

September 2023 Newsletter

Gregory Drive PS



Mrs. T. Lessard, Principal
Mrs. B. Walker, Secretary
Telephone: 519.352.6856
Website: <http://gregorydrive.lkdsb.net>
Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Welcome Back Grizzlies!

The staff at Gregory Drive Public School would like to welcome our families to the 2023-2024 school year. A special greeting is extended to our new students and families who have moved into our school community. Welcome to Team Grizzly!

The staff of Gregory Drive Public School has been working extremely hard to get ready for a new school year and to welcome our students on Tuesday September 5th. We'd like to thank our custodial staff for all their hard work as well this summer. They cleaned all the classrooms, washed all the furniture, scrubbed, and waxed the floors so that they are sparkling! Mrs. Walker too has been busy in the office registering new families and getting ready for the start of another year. We are so very lucky to have an amazing team here at GDPS and student success, safety and well-being continue to be our goal for every student, everyday!

As always, communication is the key to ensuring your child has a successful year. We encourage you to keep the lines of communication open and invite you to contact your child's teacher/the school should you have any questions or concerns.

We wish all of you the very best as we begin another new and exciting school year!

2023-2024 Staff Directory

Principal	Mrs. T. Lessard	French	Ms. E. Wallace
Secretary	Mrs. B. Walker	P.E./Health/Prep	Mr. M. Welch
FDK	Mr. B. Mackenzie	Arts/Prep	Mrs. K. Jackson
FDK	Mrs. S. O'Hara	Resource	Mrs. J. Jackson
Grade 1	Mrs. C. Plaquet	ECE	Mrs. S. Wilson
Grade 1/2	Mrs. H. Gilbert	EA	Mrs. D. Simpson
Grade 2/3	Ms. T. Secord	EA	Mrs. A. Greenslade
Grade 3/4	Mrs. A. Markovic	EA	Mrs. A. Gowman
Grade 4	Mrs. J. O'Rourke	EA	Ms. T. Travis
Grade 5/6	Mrs. S. St. Germain	Custodian	Mr. C. Emery
Grade 6/7	Mr. G. Martin		Mr. N. Cresta
Grade 6/7	Mr. G. Czichrak		
Grade 8	Mr. M. Schoger		

School Bell Times

8:25 a.m. -8:40 a.m.: Students arrive at school
8:40 a.m.: School Bell
8:40 a.m. - 10:40 a.m.: First Instructional Block
10:40 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.: AM Nutrition Break and Recess
11:20 a.m. – 1:20 – p.m.: Second Instructional Block
1:20 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.: PM Nutrition Break and Recess
2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. – Third Instructional Block
3:00 p.m.: Dismissal

**Students who walk to school or get dropped off must not arrive before 8:25 a.m. as there will be no staff supervision prior to that time.

Class Organization

As each September arrives, we welcome new students into our school and say goodbye to others. As a result of late registrations and additional moves in/out of our school area, **changes to class organization could result throughout September.** If school re-organization is required, we will work to limit changes where possible, but it is necessary that all students and families understand this possibility exists.

School Visitors

All visitors must check in at the office. If you need to drop something off for your child (lunch, backpack, etc.), please drop it off at the office with your child's name and teacher and we will ensure it gets delivered to your child.

Home School Communication

At GDPS we continue to look for ways to provide parents/guardians with quick, convenient, and accessible ways to communicate and access school information. Our teachers use digital platforms (SeeSaw, Google Classroom, etc.) to strengthen classroom-home communication and provide you with pertinent and timely classroom information. You are encouraged to utilize this form of communication as it will provide you with immediate and essential information such as homework, assignments, due dates, field trips, special events, etc. More information will come home from your child's classroom teacher.

GDPS Newsletter and School-Wide Information - The September issue of the school newsletter will be sent to parents/guardians in School Messenger as well as printed on paper and distributed to all students. **All subsequent issues of the school newsletter will be sent through School Messenger and will be available on the school website <http://gregorydrive.lkdsb.net>.** School Messenger will be used frequently throughout the year to provide families with important school wide information (special events, important dates, reminders, etc.). It is very important that we have parents/guardians up to date emails to ensure our families receive necessary information.

Parent/Guardian Contact Information

It is essential that we are made aware of any contact information changes in case there is an emergency at school. As phone numbers and emails may change over the course of the year, please remember to let Mrs. Walker know so that we can update our database.

