A "Student Accident Insurance" letter is included in this newsletter package.