



L' École Edward Johnson School
Learning for Life Apprendre pour la vie
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OCTOBER 2021

Principal's Message

It has been such a pleasure to see some of our former activities slowly return to school. We had over 84 students sign up for our Big Buddies Program and many grades 5/6 students expressed an interest in our Student Council. The intention is that as a community we are all contributing to a healthy and happy school environment. We are really hoping to encourage student voice at Edward Johnson this year and are looking forward to hearing all about our Student Council's ideas.



Speaking of community, it was so heartwarming to see all the families come out on Saturday, October 2, to pick up their pumpkins. A great big thank you to all the School Council members who gave up their Saturday morning for this fundraiser and to the Batte family for their generous donation.

Students have been working diligently in their classrooms. All the beautiful artwork in the halls certainly brightens up our school. Students have been very respectful of all the COVID protocols and we really appreciate their efforts. Even though we still have a way to go until we are out of this pandemic, students certainly show us every day that they have lots of resilience. I also am truly impressed by our teaching staff. To teach all day wearing a mask is very fatiguing. Teachers typically use their voice and facial expressions to communicate with their students and yet, while wearing masks they still find a way to make learning engaging. Tomorrow is World Teachers' Day. Hopefully, you'll get a chance to reflect on all the work that teachers do.



I wish for everyone a safe and healthy month of October. While we are all a little tired of all the protocols and routines, I am very hopeful for the future. We truly do have much to be thankful for.

Katherine Wainman (Principal)

Some upcoming important dates:

- Friday, October 1, CCAT permission forms returned for Grades 3 and 4
- Tuesday, October 5, World Teacher Day
- Tuesday, October 5, School Council Meeting (6:30pm - 7:30pm)
<https://tel.meet/zks-jegk-dna>
- Monday, October 11, Thanksgiving
- Thursday, October 12-15, CCAT Tests administered.
- Monday, October 18, IEPs go home
- Thursday, October 21, ECE Appreciation Day,
- Friday, October 29, P.D. Day
- November 1 - 5, Treaties Recognition Week

Orange Shirt Day, and Truth and Reconciliation

I hope everyone was able to see our posters on the front lawn of the school on Orange Shirt Day (Canada's first day of Truth and Reconciliation). It was heartwarming to see parents and the school community stopping for a moment in their busy days to read these messages. It certainly provoked much thought and discussion in our school community.



Environmental Activities to help celebrate our planet



**OCT 6th IS INTERNATIONAL
WALK TO SCHOOL DAY**

**Participate in International Walk to School Day on
October 6th 2021!**



In October we celebrate “active travel” by encouraging students to walk or bike between home and school, or to actively travel as much as they can in their local environments.

“In the ParticipACTION Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card, the overall grade for children remains at a D- for the third year in a row. Overall, only 9% of 5-17 year olds are getting the 60 minutes of heart-pumping activity they need each day. And sadly, only 24% of 5-17 year olds are walking/wheeling/rolling to school. Our tendency to constantly watch over them or keep them indoors to ensure they are safe from risk limits their opportunities for physical activity, endangering their long-term health.”

<http://www.saferoutestoschool.ca/>



4 ways that walking, biking or rolling can benefit kids

by Katherine Martinko

- **Outside activity is known to improve academic performance.** Children that have had some outside time in the morning arrive brighter and more alert for their first morning

class.

- **Walking gives children good life experience.** It’s an opportunity for them to be independent, think responsibly, and make decisions for themselves. Some children feel less anxiety about being at school when they know how to get home.
- **Walking gets children outdoors** – and, according to Richard Louv, who wrote about Nature Deficit Disorder, kids certainly aren’t spending enough time outside these days. Find opportunities for your child to get outside and get moving by walking, biking, skipping, or rolling too!
- **Walking/biking/rolling provides daily exercise for children.** Obesity rates have skyrocketed in North America, so incorporating physical activity into a child’s daily routine is a good place to start fighting it.

Encourage your children to get outside and get active!



October Wellness Works: Umbrella Project and growing!

Welcome back! We are happy to welcome all of our students, families, and caregivers back to the UGDSB. We are continuing to provide monthly wellness themes to our students and families to support mentally healthy and safe classrooms and environments. We know that students need to be seen and heard to be well and they need to be well to do well. Your child/ren will continue to explore important wellness skills every month. As a parent/guardian/caregiver you are an important player in your child/youth's mental health and wellbeing and we will continue to provide monthly newsletters to share each month's themes with you!

This month we are exploring cognitive flexibility. Cognitive flexibility can be defined as:

- Being open minded to new experiences
- Switching easily from one thing to the next
- Not getting stuck on one idea
- Thinking of new ways to solve problems
- Being creative

Cognitive flexibility is important for innovating, coming up with new ideas and solving problems, and is essential to creativity. It will also help them understand people and situations that are different from theirs and improve their relationships.

However you choose to bring this skill building and exploration into your home, make sure you do so with empathy and compassion for yourself and your child/ren and/or youth. So what can you do?

→ Practice modelling flexible thinking yourself when interacting with your child/ren. Invite your child/ren into your thinking processes by 'thinking out loud'.

→ Talk about scenarios that have multiple ways to solve a problem. For example, perhaps your child is struggling with a situation and you can talk about the many different ways that this could be approached and/or solved. The process of looking at many different options is "flexing" this skill in a great way! Try a template like this one to explore decision making.

→ Chat with your child/ren about the things they like done a 'certain way' and invite them to consider how those patterns can be helpful for them and when they might be harmful or limiting. Check out the online article, "What is Cognitive Flexibility and How do I Help My Child With It?") by Foothills Academy to learn more.

→ For younger children, try to make a new rule for a favourite board game. This can be difficult for adults and children alike! By working together to come up with a small change you are teaching your child/ren to bend a bit. You are flexing the cognitive flexibility part of their brain!

→ Make this work into a fun game by taking household items and coming up with interesting and new uses. This is a great way to practice creative problem solving.

→ Support your child/ren with developing reflection skills and strategies by prompting them to extend their thinking about things. For example, when you ask your child/ren how school was, prompt them to extend their answer by asking them to consider 1-2 things that made them suggest it was a certain way. Try prompts like “tell me more...”, “what makes you feel that way”, and/or “how is this like/unlike other things you’ve experienced?”. If helpful, try Reflection Stems to support them in communicating their thoughts.

UGDSB thanks EDGE MUTUAL for their donation in support of this important work.

Jenny Marino

UGDSB Mental Health Lead

#MHUG on Twitter