Parents/Guardians will be receiving verification packages sometime the first week of school. Please verify your contact information and return to the school as soon as possible.

School Absences/Late Arrivals, Safe School Arrival Policy, and Calls to the Office

All pupils are required to attend school on a regular basis. Studies have shown that regular attendance has a positive effect on the academic achievement of students. However, if your child is ill, he/she should remain home until they are well enough to return to the regular school routine. Our Safe School Policy states that if a student is going to be absent, parents/guardians are to notify the school at (519) 352-6856. We have an answering machine that will take this information before or after school hours. It is essential for safety reasons that we are aware if your child is not at school. If we have not heard from you, a telephone call must be made to confirm the absence. Students arriving late must report to the office upon arrival before going to class.

Automated safe arrival calls: The LKDSB has implemented an automated attendance messaging system for GDPS. The system will notify parents/guardians if your child has been marked absent and the school has not been notified of the reason for the absence. To follow-up, we will contact the parent/guardian phone numbers and email addresses that we have on file. Please ensure that the school has your most updated contact information.

We ask that you use School Messenger to inform the school of absences. Parents/Guardians can use School Messenger in one of the following three ways to report you're an absence or late arrival:

Option 1: Set up an online SchoolMessenger account and login to schedule and report absences or late arrival. To create your account or login in click here <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca/#/home>

Option 2: Download the free SchoolMessenger app (blue) to your smart phone or tablet to schedule and report absences or late arrival.

Click here for Apple devices <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/schoolmessengerinfocenter/id978894818>

Click here for Android devices <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.schoolmessenger.recipient>

Option 3: Call the LKDSB toll-free Attendance Reporting number 1 (844) 487-3695 and follow the prompts to report your child's absence or late arrival. For your security it is recommended that you set a PIN. Your PIN must be private and not shared with your child. Please sign up now so you are ready to use School Messenger to report any absence.

We also ask your assistance in making arrangements for rides home, early pick-up for appointments, and other changes to the normal daily routine **before** your child comes to school. **If you must call the office to advise your child of a change, please call before 2:30 pm.** We cannot ensure after this time that it will be possible to pass the message onto your child.

When walking to school, or dropping off students, please remind them:

- To cross only at crosswalks or intersections. Please be aware that there are no safety patrollers or municipal crossing guards at crosswalks/intersections.
- Not to arrive at school before 8:25 as there will be no supervision prior to this time.

If driving a vehicle for before or after school pick-up/drop off, please use THE EAST SIDE PARKING LOT or park in the Gregory Drive Church parking lot and safely walk your students to/from the school yard. For the safety of our bus students THE FRONT PARKING LOT WILL BE UNAVAILABLE before or after school. Parents are asked not to park in the bus pick up/drop off zone at the front entrance of the school as it is a safety concern, and it interferes with our bus loading. For safety reasons, please turn off your vehicle and take your keys out of the ignition.

We appreciate your cooperation and support in ensuring the safety of our school community.

Technology/Cell Phones/Devices

Students and parents should review the Responsible Use of Technology guidelines to ensure that students are aware of their responsibilities when using the internet and devices.

<https://www.lkdsb.net/Board/PoliciesRegulations/Policies/Responsible%20Use%20of%20Technology.pdf#search=student%20use%20of%20technology>

Over the past several years, there has been a dramatic increase in the use of Personal Cell Phones and Tablets (PCP&Ts) by students throughout the school day. The use of PCP&Ts has become a significant source of distraction and a hindrance to the learning environment at Gregory Drive Public School. The use of PCP&Ts have also increased the number of cyber-bullying incidents and instances of the inappropriate use of technology.

Last year, Gregory Drive Public School introduced a new set of PCP&T expectations for students. This practice will continue throughout the 2023-2024 school year. To support an optimal learning environment for our students, limit distractions and ensure student safety and well-being, PCP&Ts must be turned off and stored in students' lockers or classroom lockbox from 8:40 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It is strongly recommended that students have a lock on their locker as the school is not responsible for any lost or damaged devices. Students will not have access to their PCP&Ts throughout the day but will have the opportunity to access them during the second nutritional break to check for any important communication from parents/guardians. We strongly encourage families to make after school plans with their children prior to the beginning of the school day. When accessing their PCP&T, students are expected to adhere to the LKDSB Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. Students will be permitted to bring a personal laptop/chromebook to be used for academic purposes only and will be expected to adhere to the LKDSB Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.

