



John Darling News

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PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2013

Our first couple of months got off to an exciting start! We launched our 25th Anniversary celebration with a Community Walk to School event. Staff met students and their parents/caregivers in various locations in our neighbourhood and re-enacted the first walk to school event held for the official opening of John Darling P.S. in 1988.

In addition to this, we have also been busy with a variety of other school initiatives, including:

- The launch of Full Day Kindergarten.
- Our welcome assembly where each class presented a cheer created by the students.
- Running Club, Soccer Club & Intramurals were enjoyed by both primary and junior students.
- The Terry Fox Walk fundraising for cancer research occurred on Sept. 26th.
- A wonderful 'Meet the Teacher' night held on September 12th. Thank you to all our families who were able to join us at our open house!
- Three fire drills and our lockdown drill were conducted.
- The Green Team is back in action, leading us in being environmentally conscious.
- A Leadership Team has been created to support a group of motivated students to make a difference in our school and beyond our walls.
- A Fabulous Read-In week, complete with former JD staff and a wonderful storyteller on pyjama day.
- Our Fall Food Drive exceeded our goals due to your generosity. We collected 287 items!
- School Council elections were held on September 16th. As a result of the elections held at our School Council meeting, we also have a new executive for this school year. I would like to extend a big thank you to all of

these devoted School Council representatives.

- School Council's Annual Fall Fundraiser marks another success for our school. The final total is still being tabulated.

In our classrooms, students are well into the first term curriculum and teachers have been busy assessing student learning and achievement. Exciting and interesting units of study are in progress in all subject areas. Teachers continue to focus on using effective strategies as they provide descriptive feedback in a timely manner. Specific and ongoing feedback assists students to actively participate in the hard work of 'digging deeper' into their learning.

Character development is a school wide focus. We are using the 'DRAKE motto' to guide our learners towards positive decision making behaviours. We are also using the familiar conflict resolution strategies outlined in the 'Tools for Life program' as a reliable resource for students when the need arises. We believe in their ability to make the right choice and are there to support our students as they develop in these areas.

We have much to celebrate: our JD Dragons are great ambassadors of our Drake motto!

Gillian McKenzie
Principal

STAFFING UPDATE

We are pleased to welcome two new staff members to John Darling: Mrs. M. Pletz, who is teaching the new section of Kindergarten and Mrs. S. Hultink-Jones who is also teaching on the Kindergarten team.

FROM THE OFFICE...

Office Hours (8:15 a.m. to 3:45 p.m.)
Call: 519-749-0834 (To support Mrs. Simmonds in focusing on the needs of the students and staff during the school day, we would appreciate it if you would send notes in your child's planner or mailbag about appointments and any anticipated changes to a daily routine.)

Attendance Check Number: 519-570-8092 Ext: 3409#

Please leave a message on the answering machine if your child is going to be absent or late. The Attendance Check Number is used to report an absence of up to four days. If your child is absent for five or more days, you need to fill out a **Temporary Withdrawal** form.

Teacher voice mail: Unified Messaging System
519-570-8092.

You can leave messages for the classroom teacher by calling this line and using the **teacher's extension number.**

*Communication is the key to a successful year. Please do not hesitate to contact any of our staff if you have questions/concerns.



NEW ANSWERING MACHINE!!

We now have an answering machine in the office. It may be activated at times when Mrs. Simmonds is away from her desk. (e.g. lunch break) Please only leave a message if it is an emergency. In most circumstances, please hang up and call back later to speak to someone directly.

WEBSITE

John Darling is now posting our school newsletters, school council minutes and other school news on our website. We hope that this resource is helpful to you throughout the school year!

JD website
<http://jdp.wrdsb.on.ca/>

For updates about our 25th Anniversary plans, please visit our **facebook page**:

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/johndarling25>

DATES TO REMEMBER!

Nov. 1	Bus Evacuation Drill & Happy Anniversary Assembly
Nov. 4	Progress Report Cards go home
Nov. 11	Remembrance Day assembly School Council mtg @ 630pm
Nov. 12	Kindergarten Vision Screening
Nov. 18-22	Stand up to Bullying Week
Nov. 19	Chess instruction begins
Nov. 20	"WE day"
Nov. 29	Wacky Hair Day & Empathy Assembly
Dec. 11	Christmas Concert - Dress Rehearsal @ 1:45pm
Dec. 12	Christmas Concert @ 1:45 pm
Dec. 20	P.A. Day - No School
Dec. 23 to	
Jan.3	Christmas Holidays
Jan. 6	Return to school

STUDENT LEADERSHIP

There are many exciting opportunities for students to demonstrate their leadership potential both inside and outside the classroom. Already our students are acting as classroom helpers, safety patrols, lunchroom helpers, kindergarten helpers, library helpers, office helpers, and A8 buddies.

