



2023-2024 Welcome Back Lightning!

We are so excited to welcome all new and returning students and families to Laurelwoods. This memo contains important information about Back to School 2023-2024. If you have specific questions, please direct them to your teacher or the school office during regular school hours.

Important Dates:

- Sept. 5, 2023: First day of school. *****Please note that there is no Staggered Entry in Kindergarten this year. All students, including Kindergarten, will start school on Sept. 5, 2023.***
- Dec. 23, 2023-Jan. 5, 2024: Winter Break
- March 11-15, 2024: March Break
- June 27, 2024: Last day of school for students (elementary)

To see the full School Year Calendars, including statutory holidays and PA Days, please visit the board website: <https://www.ugdsb.ca/schools/school-year-calendars/>

Arrival on the First Day

The first official day of school for all students in grades JK-8 is Tuesday, September 5th. There is no staggered entry schedule for JK students.

Our yard supervision begins at 8:30 AM. The entry bell rings at 8:45 AM. Most students will arrive by school bus. If you are driving your child to school, the parent designated drop off will be the first row of parking spots closest to the school. We ask that parents do not drive up to the front of the school. Students who are dropped off will walk along the sidewalk with their parent to the kindergarten gate. Please say goodbye to your child at the gate.

Your child needs to know their current grade. Once on the yard they will make their way to the signage indicating their grade (i.e. grade 4). Our grade 4 teachers will meet them and direct them to the appropriate line up where they will join their classmates. We will have staff on the yard to help the children find their new teacher.

In the event that it is raining on the first day students will return to their June classroom and staff will support them in transitioning to their new room.

New Students

We ask that new students enter through the front door. New students will be directed to the Learning Commons where they will remain until other students have entered the building and settled in the room. At 9:00 AM staff supporting new students will escort them to their new class and introduce them.

Late Arrivals

If you arrive after class has begun, the front doors will be locked, parents will need to ring the doorbell when they have arrived to let us know their children are here. Students will wait at the front door, with their parent, until an office staff lets them in. The classroom teacher will be notified that the child has arrived. The student will walk directly to their classroom, drop off their things, and join the class.

What to Bring to School:

Please keep your child's personal items to a minimum. To support a safe and comfortable environment, students are asked to bring the following items clearly labeled with the student's name:

- Knapsack or tote bag for personal belongings
- Personal water bottle
- Seasonal outdoor wear. **We will be outside a lot! Unless the weather conditions are extreme students will be outside. Please keep an eye on the forecast so that your child is prepared for changes in temperature or damp conditions.**
- Indoor shoes with rubber soles that fit securely and are suitable for the gym
- Students may bring their own devices. All students in grades 6, 7, and 8 will complete B.Y.O.D. (Bring Your Own Device) Training

Resource Support

Our Special Education Resource Teacher Mrs. Rayfield, will support students in their classroom and in small group settings in the resource room. During the first weeks of school Mrs. Rayfield will be helping students to settle back into the routines of school and completing assessments. If your child will have an opportunity to work with Mrs. Rayfield she will be reaching out to you to get your consent to do so.

Communication with the School

Teachers will share their preferred form of communication with families. If you wish to meet with the administrator please contact the main office 519-940-3666 and schedule an appointment.

We have ordered agendas and will distribute them when they arrive. Students may choose to use agendas for their own personal use and time management. The agendas cost \$7.00 and will be available on School Cash Online before school starts.

We will be sending home our regular package of information during the first week of school. Please complete the forms, and return them to your child's teacher as soon as you can.

Student Accident Insurance letters will be sent home during the first weeks of September. Please seriously consider this option. The Upper Grand District School Board endorses this inexpensive accident insurance coverage. The school board does not carry accident insurance benefits for children. It is highly recommended that all students participating in school sports and extended field trips purchase student accident insurance.

For the safety and well-being of your child, it is critical that the school has your child's information on file, particularly local emergency contacts. Carefully review the student information forms that will be sent home with your child to make certain that they are accurate. **If changes are needed, cross out the old information and add the updated information to the form. As well, please make sure that you sign and date the bottom of the form and return these forms by Friday, September 22nd.**

Your child will be bringing home information that outlines the guidelines that Boards of Education must follow when protecting the personal information of their students. Please read this information, complete page three and return it to your child's teacher by September 22nd.

If you need to pick your child up early. We require that you contact the office **prior to 2:30 PM.**

If you know that your child is going to be absent in advance please let the office know so that we can avoid trying to locate your child on the day of their absence.

School monthly newsletters will be posted on the school website and sent to you via email as an attachment. Throughout the year we will send you reminders and notifications via email. It is important that the school have an active email for your family that you check regularly - we would hate for you to miss out on important information. If you need to provide us with a new email please contact the school office.