If your child must call home, a telephone will be available in the office for student use. Should you need to give your child a message, please contact the school and the office staff will forward the message to your child. In case of an emergency, the office staff will give your child a message or have the student return your call.

Students will be expected to comply with these expectations. Any student that has their PCP&T out during restricted times will be required to turn their device in to the office. The PCP&T will be sealed in an envelope with the student's name. The PCP&T can be picked up by the student at the end of the school day. If a student repeatedly violates these expectations, their PCP&T will be held at the office and a parent/guardian will be required to pick it up.

Thank you in advance for your partnership with our school and your continued support in helping provide a safe and productive learning environment that limits distractions and creates a safe learning environment for all.

School Cash On-Line

School Cash Online will be used for families to purchase items like lunches, field trips, spirit wear, etc. The school will not be accepting cash payments. Visit the school website to learn more about School Cash Online (click on the orange School Cash Online button).

School Bus Information

Check out the online **Parent Web Portal** today to access transportation applications and important bussing information. You can update your child's medical information and set up email notification subscriptions to receive real-time notifications. It is now the parent's responsibility to enter their child's medical information in the Parent Portal. Please visit www.cklass.ca and www.schoolbusinfo.com to create an account, access information and provide your child's medical information. You can also contact Student Transportation at Tel: 519-627-6860, Toll Free: 877-330-4287. You can also download **MySBI** app to receive real-time notifications on bus delays and cancellations on your mobile device.

Inclement Weather

The arrival of fall often brings fog. The policy of the LKDSB is: In the event of bus cancellation due to fog, all schools will remain open. Morning bus pickups will be cancelled, and buses will run for the afternoon return home drop offs. We encourage parents of bus students to arrange their own transportation to school when it is safe to do so. Please listen to the radio for information if the weather looks questionable in the morning. Important information regarding late busses, bus cancellations and school closures can be found on the MySBI app. Gregory Drive Public School is in School **Bus Zone 8**. Information regarding radio stations carrying cancellations, policies and routes can be accessed at: www.schoolbusinfo.com.

Individual Medical Emergency Plans & Administration of Medication

Should your child have a prevalent medical condition, such as asthma, diabetes, anaphylaxis, epilepsy/seizures, etc., that requires special emergency attention please inform the school and an **"Individual Medical Emergency Plan"** will be put in place. The forms for this purpose are available in the office or on the school website [https://www.lkdsb.net/school/gregorydrive/Pages/default.aspx#/="](https://www.lkdsb.net/school/gregorydrive/Pages/default.aspx#/=).

The Lambton Kent District School Board has developed a comprehensive procedure for the administration of prescriptive medication when it cannot be administered from home. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that prescription drugs are administered correctly to those students who, as a result of proper physician and parental/guardian authorization, are deemed to require such medication. **The school will not administer non-prescription drugs to students at any time.** An **"Authorization for the Administration of Medication"** form (available from office or on our school website), must be completed by the parent/guardian and physician, and then forwarded to the principal for each school year. This includes the administration of occasional use medications as well. Whenever the physician directs a modification of the prescribed medication the process is repeated.

Medic Alert's 'No Child Without Program'

The 'No Child Without' program offers a free MedicAlert membership to students who attend our school from age 4 until their 14th birthday. MedicAlert identification can alert staff, friends, coaches and others about your child's medical condition, should an emergency occur. Brochures are available at the office and additional information can be found at www.nochildwithout.ca. Information changes for students already registered can be made by calling MedicAlert at 1-866-679-3220.

Insurance with Insure My Kids

Our School Board does not provide accident insurance coverage for student injuries that occur on school property or during school activities including extracurricular sports. Each year, many families are left financially unprotected when their children are injured at school, while participating in non-school activities, or at home. If a student is injured, parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for any costs not covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) or their employer's health care plan. Please check with your provider regarding your coverage. Most accident-related expenses are not fully covered under OHIP and some expenses like ambulance fees, casts, crutches, physiotherapy, and emergency dental care are usually not covered at all. This leaves you, the parent/guardian, financially responsible. To help protect your family, it is recommended that you consider obtaining student accident insurance. As a convenience to you, the Board has made an arrangement to offer student accident insurance through insuremykids®. Participation is voluntary but highly recommended and the costs are to be paid by the parent/guardian. The program is available for students up to age 26. If you wish to purchase coverage, please do so directly online at www.insuremykids.com or call 1-800- 463-5437. The insurance agreement is between You and the insurance underwriter, Old Republic Insurance Company of Canada. For more information, please visit www.insuremykids.com.

