



*"Life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass. It's about learning how to dance in the rain."*

It is my sincere hope that this holiday, despite some of the challenges that are still facing us due to the ongoing pandemic, you are able to find a way to “dance in the rain”. If not, please know there is no shame in needing some support. We all need help at times. There are people you can reach out to to access support. See link below for parent mental health resources.

<https://www.ugdsb.ca/parents/mental-health/>

You are not alone.

*Sincerely,  
Mair Ann Gault - Principal ☺*

### **School Arrival**

Please encourage your children to arrive as close to 8:45 AM as possible and head right to their class line-up lines.

### **Outdoor Recess.**

In the past, we have had a number of parents requesting that their child remain inside at recess time as they are still getting over being ill. It is not possible to supervise these children during break time. All students are expected to participate in outdoor recess, as this is an important activity. Active breaks aid concentration and success in the classroom.



*Please do the COVID-19 screening daily, and follow the*

*advice given as to whether your child should stay home or come to school.*

It is getting chilly out and snow has begun to fly! Please remember to assist your child(ren) in wearing proper clothing to school. This includes a warm jacket, hat, mitts and waterproof footwear. Thanks for sending labeled extra socks and pants in your child’s backpack just in case the first pair gets wet. Twenty minutes can be a very long time if you are not dressed properly.

### **December Break**

Students finish school on Friday, December 17th at the regular time. School resumes again on Monday, January 3rd, 2022.

We wish you all a wonderful holiday, and a happy New Year. Please know that as a school staff we are here to help your entire family. Please contact your classroom teacher, or the office if you ever have a concern or need. We are in this together! Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

### **No Dogs on the Schoolyard**

A reminder to parents and visitors that dogs are not allowed on the school yard during the school day. As much as we like and trust our own dogs, when they are on school property and encounter fast moving and often unpredictable children, they can become stressed and a dog’s natural reaction is to bite. Please help us to safeguard our students by keeping your dog(s) off school property during school hours.

### **Parking and Student Safety**

We would like to remind parents and visitors of the following:

**Parking on school property is reserved for staff. Those requiring accessible parking may use one of the two designated spaces, provided a valid permit is displayed.**

- Please come to a full stop at stop signs
- Please do not stop to let your children off at the crosswalk or wave to students to cross.
- Please take care in attending to our patrols and be patient.
- Please do not park/stop in a no parking/no stopping area. This blocks the line of view for our patrols.
- U-Turns are not permitted on Willow Road

### **Walking on to school property:**

- Please use the designated crosswalks for crossing on to school property.
- Please do not walk through the parking lot.
- As a safety precaution, we ask that all parents and older siblings, who are coming to the school to pick up students, please meet at an outside meeting place at the end of the day.
- Students are asked to independently enter and exit through their assigned doors.

### **Students are not to use the front doors for entry/exit.**

Your support in keeping your children safe is greatly appreciated.

For more information about walking/parking/drop-off/pick-up, please refer to our traffic management plan that is posted on our website: <https://www.ugdsb.ca/mwoods/resources/traffic-management-plan/>



### **Safety Patrollers and -25c or Below**

On extremely cold mornings, patrollers and parents should listen to the radio for an announcement regarding altered patrol post coverage times: If no announcement is made, carry on as usual.

- At -25c (including the wind chill factor) an announcement will be made on air indicating that patrollers will be on duty for only the last five minutes of their scheduled morning time.
- At afternoon dismissal, usually the temperature has warmed up above -25c. If not, then the patrollers would also shorten their time on duty to 10 minutes.



### **ViolenceThreat Risk Assessment Protocol (VTRA)**

The Upper Grand District School Board is committed to providing safe learning environments for all students, staff, school visitors, and community members. When a student behaves inappropriately, Principals use progressive discipline to help a student take

responsibility for their actions, change their behaviour, and learn from their mistakes.

When safety is threatened by the potentially violent or dangerous behaviour of a student, which places either the student or others at risk, schools staff follow specific protocols for the protection of all. It is important that you and your children are aware of these protocols.

[VTRA - Upper Grand District School Board](#)

### **TO YOUR (MENTAL) HEALTH**

As we head through December and towards the holidays, it is important to be aware that this can be a very exciting time of year, but for some it is also a difficult time of year.

#### **REMEMBER:**

- eat well
- get good sleep
- don't over schedule
- stay connected to family and friends
- keep daily routines going
- avoid overuse of technology
- get outside and enjoy the crisp, fresh air

### **HOLIDAY "CONNECTING & REFLECTING" IDEAS:**

#### **23 Days of Giving**

Every day in December, have everyone put something that they don't use or need into a basket. Later in the month you can go as a family and donate to a shelter or community center

#### **Reflection Wall**

Have a wall in the house where everyone can add sticky notes of what they are grateful about from the year. Focus on lessons learned, new skills and strategies used throughout the year

#### **Rose, Bud, Thorn**

Have everyone identify one or two things that they feel were successes from the year (rose), something that was a struggle (thorn) and what they did to overcome

the struggle, and something they are looking forward to in the new year (bud).

