



Westwood Public School

October 2016 Newsletter



PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE:

We have had a busy but great start to the school year. I would encourage you to sign up for our email list for notifications about our newsletter and/or begin following us on Twitter. It is a great way to keep up to date with the events happening at Westwood. If you haven't had a chance to sign up for our email list, please visit www.ugdsb.on.ca/CASL and sign-up for the Westwood email list.

School Council is meeting Thursday (October 6) at 6:45pm. Hoping to see many of our new and returning parents at the meeting. Our Council plans great events for our students and school community throughout the year, and your participation is an excellent way to voice your ideas and opinions. Looking forward to seeing you on Thursday!

EQAO results are in for our students who were in Grade 3 and 6 in May. Our students and staff worked extremely hard and had great success during the Assessment. As a school, our Primary Reading scores improved by 20%. Over 60% of our Grade 3 students received level 3 or 4 in Reading. Grade 6 students continued to do well in Reading with 74% receiving a level 3 or 4. Our Grade 3 & 6 Writing results showed that 76% of our students achieved level 3 or 4. Our Primary Math scores also increased to 50% of students achieving levels 3 or 4. While our Junior Math scores were not what we hoped for, as a School Board, we are above the Provincial average for the first time in a number of years. Individual results will be coming home to parents this week. Congratulations students! We are so proud of you! You never gave up and rose to the challenge.

Like always, if you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call or meet with me at the school.

Sincerely,
Tara Topping
519-823-5450 ex. 223

TERRY FOX:

A huge thank you to all our Westwood families and staff. The year is the 36th Terry Fox Walk and our school rose to the challenge that Terry left us. If you still have pledges, please submit them to the school. Stay tuned to find out how much money we raised! Way to go Westwood!

Lice at School

The Canadian Pediatric Society has stated that head lice is no longer considered a Public Health issue. Lice do NOT carry any diseases and it is now considered a public nuisance.

Therefore the local Public Health Unit is no longer advising on head lice. Research indicates that school based head checks are ineffective and they create heightened anxiety for students and their families. If students are found with head lice, we will contact the parents AND we will send notes home to all students in the class, but as per the Canadian Pediatric Society's recommendations, we will NOT require our students to stay home until the lice have been removed. We are asking all parents to please check their children for lice at home and let us know if they need any help to purchase the special shampoo. Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Westwood's Safety Patrol Team:

Students on our Westwood Safety Patrol Team perform a very important duty each and every day of the school year. It is their responsibility to look out for the safety of our students as they walk to and from school. In order for this to happen, patrols need the respect and cooperation of all Westwood students. As parents, you can help by encouraging your child to obey safety patrols at all times and use the patrolled crosswalks.

Safety Patrol Students patrol at the following crosswalks at the following times:
Rhonda & Willow, and Westwood's Parking Lot at 8:35-8:50 & 3:10-3:25.

READING BUDDY PROGRAM:

The Reading Buddy Program is off to a great start and more volunteers are welcome. If you can spare an hour and a half per week, we have volunteer opportunities for parents to read with children throughout the school. Parent volunteers will be trained by other parent volunteers. Please contact the office to arrange for a police check prior to starting the program.

WESTWOOD SCHOOL AND THE GUELPH STORM:

Westwood wants to thank BALNAR MANAGEMENT again this year for providing season tickets to the Storm games!! WOW! Westwood Storm fans are going to really enjoy cheering on the Storm!



SCHOOL PHOTO DAY:

School photos will take place on Wednesday, October 5.

PIZZA DAYS:



We will be selling pizza slices again this year. Pizza tickets will be for sale at first break on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays every week. Pepperoni or cheese slices are available for \$1.25 each. Students will then pick up their pizza at second break.