Recess & Lunch

Students will eat in their classroom with their classmates. As we are such a small school students do not need to stay within divisional groupings during outdoor recess. This allows students to interact with peers across divisions, family members, or children from their neighborhood.

Our student nutrition program will continue to be offered to all students who would like to participate. Grab and Go Snacks will be available to all students in their classroom as of Tuesday September 5th. I wish to extend a huge thank you to the Parent Council for continued support and organization of this program.

Access to the School

The front doors will remain locked during instructional times. Should you require access to the school during the school day please ring the doorbell and we will let you in.

We look forward to having parents volunteer in various capacities. If you are interested in volunteering we will require you to complete a volunteer form and submit a current Police Record Check with the Vulnerable Sectors Screen. If you are interested in volunteering please contact your child's teacher and they can provide you the necessary paperwork.

At entry and dismissal times, parents are to remain outside the school. If you are picking your child up or dropping something off during the day please ring the doorbell.

End of Day Procedures:

For Students Taking the Bus

Students will exit the school and line up on the tarmac behind their designated bus number. Bus Patrollers will support in getting kindergarten students to their buses from the kindergarten hall.

How to Find My Bus Number and Pick Up/Drop Off Times?

1. Go to <https://www.findmyschool.ca>
 2. Click on Parent Portal
 3. If you have an account put in your email and password
 4. If you do not have an account click on Create Account
- While you are there, sign up to receive email notifications of late and canceled busses
- Your child may not be assigned a bus yet if you registered in the last few weeks.
 - Please contact 1-519-824-4119 OR 1-888-292-2224

School Bus Code of Conduct

Our school bus drivers are trained professionals who are committed to providing a safe environment for your child while they are traveling to and from school. I would encourage parents to discuss appropriate bus behaviour with your child(ren) . You can visit <https://stwdsts.ca/> to view safety videos and for a detailed list of responsibilities of students, parents and guardians. I would also encourage you to sign up to receive notifications regarding bus delays and cancellations.

For Students Being Picked Up

Parents will need to let the office know, no later than 2:30 PM that they are picking up their child. Students in grades **5 to 8** can go directly to their parent or wait at the front of the school on the sidewalk in front of the office. Parents will park in the first row.

Students in grades **JK to 4** being picked up will be asked to go to the front hall promptly following the 3:15 PM bell. There will be a staff member who will dismiss students in the hallway to their parent. Please be aware this procedure will take some time but allows us to be certain your child was safely released to a trusted adult.

Medication at School

It is the policy of the Upper Grand District School Board for an “Administration of Medication” form to be completed for students requiring medication at school. The Board’s interpretation of medication includes: Tylenol, allergy medication, and any prescribed medications. The storing of medication in lunch kits or book bags is not permitted with the exception of asthma inhalers and epi-pens. This is due to safety concerns for other children coming in contact with the prescribed medication. Should you require a medication form, please inform your child’s teacher or the school office.

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/> (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 attempts at an allergy-safe environment for all of our students.

School Organizations

Schools have built class lists based on their tentative organization. Changes may be necessary at your child(ren)'s school in order that our Board remains compliant with Ministry parameters. **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. Any changes would be implemented by Monday, September 25th.

Attendance

During the post pandemic period the rate of problematic student attendance has increased across the province. Persistent absenteeism is defined by the Ministry of Education as: "any student/pupil who has missed 10% or more of school days for any reason, including unexcused or excused absences, over an academic year." To put this in perspective there are 18 school days in September. A child who is absent twice would have missed more than 10% of the month. Absenteeism negatively impacts academics as well as opportunities for school engagement which bolster socio emotional well being and connection to school community. While we recognize that there are times when students fall ill and must stay home I would ask that you reflect on your family's schedule (i.e. appointments, vacation planning, sports commitments, special outings with your child) and routines as we move into this school year.

We are looking forward to a terrific school year. We can't wait to celebrate all the wonderful things that our students do!

School Code of Conduct

It is the policy of the Upper Grand District School Board to maintain a safe and inclusive learning and teaching environment through the adoption of a Code of Conduct which promotes responsibility, respect, civility and academic excellence, and sets clear standards of behaviour for all members of the school community. The goal is to create a

positive school climate where all members of the school community feel safe, included and accepted. The Code outlines the rights, roles and responsibilities of all members of our school community. As a new school year begins teachers will be reviewing the Code of Conduct with students. Families can find the Code of Conduct on the School website <https://www.ugdsb.ca/laurel/resources/code-of-conduct/>