



At Mitchell Woods we are:  
**BEING** respectful, resilient and positive members of our school community.  
**BELONGING** - everyone is accepted and welcome.  
**CONTRIBUTING** our best to make our school community awesome!

(A few years ago, I had an opportunity to speak to parents at our Mitchell Woods 101 breakfast about the third line of our motto. (See above) I share this speech again with you today, as it is very fitting given our current circumstances.)

## CONTRIBUTING.

What is Contributing?

One definition is to give something in order to help achieve or provide something, another definition is to help to cause or bring about.

And what are we trying to achieve? To bring about?

“An awesome school community!!”

So what does contributing look like in action?

At our last PA day, I showed a short video clip to staff (See link - it's about 2 minutes long).

[Video link: What makes you happy \(contributing\) :-\)](#)

and asked them to reflect and discuss the following questions:

“What is this man contributing?”

“What do the others around him seem to be thinking while he is doing these acts?”

“What is the impact of his contribution?”

The movie prompted some great discussion. When we chatted about the video, we noticed several things:

One, what the man is contributing are small acts of kindness - not big showy demonstrations of how awesome he is, but quiet, compassionate, life-giving generous acts.

Two, sometimes the people around him were impatient, embarrassed, judgmental... but he does what he believes to be right anyway.

Third, the impact of his contribution takes time to unfold, is not immediate, and perhaps it goes unseen.

When we are challenging our school community (our students, staff, parents and guardians) to contribute, these are the types of behaviours we are trying to emphasize... not just the big gestures of contributing, such as leading a team, being the best in your class, or being an excellent fundraiser - these actions are needed and appreciated... but we are asking our school community to go deeper... to move toward acts of kindness, compassion, understanding, forgiveness and patience. We are asking our school community to give a little piece of their day, their time and their heart to continue to make Mitchell Woods the warm, loving, welcoming and accepting community it is!

We don't have to spend money, or bags of time.

We can simply speak gently to one another.

When you wait day after day for your children to be dismissed, make conversation with one another - even if it's awkward at first, and you'd rather just be checking Instagram on your phones!

Be patient when there is not enough parking and you are pulling your hair out!!

Walk your children to school whenever you can, to keep the parking open for people who maybe aren't physically able to walk.

Show gratitude.

Our children are watching us. They learn more from what they *see us do*, than they ever do from what *they hear us say*.

NOTE: When I originally wrote this speech... none of us had lived through a global pandemic. None of us knew that in 2020 we would be wearing masks to school, sanitizing our hands constantly and trying to stay physically distanced. And yet, here we are. And more than ever, our small acts of contribution are more important than ever. How we act in times of struggle speak so loudly to our children.

Let us continue, therefore to be the incredible, kind, compassionate, loving, respectful school we have always been.

I feel blessed every day to walk into this building and serve these children, this staff and our community.

All I can say is keep up the great work!!”

- Mair Ann Gault - Principal MWPS

One final quote:

**“In this life we cannot always do great things. But we can do small things with great love.” Mother Teresa**

### **Calling all Families**

We are looking for families who will film a short video in recognition of a celebration that is important to them. Please see your child's Google Classroom for details.

### **School Council Update**

Despite our inability to gather in person, your school council has been meeting online and moving forward with projects to support our school. Using funds raised from last year's fundraising efforts, we have purchased playground equipment kits for every classroom to be used during outdoor play times. A big thank you to Sara Orrell and Stacey Murphy for coordinating this project.

**Save the date!** On **November 19<sup>th</sup> from 7-8PM** we will be hosting a webinar centered on supporting mental health during the pandemic. Our speaker, Andrea Groenewald, is a registered psychotherapist who has served families and businesses in Guelph and surrounding area for over 20 years. Some of you may remember when she spoke at our pancake breakfast a few years ago about developing resilience in our children and know what an effective speaker she is. Details on how to join the webinar will be advertised soon!

Due to restrictions for gatherings, our monthly meetings will be held on-line. If you are interested in attending those meetings please contact Amanda Dawson at [scmitchellwoods@gmail.com](mailto:scmitchellwoods@gmail.com) and she will make sure you have access. Meetings are held from 7:30-9:15PM. The following are tentative dates for the year:

- December 7
- January 4
- February 8
- April 5
- May 3
- June 7

If you have any questions about school council, please contact Amanda at [scmitchellwoods@gmail.com](mailto:scmitchellwoods@gmail.com).