Nut Aware

Please remember that GDPS is a **NUT AWARE** school. Students **may not** bring any nuts, peanut butter, or nut products (including Wow Butter) to school. Please make sure to read all labels before packing your child's lunch. We have students with severe anaphylactic allergies to a variety of nuts and it is important that we ensure their safety while they are at school. We appreciate your co-operation and support with this.

Snack Program

With the support of the Ontario Student Nutrition Program and the May Court Club of Chatham, Gregory Drive Public School will be running a snack program for the 2023-2024 school year. Throughout the year, students will have access to a variety of pre-packaged snacks (yogurt, cheese strings, granola bars, fruits, and vegetables). The Snack Program will begin the first week of school. Food/monitory donations to Gregory Drive Snack Program are always welcome. Please contact the office if you are interested in donating to our school snack program.

GDPS School Council

School Councils are advisory groups mandated and regulated by the Ministry of Education and are an integral part to student success. Members represent the school community can include parents, students, staff, and community representatives. For those of you who have joined us in the past, we thank-you and encourage you to continue your involvement. An invitation is extended to all Gregory Drive parents/guardians to join GDPS 2023-2024 School Council. Please contact the office for more information. We will have our first school council meeting September 18 at 6:30 in the school Learning Commons.

Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol - Fair Notice Communication

The Lambton Kent 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 will most often employ progressive discipline strategies to help a student take responsibility for their actions, learn from their mistakes, and make better choices in the future.

In more extreme cases however, when a student's behaviour poses a potential threat to their own or others' well-being, the Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol (VTRA) supports principals in taking further steps to safeguard everyone.

The VTRA protocol outlines how a school responds immediately to threatening incidents including but not limited to possession of a weapon or replica weapon, bomb threat or plan, verbal or written (including electronic) threats to harm oneself or others, other threats of violence, and fire setting.

The initial response team is likely to include the Principal / Vice-Principal, police, and board staff. Should conditions warrant, a Community Threat Assessment Team will be convened. This community team includes representatives of community agencies who work with schools and boards to keep our students and staff safe, such as local police and children's mental health organizations. Parents and guardians will be notified if their child will be discussed through the Community Violence Threat Risk Assessment Protocol.

If parents/guardians cannot be reached, or if they choose not to provide consent, but a concern for safety still exists due to threatening behaviour, the threat assessment may still proceed.

Please see the link below for information on the LKDSB Fair Notice Communication Regarding Violent Threat Risk Assessment Protocol:

[https://www.lkdsb.net/Pages/newsitem.aspx?ItemID=236&ListID=1cb83139-1d39-452b-8ab2b6cfab6c2ba7&TemplateID=Announcement_Item#/="](https://www.lkdsb.net/Pages/newsitem.aspx?ItemID=236&ListID=1cb83139-1d39-452b-8ab2b6cfab6c2ba7&TemplateID=Announcement_Item#/=)

Upcoming School Events/Activities

Meet the Staff Night

We will be having a Meet the Staff Night on Monday September 25th. Please mark this on your calendar now and look for more information to come home soon.

Terry Fox

We will be participating in the Terry Fox Run/Walk at the school again this year on Friday September 22. Please look for more information to come home soon.

Orange Shirt Day/National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

The Lambton Kent District School Board will commemorate the impact of residential schools on Friday, September 29, 2023 – Orange Shirt Day. Students and staff are encouraged to wear orange shirts and use this day as a catalyst to encourage learning and understanding about the residential school system and the impacts that system has had on First Nations, Metis, and Inuit people. This is a meaningful way as school communities to come together in a spirit of reconciliation and hope because “Every Child Matters”. Please take the opportunity to learn more about Orange Shirt Day and its origins by visiting and sharing the following link: <http://www.orangeshirtday.org>