

# Bennington Heights Elementary School



## Parent Handbook

## Our School Day

### **ENTRY AND DISMISSAL ROUTINES**

Your child should be dropped off and picked up at their designated playground doors at entry and dismissal times. They enter and leave through the same doors every day.

Students in grades 1/2 and 3/4 classes enter and exit through Door #2 (middle doors at stairwell).

Students in grades 4/5 and 5/6 classes enter and exit through Door #3 (far end of playground).

Kindergarten students enter through the right side of the building; please follow the pathway to the kindergarten playground and wait outside the fenced area.

In inclement weather, students will be brought into the school building earlier to be supervised until the entry bell.

Upon entry to the school, students are escorted by their teacher to the classroom. Attendance is taken by the class teacher; if you know your child is going to be away or late, please send an email to both your child's teacher AND our office administrator, Ms. Laura Lavita.

Students who arrive late must enter the school via the main doors and wait in the front foyer until they have been received by an adult.

### **LUNCH PROGRAM**

The lunchroom program is designed for students who have no other choice but to be at school for lunch. We have lunchroom supervisors who each supervise approximately 60 students during this time. Students who eat lunch at school will remain in their class to eat lunch from 11:05 – 11:25. They will spend the remainder of the lunch period outdoors (lunch recess 11:25 – 12:00).

For safety reasons, please send a note or an email to the teacher and Ms. Laura if your child will be absent from the lunch program, or there is a change from what is listed on the lunchroom permission form.

Students who are registered in our lunch program are expected to remain on school property at all times and to follow lunchroom rules.

Due to the increasing prevalence of life threatening nut allergies, PLEASE DO NOT SEND ANY FOODS CONTAINING NUTS TO SCHOOL AT ANY TIME. Please help our students and staff members stay safe by checking all wrappers and labels for nut products.

## **STUDENTS TAKING BUS TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

Students who take the bus arrive at school at approximately 8:10 a.m. and they are supervised by an adult as they get off the bus. After the drop off, students in grades 1-5 make their way to the playground, and kindergarten students are escorted by an adult to the kindergarten play area.

At the end of the school day, bus students are supervised as they wait in the front hallway for the bus home. Attendance is taken and students are supervised as they get on the bus. They usually depart from Bennington at approximately 2:55 p.m. every day. We ask parents to inform their child's teacher and Ms. Laura if their child is not taking the bus home.

## What to Bring To School:

### **VALUABLES AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Students should not bring to school large amounts of cash or items of value (e.g., expensive toys and electronics). There may be a high monetary or emotional value attached to these items and the school cannot be held responsible for any loss, theft, or damage to these items. In addition, these items can be a distraction in the classroom.

### **LOST AND FOUND**

We suggest that you clearly label backpacks, lunch bags, shoes, boots and other articles of clothing. Include your child's name and room number. This way, lost items can be more easily returned to the owner. Our Lost and Found bin is located in the front foyer.

Suggestion for Parents:

- Children should bring their own water bottle that is labeled, kept with them during the day, and not shared; we recommend that the water bottle is filled before coming to school
- Label all children's belongings (clothing, lunch bag, backpack, snack container, etc.)
- Ensure children have their own individual meal or snack, as well as utensils
- Children should have one pair of indoor shoes that is kept at school and is suitable to wear in gym class
- Children are discouraged from bringing to school non-essential materials (e.g., toys, glitter glue, scented markers, etc.) as these items can become a diversion from learning

## **Health and Safety**

### **VISITORS**

For safety reasons, all school doors will be kept locked from 8:15 a.m. – 2:50 p.m. and visitors must use the buzzer located on the wall beside the front doors in order to enter the school.

### **PARKING LOT SAFETY**

Please drive slowly upon entering the parking lot. Do not stop or park in the bus loop (in front of the school) at any time as this creates a dangerous situation. Please park your car in the parking lot and walk your child to the playground or to the door. All students should routinely be in the school yard 5 minutes before the entry times to line up with their class.

### **SAFETY PROCEDURES - FIRE DRILLS, LOCKDOWNS, EVACUATIONS**

During the school year, all TDSB schools must practice fire drill evacuations and lockdowns. Our school will practice fire drill evacuation three times in the Fall and three times in the Spring. We will also practice lockdown drills at least two times. During a lockdown drill all doors are locked and no student or staff is permitted to leave the classroom or school. In addition, visitors will not be permitted to enter the school building. Signs will be posted outside the school when we are in "Lockdown" mode. In case of a serious emergency that requires students and staff to leave the school property, our evacuation site is Rolph Road Public School.

### **STUDENTS WITH ALLERGIES OR MEDICAL ALERT CONDITIONS**

Bennington is a "nut-aware" environment. For the safety of all students, parents are asked to check carefully that all food sent to school, for recess snacks or lunch, do not contain nuts or nut products (including peanut butter, Nutella, almonds, hazelnuts, cashews, pistachios, pecans, walnuts, sesame seeds, sesame snaps, etc.).