OCTOBER PD DAY:

There is a PD Day on Friday October 28th - there will be no school for students on this day as staff will be participating in professional development activities for the day.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

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| Oct 5 | Picture Day |
| Oct 6 | School Council Meeting (6:45pm) |
| Oct 7 | Spirit Day- Colour Day & National Walk to School Day |
| Oct 10 | Thanksgiving Monday - No School |
| Oct 13 | Homework Club begins (Grade 3s) |
| Oct 14 | QSP Magazine Fundraiser Kick off |
| Oct 17 | Police Class Visits and Safety Patrol Pizza Lunch |
| Oct 18 | IEPs go home |
| Oct 24 | Grade 7 & 8 Immunizations |
| Oct 28 | PD Day - No School for Students |
| Oct 31 | Halloween Parade |

First Nation, Métis, Inuit Self-identification:

If your child is a member of a First Nation, the Métis or the Inuit, then please consider having him or her self-identify. Self-identification helps in several ways:

1. Students will have access to more culturally relevant programming and opportunities for unique cultural and academic experiences.
2. The school system will have an opportunity to focus efforts and resources, as well as an increased awareness of the diverse needs of indigenous families.
3. The school community will have an opportunity for building relationships to increase student success and well being.

Share your pride in your heritage! Please come to the office (or have your child do so) to get a card that can be filled in and submitted if you wish to self-identify

Westwood Playtime:

Playtime (for parents and caregivers with birth to six children) formerly Parent Child Place: At Playtime children will experience an interactive hands-on program that includes free play, creative activities, and circle time with songs and stories. It is a place you and the children can meet new friends and ask questions of the staff. You'll also find information about a variety of parenting topics such as child development, toilet training, sleep, nutrition and more. Your neighbourhood Playtime is located at: **Three Willows United Church**, 577 Willow Road. Wednesdays 9:30 – 11:30am. Please contact oeyc@guelphchc.ca or phone 519-821-6638 option 3 for more information.

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 adopted a new policy in June 2016 to provide support for students with Asthma. If your child has asthma, the policy requires an Asthma Management Plan (AMP)

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 516. Parents are requested to complete the AMP and return it to the school as soon as possible at the beginning of the school year. Authorization for the collection of this information is in the Education Act. The purpose is to collect and share medical information and to administer proper medical care in the event of an emergency or life-threatening situation. Users of this information may be principals, teachers, support staff, volunteers, bus operators and drivers. This form will be kept for a minimum period of one calendar year. Contact person concerning this collection is the school principal.

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.

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 causes a severe reaction to food or other materials, and 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 may refrain from sending foods to the school that contain peanuts and nuts. 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 contacted by the classroom teacher.

Our school has procedures in place to help manage 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.

Individual Education Plans (IEPs):

Individual Education Plans, or IEPs, are developed by schools when assessments show that a student needs special education programming and/or services. The development of the IEP should be a collaborative process that includes parents and the student (if possible). During the development phase, schools are required to seek feedback through consultation with parents. This is your opportunity to discuss and share information with the classroom teacher and/or

special education teacher regarding your child's education. If your child had an IEP last year, you will see a copy of this working document come home within the first 30 school days.

When the IEP is sent home, you will also receive a booklet titled, Parents' Guide to the Individual Education Plan. This booklet is a resource to help parents understand how an IEP is developed, what is included in an IEP, and how an IEP supports your child. It also includes definitions and explanations to help parents understand some of the language that is part of an IEP, such as accommodations and modifications.

One more item that will accompany your child's IEP this year is a Parent/Guardian IEP Questionnaire. We want to know your ideas about your child's Individual Education Plan (IEP). Your ideas will be used to help us improve the IEP processes in our schools, and help us provide parents/guardians with the special education information they are looking for. Please take a few moments to share your ideas and return the questionnaire to the school office. If you need any help with completing this questionnaire, your child's classroom or special education teacher can assist you.

Changing Our Beliefs and Attitudes About Math:

Myth of the Math Person

Most people believe that math is one of those subjects that you either "get" or you "don't get." This way of thinking cannot be further from the truth; there is no such thing as a math person. Everyone can achieve in any subject with hard work, perseverance, and someone to guide them. The key to shattering this myth is developing a growth mindset in our teachers and students, and a math classroom where students are challenged by engaging problems and supported in their learning.

The Evolving Classroom

The reason so many people think math is the most difficult is the inaccessible way it is often taught."^[1] When we were math students our math teachers often taught us tips, tricks, and recipes for solving math problems. In the math classes of old there was only one correct solution. We could get the answer if we memorized and followed the teacher's procedure, but if someone asked us the "why" behind our formula, most of us wouldn't be able to answer.

