

GREAT LAKES CURRENT

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Mr. P. Wiersma Principal
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A Newsletter for Parents of Great Lakes Secondary School November 16, 2017

A Culture of High Expectations

With the arrival of this newsletter, there will be fewer than forty days of school left this semester. The novelty of the new school year has worn off, and students are being challenged with fewer hours of sunlight and seasonal colds and illness. Students are encouraged to work hard and to set high expectations for themselves. We believe that all students can learn, progress, and achieve at high levels with time, support, and caring adults as their teachers. We expect that students will attend their classes, and we will work with students to have them achieve at the provincial standard, which is level three or higher. We appreciate your support as we challenge each other to do our best.

Attendance

Attendance is a critical ingredient to being academically successful. Each course includes 89 classes, and missing classes or coming late to class represents missed learning opportunities. Please encourage your son and/or daughter to make attendance a priority. Please contact the school if classes need to be missed for illness, medical appointment, or another necessary reason.

Bus Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather

Bus cancellation information is posted each school day by 6:30 a.m. at <http://www.schoolbusinfo.com/>. Great Lakes is in transportation zone two. On days that the buses are cancelled, the school will remain open, and teachers will conduct classes. Sixty percent of students are bussed to school. Students are encouraged to attend school if it is safe to do so. Students who are bussed will have their absence coded “transportation cancelled” and it will be assumed that they are not coming to school. Such students who do come to school are expected to attend classes and will have their attendance coded “present”. Students who walk to school will be expected to attend school unless a parent contacts the school to explain their absence. Such students who are absent without explanation will be deemed truant.

School Council

The GLSS School Council is made up of parents, staff representatives, community members and the principal. The School Council provides a forum for people interested in public education to work cooperatively in developing common goals and plans to strengthen schools in order to improve student achievement. The Council meets regularly to discuss a variety of topics relevant to the school community. Input from the various council members shapes school policies and priorities. Meetings of the School Council are public, and everyone is welcome to attend. The next meeting is on Thursday, November 30, at 7 p.m. See the school website for past meeting agendas and minutes.

Student Wellness and Bullying Intervention Line

Students are able to learn when the school environment is safe. Call the school if there is a concern about a student's wellness or there is a bullying situation that you are aware of. Messages may be left anonymously. The line is monitored regularly by the principal, and is available 24 hours a day. Call 519-336-6131, and select option 5.

Awards Assembly and Night

Parents and members of the community are welcome to attend the Awards Assembly and Awards Night on Thursday, December 21. Students who are receiving awards based on their accomplishments last year in grades nine, ten, and eleven will be recognized at an awards assembly at 1 p.m. Students who are receiving awards based on their accomplishments last year in grade twelve will be recognized at Awards Night at 7:00 p.m. Students winning awards will receive invitations to participate.

Homework Help

As part of the LKDSB's numeracy initiative, grades nine and ten students have registered for Homework Help (<https://homeworkhelp.ilc.org/>). Homework Help is a free online math help resource for students in grades 7-10. It provides free, live one-on-one tutoring from Ontario teachers Sunday to Thursday from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Great Lakes Music Department Happenings

- Over the next five weeks, the Great Lakes music students will be performing exciting holiday concerts at ten of our feeder schools to share their considerable gifts with their larger school community. Students learn valuable lessons about musical excellence, performance practices, and mentorship by working with their younger peers.
- Great Lakes Idol is just around the corner. On November 23, at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium, many of our talented young singers will be performing in the second round of Idol to take a shot at the coveted Great Lakes Idol title.
- Don't forget to come on out to the Corunna Santa Claus Parade, on Saturday, November 25, which will feature nearly thirty of our musicians as they play in Santa's Band at the clock tower from 6:00-7:30 p.m. It promises to be a wonderful evening.
- Music Night is fast approaching. Come out and hear the Jazz Choir, Music classes, Concert Band and Jazz Band perform rousing music from many styles and eras. We look forward to exceptional performances with a slamming grade nine rock band as the warm-up act. The concert starts at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$5.00 per person. Children under 12 are free.

Athletics

Fall athletics have come to a close. The Wolfpack had great seasons competing in the Lambton Kent Secondary School Athletic Association (LKSSAA). Fall sports included Senior Football, Junior and Senior Girls' Basketball, Junior and Senior Boys' Volleyball, Junior Girls' and Boys' Soccer, Cross Country, Golf, and Tennis. Winter athletics are beginning and include Junior and Senior Boys' Basketball, Junior and Senior Girls' Volleyball, Girls' and Boys' Hockey, Curling, Swimming, and Wrestling. Thanks to all our teachers and community coaches for the time they volunteer with our students. Schedules and results can be viewed at <http://www.lkssaa.ca/>.

Parking

During school hours, on-site parking is restricted to staff. Students may park at the Sarnia Arena. Vehicles found parked at the school during school hours without a parking pass clearly visible in the front windshield may be towed at the owner's expense.

Serious Student Medical Concerns

Schools are responsible for planning for students with serious medical concerns such as anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes, seizures, and other health issues that may be life threatening. If your child has a serious medical concern then please contact one of our vice-principals, Mr. J. Gower (jeremy.gower@lkdsb.net) or Mrs. C. White (caroline.white@lkdsb.net), to discuss. This information will then be made available to school staff including your child's classroom teachers, guidance counsellors, administrators, and the office staff.

Final Exams

All students are expected to write their exams as scheduled by the school. Exams are **not** rescheduled for reasons such as work schedules or vacations. The only acceptable reasons for absence from exams are for illness, bereavement or court appearance. Medical notes will be required for students who are absent from exams due to illness. Absence from an exam for any other reason will result in a mark of zero for the exam portion of the course.

Volunteers

Great Lakes is fortunate to have approximately 35 people who volunteer their time to support student activities and events at the school. Volunteers are screened by the principal and have completed a police vulnerable sector police check. Please contact the principal if you are interested in participating.

Community Involvement Activities

Students are required to complete forty hours of community involvement activities for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma. Students are encouraged to complete these hours in the earlier years of high school and may begin the summer before grade nine. Ineligible activities include ones that would normally be a paid position (e.g. for a business) or activities that would normally be performed in the home (e.g. chores). See <http://www.lkdsb.net/Secondary/CommunityInvolvement/Pages/default.aspx> for more information.

Important Dates and Activities

Nov. 23	Great Lakes Idol, 7 p.m.
Nov. 30	School Council, 7 p.m.
Dec. 6-21	Graduation Pictures
Dec. 7	Music Night, 7 p.m.
Dec. 21	Awards Assembly (1 p.m.), Awards Night (7 p.m.)
Dec. 23 - Jan. 7	Christmas Break
Jan. 10	Progress Reports
Jan. 18-19	EQAO Grade 9 Math
Jan. 26 - Feb. 1	Exams
March 1-3	The Revue
May 24-26	Musical
June 7	Graduation, Progressive Auto Sales Arena
June 27	Last Exam Date