### **Virtual Parent Seminars**

In order to support our parent/guardian community this year, our Board has planned some wonderful, informative webinars during the month of November. All of them are virtual and can be enjoyed in the comfort of your own home. See link below for details.

[UGDSB Parent Webinars supporting Mental Health](#)

## **Cold Days - Wet Weather- Recess**

It is getting chilly out and the snow may fly soon. Please remember to assist your child in wearing the proper clothing to school. This includes a warm jacket, hat, mittens, and waterproof footwear. Thanks for sending extra socks in your child's backpack just in case.



All students are expected to wait in line while we follow Covid friendly protocols in the morning, no matter the weather. They also participate in outdoor recess, as this important active break aids concentration and success in the classroom. Indoor shoes are essential to help keep our classrooms clean and dry.

## **Inclement Weather**

It is the parent's responsibility to determine whether or not it is safe for his or her child to leave for school in inclement or severe weather. A parent must be aware of the following:



child to

- When a bus does not travel a route in the morning due to fog, ice, snow conditions, it will NOT travel that route in the afternoon.
- While we have an excellent transportation system, buses may be delayed in the morning due to traffic, poor road conditions, mechanical breakdowns etc. To ensure your child is not stranded at his/her pick up point, please make sure they know what to do and where to go if their bus is more than 15 minutes late
- Remember to listen to CJOY 1460 AM or Magic 106.1 FM in the event of inclement weather. They will broadcast bus cancellations or school closures.

Procedures are also in place to ensure the safety of students during their outdoor breaks at nutritional breaks during periods of extreme cold.

In the event of inclement weather, the Director of Education will make the decision to close schools. Announcements are made by local radio stations and this information is also posted on the Wellington-Dufferin Student Transportation System website.

Website: [www.stwdsts.ca](http://www.stwdsts.ca)

## **Important CoVid Related Reminders**

We are working hard to keep everyone safe at school. Parents and guardians, we would really appreciate your help reminding your children to come to school as close to 8:45 am as possible, wear a mask, and getting into line with their classmates. It is very important that they don't play during this time, but stay in their designated line area. Also, please help them remember, as difficult as it is, to try to stay 2 metres away from each other when at school. Naturally, children struggle with this expectation when they are playing, but it is vital to encourage physical distancing as much as possible. Thank you for your assistance as we work together to keep our students safe.

## **Child Custody**

Unless otherwise directed by a court of law, both natural parents have full access to their child and their records. If for some reason these rights are restricted, it is important to notify the Principal with a photocopy of any legal documents that outline a parent's access rights (e.g. Custody Order). Should the situation change, please ensure that the Principal is notified.

## **Traffic Reminders**

For the safety of all our students please obey all traffic and parking rules when you drop off and pick up your children before and after school.

For details please refer to our Traffic Management Plan (link below). Thank you.

## **[MWPS Traffic Management Plan](#)**

## **Head Lice**

Here is our friendly head lice reminder; as you are aware, having head lice is not an indicator of poor hygiene – lice like clean hair best! They can happen to anyone. If there was a report of head lice in your child's class, we will send home a head lice notice. Please check your son/daughter's hair regularly, and contact the school if you discover your child has lice or nits. If your child has head lice, please treat them with a remedy from the pharmacy that kills the live lice and then using a special comb or other technique; and remove nits from the hair. Since no product can effectively kill all nits, you will then need to check for nits and remove them from the hair every day for 7-10 days at which time treatment is redone with a pharmacy product.

## **Kindergarten Registration**

Kindergarten Registration for the 2021/22 school year will take place in the new year. More information will follow.

## **Bullying Awareness Week**

**November 16th - 20th**

During the week of November 16-20 the students and staff at Mitchell Woods are going to be discussing and exploring the issue of bullying and its effects. Throughout the week, students will participate in activities and discussions in their classrooms.