[1] Boaler, Jo. *Mathematical Mindsets*. Jossey-Bass: 2016, pg 96.

Today, teachers are striving for students to have a solid grasp of the "why" behind each solution. This often means that students are encouraged to share a variety of methods and strategies to solve a single problem. By sharing different strategies, teachers can help students see the common thread that connects each solution, thus deepening their understanding of the concept being taught. The teacher's role is no longer to teach procedures, but to help students make connections and understand the mathematical concepts behind the solutions.

Let your child struggle with math problems.

- See if they have the perseverance to work through their struggles. We need to break the math myth that we need fast answers to be good at math.

Never let your child hear you say: "I was never good at math."

- Research studies have shown when parents tell their children they were not good at

math, their child's achievement is immediately affected.^[1]

Ask your child if they can solve a math problem in another way.

- This shows that your child has multiple strategies at their fingertips and they are flexible with their math thinking.

Ask your child to explain the reasoning behind their response.

- "Why did you (add/ subtract/ multiply/ divide)?"
- "What does your drawing represent?"

Online Resources

Parents' Beliefs about Math Change Their Children's Achievement - <https://goo.gl/psL33d>

"We now know that the [messages we give students](#) can change their performance dramatically, and that students need to know that the adults in their lives believe in them."

TL Talk: The Gift of Failure – Interview with Jessica Lahey - <https://goo.gl/oo7xFc>

"Jessica is the author of the New York Times bestselling book, [The Gift of Failure: How the Best Parents Learn to Let Go So Their Children Can Succeed.](#)"

How to Learn Math: for Students - <https://goo.gl/OCywaf>

"How to Learn Math is a free self-paced class for learners of all levels of mathematics. It combines really important information on the brain and learning with new evidence on the best ways to approach and learn math effectively."

[1] Boaler, J. (n.d.). Parents' Beliefs about Math Change Their Children's Achievement. Retrieved September 22, 2016, from

<https://www.youcubed.org/think-it-up/parents-beliefs-math-change-childrens-achievement/>

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH:

Talking About Mental Health October 2016 – Promoting Mental Health. Helping kids grow up mentally healthy is an important part of parenting. Here are a few things that CHEO

(<http://www.cheo.on.ca/en/Promoting-Mental-Health-parents>) suggests you can do to support good mental health in your children and youth.

1. Put your device down. When you are with your children and youth, show them that they are more important than your electronic device. Lead by example: put your own devices aside and spend face-to-face time with your kids.
2. Listen when they're upset. When children and youth are upset, they just want you to listen and understand how they're feeling. Try not to jump in with advice or reassurance. Listen is spelled with the same letters as Silent.
3. Focus on their strengths. Support your children and youth's self-esteem by helping them to see their own strengths. Show that you see and appreciate kindness, empathy and trying

hard, and not just achievements like good grades. For example, “That was kind of you to think of your brother” or “You worked so hard on that and you didn’t give up!”

Have a mentally healthy October!

Dr. Lynn Woodford is the Mental Health Lead for the Upper Grand District School Board.

Follow me on Twitter @drlynnwoodford.

InterNational Walk to School Day:

In October we celebrate active travel by encouraging students to walk or bike between home and school. Walking or cycling to school gets kids outside every day actively enjoying their natural environment. They arrive at school better able to concentrate and learn.

“In the 2015 ParticipACTION Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, the overall grade for Canadian children and youth 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, the grade for Active Transportation remains a D, with only 24% of 5-17 year olds walking/wheeling to school and 62% being driven by parents or caregivers. 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 or biking to school can benefit kids *by Katherine Martinko*

Walking is known to improve academic performance. Children 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 *Last Child in the Woods*, kids certainly aren’t spending enough time outside these days. Those few minutes of walking can provide inspiration.

Walking 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.

Urban affairs journalist Christopher Hume says, “*Walking is a reflection of how we feel about the environment in which we live.*” Children will learn to love their town even more if they get to know it on foot. Why not gather a group of friends and participate in Walk to School Day?