

A NOTE FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE



September 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians of Westhaven Students:

WELCOME BACK!

If you're new to Westhaven School - WELCOME TO THE WOLF PACK!

The start of a new school year is an exciting time full of promises of new adventures, learning and growth for our students. Our educators are geared up and ready to go. They've spent the first day of school getting to know the children, helping students get to know each other and teaching them school routines and expectations.

I am sending this letter to let you know a few things that will be important for you as we move through the 2023/24 school year. Please refer back to this information when you have questions about various topics regarding our procedures and policies.

OUR VISION, MISSION & CORE VALUES

At École Westhaven School, all students will learn how to take chances, make mistakes and get messy because we want students to be confident in their abilities to meet any challenges that come their way!

We are committed to being **CARING, CONNECTED, CREATIVE
SUPPORTIVE AND INNOVATIVE**
for ALL LEARNERS.

COMMUNICATIONS

- All families will receive a GYPSD Calendar.
- Website - Most information that you'll need can be found on our website at <https://westhavenschool.gypsd.ca/>. Upcoming whole-school events can be found on the front page, and if you click on the *Important School Dates* tab, there is a monthly calendar you can download or print. We do our very best to keep this information as up-to-date as possible.
- Phone calls home - You'll receive a quick, pre-recorded phone message from me every Sunday night (Mondays for long weekends), letting you know what's coming up in the week ahead. Please keep your phone number up-to-date with the office so you receive these messages.
- Emails home - We try to reduce our paper usage and utilize technology for most communication, so future letters from me and/or the school division will come

through your email. Please keep your email up-to-date with the office and check your spam or junk inbox if you missed a notice.

- Facebook Pages - We use our main Facebook page (Westhaven Elementary School) to post photos that celebrate all the fantastic learning activities and special events around the school. Our Montessori and Junior Kindergarten classes also have specific Facebook pages.
- Agendas - We want to teach our students ways to remind themselves and you about homework and upcoming events so all our grade 1-5 students each have a home/school agenda. Each teacher will give you more details about how they use agendas in their classroom.
- Other - individual teachers have provided you with extra information you'll need to know, such as newsletters, the Remind App or the Class Dojo App.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Students flourish when parents are involved at school and when we work together to support each other. If you are interested in volunteering, please ask your child's teacher to send home a Volunteer Package for you to complete. I would encourage you to become involved by attending School Council meetings. FRIM parents are encouraged to become members of the Edson Chapter of Canadian Parents for French.

IF YOUR CHILD IS SICK OR INJURED AT SCHOOL

We'll call you if your child is sick or injured at school and needs to be picked up. The child will be supervised in the office until parents have been contacted. If we can't get ahold of a child's parent, we may need to contact the emergency contact. **It is essential to keep your phone number(s) and emergency contact information up-to-date with the office.**

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance and arriving at school on time in the morning are two main ways to help your child be successful and have a positive attitude toward school. We will monitor attendance and contact parents if a child misses a lot of school so we can work out an improvement plan with you.

The school must be notified if your child will be absent as soon as possible. **Call the office at 780-723-3397 between 7:45 and 8:30 a.m. if your child will be absent, or email us at wh@gypsd.ca.** We have a "Safe Arrival" program at Westhaven. If a student is absent at 8:45, and we haven't heard from you, we will call home to verify the reason for the absence.

Late students must enter through the front door of the building and be received by a staff member. If you are picking your child up early from school, please come to the front door to pick them up.

IF PROBLEMS ARISE

We are committed to maintaining a positive relationship with parents. See the attached GYPSD procedure for addressing concerns regarding your child's education.

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

If our school population needs to evacuate the building due to unforeseen circumstances, the children will be taken to the Vanier Community Catholic School gymnasium at 831-56 Street. Regular dismissal times would be followed, and bussed students would be picked up from Vanier. Every effort would be made to contact parents or guardians by telephone. Should this occur, please remain calm and patient as we contact everyone.

TELEPHONE USE/CELL PHONES

Telephones in the classrooms are for emergency use only. We ask that after-school play times and sleepovers be arranged at home—interruptions due to telephone calls to the classroom result in decreased learning time for students. Student cell phones are not used during school time. If you feel your child requires a cell phone to contact you after school, please be aware that it is at your own risk and that the phone will be put away during school hours.

SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE FROM SCHOOL

Playground supervision begins at 8:05 a.m. for our **bus** students. We have an extra supervisor on the back playground beginning at 8:15 a.m. for in-town students. School begins at 8:30 a.m. Dismissal is at 3:10 p.m. Bus arrivals and departures are supervised. Contact the office or your child's teacher if your child is a bus student who is not riding for a specific day. Students walking home from school or being picked up must leave the school grounds immediately after dismissal. Students are not allowed to play on the playground after school.

We have two marked crosswalks at the school. Please teach your child(ren) to only cross safely at the marked crosswalks. Drivers, be extra cautious when driving in front of the school along Westhaven Drive.

DO NOT drive into the bus lane before school (7:45 to 8:45 a.m.) or after school (3:00-4:00 p.m.)

ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL

Student safety is of utmost importance to us. We are a closed campus, meaning all exterior doors will remain locked. If you need to enter the school, please ring the doorbell to the right of the front door, and a staff member will let you in. All school visitors must sign in and receive a Visitor Tag from the office.

Thanks again for choosing Westhaven School for your child! Please feel free to contact me if you need more information, and I look forward to working closely together to make this year a fantastic year!

LET'S GET MESSY!

Ms. Debra Boos

Principal



Grande Yellowhead Public School Division

A Guide to Services Provided by the Education Services Staff

WHAT TO DO IF YOU WISH TO RAISE A CONCERN ABOUT SOMETHING AT SCHOOL

If you have any concerns about your child's education or something that happened at school, address them quickly and appropriately. Communicate your concerns calmly and clearly.

STEP 1: TALK TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

The first step to addressing a concern is to contact your child's teacher. The classroom teacher knows each student's strengths and needs, and can most accurately provide information on how to improve or fix the issue. You can:

- talk to the teacher about your concerns and how your child feels
- be specific about describing your concern
- ask questions to help you understand school policies and procedures
- listen to the teacher's point of view and suggestions
- focus on the problem, not the people involved
- be prepared to explore options for resolution
- follow up on the outcome.

STEP 2: TALK TO THE PRINCIPAL

If you don't feel your concern has been addressed after talking to your child's teacher, make an appointment to speak to the school principal or assistant principal. They will ask whether or not you have first spoken directly with your child's teacher. A meeting may be set up with the student, teacher, and principal to address your concern.

STEP 3: CONTACT GYPSD CENTRAL SUPPORT SERVICES

If a resolution is not reached, contact Central Support Services. They will ask whether or not you have already spoken directly to the school principal. Central Support Services provides advice and mediation to support schools, parents, community members and other educational partners.

STEP 4: CONTACT THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

If you feel the problem still hasn't been solved, you can contact the Superintendent of Schools or your Trustee.