### **Signs to look for that someone is struggling**

*Sometimes it's hard to tell that someone is suffering.*

*Here are some signs that someone is struggling.*

- not coming to school or work
- not engaging with friends or family
- not participating in activities that they used to enjoy
- withdrawing
- feeling hopeless
- increase use of drugs or alcohol
- changes in behaviour
- anger/irritability

### **Getting help**

If you, your child/youth or someone you know is struggling, it is important to know where to reach out for help.

Who would you talk to if you were distressed, overwhelmed or struggling? Take a moment to make a list of at least 3 people or resources you would reach out to.

Who would your child/youth talk to if they were upset, overwhelmed or struggling? Take a moment to sit down with your child/youth and ask them who they would talk to. Put the kidshelpphone and HERE 24/7 in their phones (see below).

All children and youth need caring adults in their lives to talk to about their feelings. Parents/guardians can be some of those caring adults, but it is important for the children/youth to have other caring adults in their lives such as:

Family members, friends of the family, School staff (teachers, guidance counsellors, principals, child and youth counsellors, social workers, librarian, custodial staff), Coaches, instructors, Spiritual or religious community members (police, family doctors, librarians, etc.)

### **Who you can call for mental health support:**

- Here 24/7 (for crisis and support with mental health or addiction concerns in Guelph/Wellington) <http://here247.ca/> 1.844.437.3247
- Kids Help Phone <https://kidshelpphone.ca/> 1 800 668 6868
- Your family physician or family health team

Have a mentally healthy holiday season!

### **December is Gratitude Month**

#### **Wellness Works December 2021 Gratitude**

Gratitude is not just “good manners” and it plays a significant role in overall wellbeing. Gratitude can be expressed by a simple “thank you” but there are many other ways to nurture and identify gratitude. Gratitude can happen in four ways:

- NOTICE what it is that you are grateful for
- THINK about why you are able to be grateful or why the thing you are grateful for is there
- Identify how you FEEL about the things we are grateful for
- DO express appreciation back “outwards”

Gratitude is not just about receiving, it is also about giving. So what can you do with your child/ren or even yourself?

- Point out the things you are grateful for and remember that modeling for your child/ren is a very powerful technique
- When you are grateful make sure to point out why you feel grateful
- Help your child/ren find gratitude in the things they may take for granted such as something in nature, or a simple meal
- Encourage them to use their own areas of strength to give back and be helpful and cooperative with others
- Notice accomplishments - even the smallest ones are something we can be grateful about
- Have a gratitude wall or space on your fridge where everyone can write something they are grateful for - the whole family, visitors, friends.

Seeing what others are grateful about is also quite powerful

- Identify someone your child/ren is grateful to have in their life (e.g., an extended family member, an elder, a peer, a teacher, a principal, a counsellor) and encourage them to let that person know

Taking just a bit of time to identify gratitude can have an impact. We are very grateful to all of the parents, guardians, elders, and caregivers who support our communities' children and youth.

Jenny Marino, Mental Health Lead  
And the Wellness Works Committee

### **School Council Update**

The year 2021 has been an interesting one for our School Council and although we haven't been able to do some things the way we traditionally would, we are thankful for many things. We are thankful for technology and being able to meet virtually to check in every month. We are thankful for innovative members who have risen to the challenges of the pandemic and brought new ideas and ways to do things. We are thankful for supportive staff who have helped us when we can't be in the building volunteering ourselves and we are thankful for the entire Mitchell Woods community who has shown positivity and resilience and made what we do so rewarding no matter the circumstances.

We would like to extend a sincere thank you to the community for the support they have shown our Mabel's Labels and Fundscrip Fundraisers. The money we raise goes towards important items such as recess equipment, class workshops and guest speakers, technology and a contribution to the grade 8 graduation, just to name a few things.

If interested, our fundraisers can be found at: Mabels Labels:

[https://mabelslabels.ca/en\\_CA/fundraising/support/](https://mabelslabels.ca/en_CA/fundraising/support/)

and

"RECESS PIECES" Fundscrip Gift Cards:

For more details, check out our [video!](#) or visit <https://www.ugdsb.ca/mwoods/>

Order by December 6th to get your cards in time for

the holidays! We would like to wish all the students, staff and families a safe and fun upcoming winter break!

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

It is getting chilly out and the snow is flying. 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:

- 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)

## **Child Custody**

Unless otherwise directed by a court of law, both biological 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.

## **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 is 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 use 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 2022/23 school year will take place in the new year. More information will follow.

## **Bullying Awareness Week and Kindness Week** **November 15 - 19th**

During the week of November 15-19 the students and staff at Mitchell Woods discussed and explored the issue of bullying and its effects. We also actively encouraged kindness throughout our school through various discussions and activities.

[See our 2021/22 Bullying Prevention Plan- Safe, Equitable and Inclusive School Strategies](#)

## **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.

## *Final Thought to Ponder:*

*“You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.”*

*—Jane Goodall*