## **What is a bully?**

A bully can be defined in many ways but some of the common elements of the definition include:

- an imbalance of power - the bully or bullies may be physically stronger or may be part of a larger group and/or may have a stronger social status within the school
- the action is repeated over time - two friends arguing and calling each other names is not bullying
- there is malicious intent - a bully means to hurt the other person. Bullying is not accidental nor is bullying just teasing
- bullies enjoy the power and strength they feel when hurting others

Anyone can be a bully, although the approach a bully takes usually differs from boys to girls. Boys tend to bully physically; pushing, tripping, bumping, kicking, etc. The bullying pattern of girls tends to be harder to observe as they tend to exclude, intimidate or verbally bully their target. If you suspect that your child may be a bully you need to take the problem seriously and talk to your child. Let your child know that you will not tolerate bullying behaviour and use non-violent consequences. Establishing family rules, spending more time with your child and increasing supervision of their activities will help your child feel valued and lessen the likelihood of bullying behaviour.

### **How do I know if my child is being bullied?**

Anyone can be a target of bullying although bullies tend to choose victims who are passive and are less likely to be assertive and stand up for themselves or less likely to tell an adult.

Some signs that your child is being bullied *may* include:

- being afraid to go to school
- changes in mood or behaviour (ie. quiet, withdrawn, argumentative)
- coming home with unexplained injuries
- having damaged property
- experiencing restless sleep

### **What to do if your child is being bullied?**

- ask your child directly
- listen
- talk with staff supervising your child
- teach your child assertiveness and social skills
- know your child's strengths and weaknesses
- encourage special interests and activities that focus on strengths
- teach your child positive ways to resolve arguments
- seek help

### **What is a bystander?**

A lot of recent research indicates the role of a third group in the occurrence of bullying. This third group is the bystanders. Bystanders allow bullying to occur by standing and watching or by actively encouraging and cheering the bully on thereby reinforcing the bullying behaviour. Bystanders often say that it's none of their business, the bully is my friend, the victim deserved to be bullied or that there is nothing they can do about it. Bystanders are now being encouraged to empathize with the victim, to report (not tattling) when someone is in danger of being harmed, to accompany the target to get help, and to join together with their

peers to protect targets.

### **Is conflict the same as bullying?**

People may sometimes confuse conflict with bullying, but they are different.

Conflict occurs between two or more people who have a disagreement, a difference of opinion or different views. Conflict between students does not always mean it's bullying. Children learn at a young age to understand that others can have a different perspective than their own, but developing the ability to gain perspective takes time and the process continues into early adulthood.

In conflict, each person feels comfortable expressing his or her views, and there is no power imbalance. Each person feels able to state his or her view point. How people deal with conflict can make it positive or negative.

Conflict becomes negative when an individual behaves aggressively by saying or doing hurtful things. Then the conflict is an aggressive interaction. Conflict only becomes bullying when it is repeated over and over again and there is a power imbalance. Over time, a pattern of behaviour may emerge where the person who behaves aggressively in the conflict may continue or even make it worse. The person who is the recipient of the aggressive conflict may feel less and less able to express his or her point of view and feel more and more powerless. That is when negative conflict may turn into bullying.

A school will respond to bullying and conflict differently. For example, in the case of a conflict, a school staff member may try to have the students come together to tell their side of the story and help them resolve the situation together.

In the case of bullying, a principal will consider progressive discipline, which may include suspension or expulsion. - Ontario Ministry of Education

See our 2020/21 Bullying Prevention Plan

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/mwoods/our-school/bullying-prevention-plan/>

### **Special Class Placement in UGDSB**

Students who require special education programs and services receive support through the classroom teacher and the special education resource teacher at their home schools. However, in some circumstances, students can be referred to a special education class placement where focused instruction in the area of need is provided. These classes have smaller numbers and can provide targeted instruction to meet student needs. In elementary there are four specialized class placements for the following exceptionalities: Learning Disability, Mild Intellectual Disability/Language-based Learning Disability, Developmental Disability (Intellectual Disability), and Intellectually Gifted. *Students need to have a diagnosis of an exceptionality before they can be eligible for class placement, and parents and the school team should feel like the placement would best meet the student's learning needs.* Contact your school team if you would like to have more information on special class placement options.