Many thanks, to all of our teachers, who are providing opportunities for students both in and out of the classroom and to our eager students who are actively engaging in helping us to build a vibrant school community.

PLAYGROUND EXPECTATIONS

We are currently reviewing our playground expectations. Student Safety and Fun for All are our main objectives. With the addition of full day kindergarten, we have more students on the yard along with smaller children who have varying gross motor skills. As we make some changes, we continue to look for other options for student play and will offer the appropriate equipment/games for our busy and active group. This transition will take time to acquire equipment/games and to adjust to some changes in expectations. Student safety is primary goal.

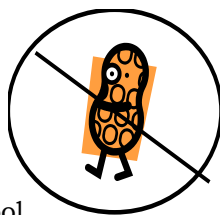
STUDENT SAFETY

1. Our student's safety remains our number one concern at John Darling. Please ensure that your son/daughter recognizes and obeys all traffic safety rules when you **drop them off in the morning or pick them up** after school. Our crossing safety patrols are constantly on the lookout for those who may be putting themselves into danger.
2. **Traffic problems** related to student pick-up and drop-off are a concern at most schools in the Waterloo Region District School Board. *Please watch and move your child safely from your vehicle to the crossing and school property.*
3. **Morning supervision starts at 8:35 a.m.** We ask that students do not arrive at school before supervision begins. We appreciate your ongoing support and cooperation in this matter. Please remember that all students walk their bikes as soon as they arrive on school property.

The parent handbook also has important safety information to discuss with your child/ren. Thank you for your help as we continue to make John Darling School a safe place to be!

FOOD ALLERGIES

At John Darling, we have several children with severe allergies to nuts. These children and their parents have taken steps to ensure that they make responsible decisions about any food or drink ingested. As a school community, all students, teachers and parents can share the responsibility of making our environment safe for all students at John Darling. J.D. Public School is a "nut safe" environment. Please assist us by sending nut free lunches and snacks to school.



PARKING

Please be aware that the Daycare driveway is reserved for Daycare Staff and Special Education Buses. It is not a student drop off or pick up location. We ask that you cooperate with us so that we can avoid any serious accidents. Also, the parking lot is a "no drop off zone" due to student safety.



SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO ACT

Now that a new school year is underway, I wish to remind you of the enforcement protocol regarding smoking on school property.

On May 31, 2006, *The Smoke Free Ontario Act* (SFOA) was enacted. This Act prohibits or restricts smoking in all public places and workplaces in Ontario, including schools.

Specifically, this law prohibits:

(2) No person shall smoke or hold lighted tobacco in the following places or areas:

1. A school as defined in the Education Act.
2. A building or the grounds surrounding the building of a private school, where the private school is the only occupant of the premises, or the grounds annexed to a private school, where the private school is not the only occupant of the premises.

DRAKE CAUGHT YOU DOING SOMETHING RIGHT!



The 'Gotcha' is a small prize draw for students at John Darling Public School. Students receive tickets, which they then put into the 'Gotcha Jars' in the office, when they are caught doing the right thing (DRAKE expectations/Character attributes). Tickets may be awarded either in school or on the playground. The 'Gotcha Jars' are quite full at the end of each week. All of the students are recognized as winners, and one student from each grade receives a small prize at the end of each week. We congratulate all of our John Darling students for their wonderful behaviour!

MILK

A8, our Developmental Education class started selling both white and chocolate milk. Milk is sold at a cost of \$1.00 per carton. Please refer to the information note that was sent home entitled "Milk Program" for further details. We thank Mrs. Nielson, Mrs. Schott, Ms. Moores and their students in A8 for offering this program.



Our EQAO Test Results 2012-13

The report on the Assessments of Reading, Writing and Mathematics, Primary Division (Grades 1-3) and Junior Division (Grades 4-6) for 2006-2007 has been published on the Ministry of Education's website (www.eqao.com). EQAO test results provide a snapshot of student achievement in relation to the provincial standard. Students meeting or exceeding the standard (Level 3 and 4) have demonstrated most or all of the required reading, writing and mathematics knowledge and skills expected at their stage in their education.

However, no single test can offer a complete or definitive picture of what a child has learned. In the end, no one better understands the true measure of a child's abilities and knowledge – or is in a better position to assess them – than his or her classroom teacher. When used together, the results of EQAO and classroom tests provide a more complete picture of the student's knowledge.

