

NEWCOMER PARENT UPDATE

In collaboration with Immigrant Services- Guelph Wellington, we are pleased to share this monthly update with you. Tigrinya-speaking parents from our community have decided which topics will be covered each month. Contact valerie.karunaratne@wellingtoncdsb.ca or the SWIS worker at your child's school if:

- you have feedback about this newsletter
- have a topic you wish to have explored in a future edition



The Ontario Curriculum

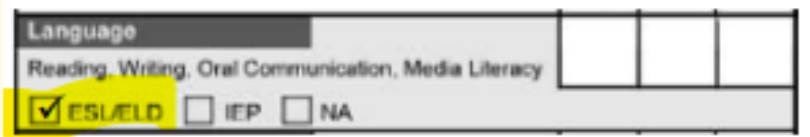
Knowing which curriculum topics students are studying in Ontario Classrooms can help you to better understand what your child is exposed to during their time at school.

The Elementary Curriculum (Grades K-8) is available for parents online [here](#).

The Secondary Curriculum (Grades 9-12) is available for parents online [here](#).

Please use [this link](#) to see a chart which explains literacy expectations throughout Grades 1-4.

On your child's report card, when the ESL box is checked, it means that your child was assessed on alternate goals based on their developing English proficiency. This box could be checked in a few or all areas of the curriculum.



School Boundary Review West Guelph

We are reviewing school boundaries and grade levels in our West Guelph elementary and all high schools to help balance enrolment. This is to relieve overcrowding in some schools and make better use of available space.

It is important for you and your family to attend, we need your help - as a community we need to find a solution.

Please join us on:

- November 26 from 5:30 - 7 at St. Peter Catholic Elementary School
- November 27 from 5:30 - 7 at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School

Refreshments will be provided, as well as fun activities for children.

If you have any questions or require transportation assistance please contact your SWIS worker:

- St Joseph: Asmait.aafewerqi@is-gw.ca 226-821-4454
- St Peter: Samhal.szewolde@is-gw.ca 226-332-0790
- St Francis: Danait.dafewerqi@is-gw.ca 519-831-1281

Building Oral Language

Parents who read 1 picture book with their children every day prior to the child starting school expose their children to an estimated 58,000 words each year. Young children whose parents read them five books a day enter kindergarten having heard about 1.4 million more words than kids who were never read to. - The Million Word Gap

Watch this [video](#) for ideas about how to share story books with your child.



The Importance of Phonics

Strong oral language skills are the foundation for literacy skills in any language.

Phonics refers to the relationship between the sounds we hear in words and the letters used to spell them. Simply put, phonics means that students can use letter patterns to accurately read and write words.

"[Improv Yor Smelling](#)" is a free digital book which explains spelling rules for English words.



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Upcoming Parent Teacher Conferences

On Tuesday November 12th, parents of children in elementary school will receive their child(ren)'s Progress Report Card. We invite you to book a Parent-Teacher Conference to strengthen the home-school partnership. Parent-Teacher Conferences are a great opportunity to discuss your child's adjustment to school and academic progress. If you would like to have a meeting with your child(ren)'s teacher(s), SWIS workers are available to support interpretation of these meetings. Please talk to the SWIS worker assigned to your school about booking a timeslot. To support Multilingual parents at St. Peter, St. Joseph, Holy Rosary, St. Francis and St. Patrick, various dates and times will be available with SWIS workers between November 14th and November 28th. A strong connection with school helps to ensure that your child has the best possible learning experience!

Early Reading Screener

Beginning in the fall of 2024, the Ontario Ministry of Education has mandated that schools conduct an "Early Reading Screener". Students in Year 2 of Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 will complete the screening in a 1 on 1 setting with their classroom teacher. The screener evaluates foundational skills required for reading proficiency. Early reading screening is a tool to help us understand and communicate your child's individual reading progress so that we can support their unique needs. This new screening is not evaluated as part of your child's grades, but instead will help identify the support they need in order to develop reading proficiency. Teachers will connect with you to discuss your child's strengths, areas of need, and to share examples of their growth and progress over time. Results of the first screening will be communicated to you in your child's first Report Card (issued in February 2025) and will indicate whether your child has met or not yet met the screening benchmark at the time of their screening. If you have questions about your child's progress, please contact their teacher or the Principal at your child's school.

