



**OPENING DAY PRINCIPAL'S ADDRESS
WELLINGTON HEIGHTS SECONDARY SCHOOL
September 7, 2021**



Good morning, Wellington Heights - this is Mr. Bloch. I am delighted and honoured to serve as your Principal during this historic time in education. For the second year in a row, our school population is returning to classes in the fall in the midst of a global pandemic. We are all faced with the tremendous challenge of balancing the safety of our school community with the rigours of academic excellence - but I can confidently say that I know we Wolverines are up to this challenge.

Today in your Period 1 classes, your teachers will be reviewing with you the COVID-19 protocols and requirements that we all must follow in order to keep you, your teachers, our school support staff, your families, and our local community safe and healthy. It will be imperative for all of us to quickly establish new behaviours and routines within the school, during lunch break, and on the school bus, that ensure social distancing and a clean school environment. This responsibility must be taken seriously, and we must all kindly help one another to follow the directives set forth by our local Public Health Unit.

The goal of the Upper Grand District School Board, is for all of our students to accomplish a safe return to in-person learning, and to earn two credits this quadmester. To help meet this goal, our new school instructional model this Quadmester includes only two classes, instead of the usual four, that students will take until November. Our Head of Guidance, Ms. Bell, has indicated that timetable changes will only be done for students with serious timetable issues, such as timetables with Grade 11 Math in Quadmester 1, and Grade 10 Math the following Quadmester. Many classes are full, and your requested changes may not be able to happen, or

you may be put on a waitlist for your requested class. Priority today is for Grade 12 students and those other students with serious timetable issues in Quadmester 1. If you require a timetable change, please see the table outside of the office. There, you can look over the master schedule and plan what alternative course(s) you would like. Complete the paper form, listing your current choices and your 1st and 2nd requested choices. Book a time slot and come to the office at that time. Timetable changes need to be finalized before the end of the day on Thursday.

This year, our school model will include a lunch break. Once dismissed, students will have the option of leaving school to purchase lunch downtown, leaving school to eat lunch at home, going outside to eat the lunch brought to school, or remaining in the classroom or assigned lunch room to eat the lunch brought to school. During this time, students remaining in the building may remove their masks only to consume their lunches, and then must put them back on. All classroom doors will be left open during lunch, and students may only leave their room to go to the washroom. Students who leave the building during lunch may remove their masks once outside, but must ensure social distancing. If returning to school before the warning bell at 12:25p.m., students will need to report to their assigned lunch room until the bell rings. Period 2 will begin at 12:30p.m.

Additionally, we are excited about the possibility of the return of extracurricular clubs, councils, activities, and sports. The board has indicated that schools may begin planning these activities. Sports teams may begin practices and try-outs soon, but we are still awaiting direction from the District, Regional, and Provincial associations regarding sport competitions with other schools. Please listen to announcements, or read our daily announcements on our school website at the Daily Announcements tab, for information about extracurricular opportunities.

At Wellington Heights, we are very fortunate to have such a caring, dedicated, flexible, and conscientious teaching staff, who have been working diligently and creatively to plan for your instruction. Please give them your respect, attention, and best efforts as they navigate these COVID-19 protocols and new school model. Our Administrative Assistants and Guidance Staff have also been working long hours to prepare for your arrival, and I am grateful for their support. Our custodial staff has equally been working diligently these past several weeks to get our school thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to ensure our safety - and for that I would like to offer them our thanks.

Upon arriving to school today, you may have noticed that we are proudly flying the new Pride flag. This flag is a symbol of our commitment to ensuring equity and respect for people of the LGBTQ 2-spirited community, and a reminder that everyone has the right to feel safe and welcoming in their school community.

In this quadmester, with an ongoing global pandemic, continued COVID-19 protocols, and a new Quadmester model, it may be difficult to maintain one's self discipline and to aim for higher than mediocrity. In the words of former Arthur District High School Principal, P.E. Brown, "Do not forget that our years spent in formal education are a preparation for our future responsibilities in the world of work. In the course of this preparation, we can do nothing else other than insist on our best possible effort in everything we undertake." Whether that be in the completion of our studies, the following of our Covid-19 protocols, or our participation in extracurricular activities, we must develop the habit of giving nothing but our best effort. "In this manner, by giving our closest attention to seemingly minor details and by striving for perfection in what appear to be small matters, we are making the best possible preparation for our vocation in life."

In closing, I ask that you remember our school motto, “Be Kind And Learn,” and endeavour to treat everyone you encounter at Wellington Heights and beyond with kindness always, and that your focus at school be to continually improve your own learning. This motto, coupled with our school values of “Pride, Respect, and Friendship” should guide you and ground you in all that you do, and in all that you endeavour to be. Be proud Wolverines this year, as we collaboratively work to combat Covid-19 while achieving the greatest academic achievements possible. In the words of former British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, remember that, “Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts.”

Best wishes to all of you for a wonderful first day of school, and a memorable and successful year ahead!

Sincerely,

Mr. B. Bloch
Principal