This year, our Grade 3 students' performance was below the provincial standards with results slightly behind the provincial results for Grade 3 learners. Our Grade 6 students achieved results at or above the provincial standard in Reading and Writing. The results for mathematics, in both grades were consistent with the provincial trend. Although our school's results seem to remain constant, they fell below the provincial standard. This information is currently being used by staff as we plan for improved student achievement in the school year ahead and celebrate the success our learners have achieved.

Lunch Lady Program

Due to declining orders, hot lunches will now be offered to our families on alternating weeks. Please be sure to mark the dates on your calendar if you choose to purchase a hot lunch through the Lunch Lady program.

PIZZA TUESDAYS

Again this year student pizza lunch is being ordered from Panago Pizza on Tuesdays. Students must order their pizza first thing in the morning from their homeroom teacher when attendance is taken. Late orders cannot be accepted after 10:00 a.m. (Kindergarten students order separately - information was sent home from those teachers).

HOME READING PROGRAM

The John Darling Primary Home Reading Program is being offered to all students in grades one, two and three. This beneficial reading opportunity will help your child develop a habit of reading every day and improve their reading skills and confidence. This is why the books chosen are at a recreational level for the program. Please enjoy the reading time with your child, and work on comprehension and fluency



VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

It is the policy of the WRDSB that all visitors go directly to the office and sign in when coming into a school. Whether picking up your child, or popping in for a quick moment, please help us by coming directly to the office each time.

COLDS AND FLU

Regular and thorough washing of hands is one of the most effective ways of stopping the spread of infections. Our hands can be the vehicle by which many different germs are spread.



Please encourage your children to wash hands frequently and show them how to cough into their sleeve. Hands should be washed for at least 15 seconds.

Please consider keeping your children at home if they display flu-like symptoms.

Students who feel sick at school will be sent to the office and a call will be made home for someone to pick them up.

AUTUMN WEATHER

Autumn brings varied weather conditions. We often remind all students to arrive at school dressed for changing temperatures throughout the day. Effective learning occurs when children take advantage of the outdoor activity. Please assist us by reinforcing with your children that the weather may require a jacket, umbrella or raincoat. Thank you for your support. **Please remember that if your child is well enough to attend school, we assume they are well enough to go outside during the first part of the nutrition break and participate in gym.**



EMERGENCY DRILLS

Every school is required to practice three **fire drills** in the fall term, and three drills in the spring. We must also hold a practice **tornado drill** in the spring. The third emergency procedure that must be practiced with students is a "**lockdown**", and is put into place when there is a threat to personal safety inside or outside of the school.

We have completed our Safety procedures for the Fall. We explain to the students why we are practicing these procedures, and we also assure them that these events have very little likelihood of occurring. Sometimes, there may be an individual child who is fearful after the procedure. Please take some time to talk to your child if you feel this is the case, and offer information and reassurance to alleviate any fears. Thanks so much for your cooperation!

SCHOOL COUNCIL

Thank you for supporting our Fall fundraising campaign! To date our profit is approximately, **\$6500!!** Treasure book orders will be filled as soon as possible while the catalogue orders are in transit. Thanks for getting your orders in! School Council will also be selling poinsettias in November. Profits from these two campaigns will be used to pay for chess club for our grades one to six students, a science program for all grades, and busing for one trip per class. Council will continue to review ways to support school initiatives with the funds we raise. Thanks again for supporting our fundraising efforts.



Our next 2 meeting dates for School Council are: Nov. 11th and Jan. 13th

School Council Elected Executive 2013-2014

Co-Chairs - Jessie White, TBA

Treasurer - Mandy Dahmer

Secretary - Marnie Wuensch, Jen Hulett

School Council Voting Members 2013/2014

Beth Skilling

Mandy Dahmer

Melissa Wells-Cave

Jessie White

Heather Quiring

Amy Knechtel-Shannon

Jennifer Hulett

Colleen Brandes

Jennifer Fleet

Marti-Anne Hachey

Kim Schmidt

Lori Williams

Michelle Martin

Katie Hoedle

Marnie Wuensch

Jackie Teixeira

Rachel Coleman

Helen Byers

Tara McPherson

Tom Herr

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

The staff at John Darling appreciates and values the many volunteers who support and enrich our School programs. We know that many parents work outside of the home full time and are not available to help during school hours. If you would have some time to support School Council in their community building initiatives, which support and strengthen our school programs, but would prefer not to be a member of council, please contact the school at 519-749-0834. If you would like to volunteer in other areas (home reading, office, classroom) please call the office.