Dressing for Canadian Weather

Most elementary schools in Wellington Catholic have 2 times during the day where students go outside for recess. Outside time is essential for students to exercise and develop gross motor and social skills during play with peers.

As November nears, we know that dressing students in warmer layers is important to enjoy outside time. We can never predict when snowy weather will begin but that brings additional needs of snowpants and warm boots. Helping your child(ren) learn the most efficient sequence for dressing for outside during Canadian winters can help them to enjoy outside time!



The Importance of Phonemic Awareness

Strong oral language skills are the foundation for literacy skills in any language.

Phonemic Awareness refers to a child's ability to identify, manipulate and distinguish individual sounds in spoken words. Before a child can learn to read, they must be able to understand that words they are hearing are made up of separate units of sounds called phonemes. Once this understanding is developed, students must be able to hear, blend, segment and manipulate the sounds they hear in words.

Phonological awareness supports the development of reading and spelling. It enables children to identify and focus on the separate sounds in words: phonemes. Awareness often begins with rhythm, for example, children clapping the beats of their name. Children then learn to divide syllables into separate sounds and manipulate them to form different words. Letter-sound relationships can then be introduced and children can be taught phonemic and phonics skills simultaneously from this point.

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IMMIGRANT SERVICES
Guelph-Wellington

Wellington Catholic
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

School Library Use

Elementary School: Students in Kindergarten-Grade 8 have a day each week they visit the library at school. Students may take books from the library each week and bring them home for no cost. These books are borrowed from the school should be returned the following week. Being a responsible school community member means that students would return books in good condition without drawings, food spills, or large tears.

High School: Students may use the library at school to complete work, study or borrow books. Typically libraries at high schools remain open after school until about 4pm. Libraries often have laptops which can be borrowed during the day or after school to complete school work. If a student needs a laptop after a library is closed, they may make arrangements with a librarian.

School Gymnasium Use

Elementary School: Students in Kindergarten-Grade 8 have scheduled times each week where their class participates in Physical Education in the school gym. Older students may change into gym clothes at school to participate. Participation in Physical Education is graded and documented on each report card.

High School: Students need at least one Physical Education credit to graduate from high school. While a student is enrolled in a Physical Education course, they would participate in this class each day of that semester. A uniform to participate in Physical Education class is required.

Packing School Lunches

Elementary School: Most schools in Wellington Catholic have 2 times during the day where students can eat. Packing lunches and snacks for school ensures that your child has enough energy for busy days of learning. Schools often have snacks available for all students for free. Each school's snack program relies on donations and volunteers. Consider volunteering to help with snacks at your child's school with other parents if you are able. There are also days when parents can purchase lunch items such as pizza for children to have at school. The purchase of food items at school is done on "School Cash Online".

High School: Students at high school have one lunch period. High schools often have snacks and breakfast foods available for students for free. Your child can ask friends or staff at the school to find out where to pick up available food during the school day.

The Importance of Oral Language

Oral language is the foundation for literacy skills in any language. Oral language is often used to communicate information, ideas, feelings and thoughts. Children develop oral language skills by talking and listening to both children and adults. The more interactions children have in any language increases the number of words they can speak and understand.

vocabulary: number of words a child can use and understand

phonological awareness: an awareness that children have about the sounds used to make words

fluency: refers to the ease of communication. It can include accurate use of vocabulary, an appropriate rate of speech and appropriate expression

comprehension: communication has meaning. Comprehension refers to how much understanding of those words and their meaning a child has.

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 SCHOOLMESSENGER®