We are also making a concerted effort to be a "scent-aware" school. We ask staff, parents and students to not wear heavy perfumes, colognes or scented products when they come to school.

Parents are requested to provide the necessary information regarding any medical condition to ensure the safety of their child. A medical alert form is filled out by the parent. This form is distributed to staff so that everyone is alerted. A photo is also posted inside the office. Parents are required to provide the school with Epi-pens if this is a recommended practice by their child's doctor. Students who require an Epi-pen at school will need to keep it with them at all times. We recommend that parents provide an additional Epi-pen to be kept in the office.

## MEDICATION

TDSB permits the administration of medication to students during school hours in the following situations:

- The medication is required for the student to continue to attend school
- The medication, by necessity, must be taken during school hours. It is not appropriate for the student to self-administer the medication.

In order for any student who meets the above conditions to receive medication at school, a parent or legal guardian must administer the medication, or supervise their child while she or he takes the medication.

No medication is to be kept in the possession of a student, with the exception of prescribed inhalers to control asthma, and Epi-pens. Students that need to carry an inhaler or Epi-pen must be instructed (by a parent or guardian) to never share them with anyone and must know how to use them safely and correctly.

## COVID-19 HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Due to the ongoing COVID pandemic we will be following many of the same health and safety routines and procedures as the previous school year. Earlier in August, the Ministry of Education released its guidance for the new school year. They have stated that schools will begin the year in the same way that we ended last year, with only the most necessary COVID-19 measures in place. We continue to take our health and safety direction from the Ministry and Toronto Public Health and it is important to note that this is the current information and can change based on a change of guidance.

**Masks** – The TDSB continues to be a mask-friendly environment inclusive of all staff and students. While the Ministry of Education and public health officials are not mandating the use of masks, Toronto Public Health strongly recommends wearing a well-fitting, high quality mask, especially in indoor public settings. The TDSB will continue to provide masks for staff and students who request them.

**Screening** – Students and staff should continue to do a daily self-assessment before entering school or Board buildings and stay home if they are sick. The Government of Ontario has provided a revised screening tool for schools and childcares. Toronto Public Health is developing a printable version and will be shared as soon as it is available.

**Cohorting** – Cohorting classes is no longer required for health and safety reasons.

## **Staying Connected**

### **CONNECTING WITH BENNINGTON STAFF**

We believe that ongoing communication is an important part of the Parent and Teacher relationship. Our staff are always ready to have conversations (telephone, email or in person) to discuss any questions or concerns their parents may have.

Without an educational background or knowledge of current and effective teaching practices, parents can find it challenging to have a full understanding of the work that our teaching staff do. If you have any questions or concerns, please connect directly with your child's teacher.

Please do not randomly drop by the classroom to speak with teachers while they are supervising students and/or during instructional time.

### **WEEKLY UPDATES FROM THE PRINCIPAL**

Ms. Danish will send a Principal's Update to Bennington parents via email every week to provide information on what is happening at school and on upcoming school events, as well as other relevant information.

### **REPORTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

Three formal written reports will be provided during the school year for all students. The reporting periods are as follows:

November

- Grade JK & SK – Kindergarten Communication of Learning: Initial Observations, and Parent/Teacher conference

- Grades 1 – 6 – Progress Report Card and Parent/Teacher conference

February

- Grades JK & SK – Kindergarten Communication of Learning and Parent/Teacher conference

- Grades 1-6 – Provincial Report Card 1 and Parent/Teacher conference by request

June

- Grades JK & SK – Kindergarten Communication of Learning

- Grades 1-6 Provincial Report Card 2

Curriculum Expectations by grade can be found at [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng)

## **SCHOOL TRUSTEE**

We are very fortunate to have Rachel Chernos Lin as our school Trustee. Rachel is a very strong advocate for parents and schools in Ward 11- Don Valley West. Her monthly newsletter provides a wealth of information for parents. Here is a link to sign up for her monthly newsletter: <https://signup.e2ma.net/signup/1787232/1752252/>

## **SCHOOL SUPPORT TEAM**

Every TDSB school has a School Support Team (SST) comprised of the following support staff members:

- Special Education Consultant
- Psycho-Educational Consultant
- Speech-Language Pathologist
- Social Worker

The School Support Team meets once a month with the principal to discuss students who are struggling academically, socially or emotionally. At this meeting the student's teacher and parents share information regarding the student's areas of strength and needs, as well as strategies that have been tried to support the student in the classroom. The Team then makes recommendations for further steps to support the student.

## Rules and Expectations

### SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS

- Show respect for yourself, other students, and adults
- Show respect for the property of fellow students, the school and community
- Come to school on time and ready to learn
- Follow school and classroom rules and routines
- Resolve conflicts and difficulties through peaceful means
- Take responsibility for your own behaviour; apologize if you hurt someone or their feelings
- Walk bicycle or scooter through the school yard (both feet on the ground)
- Stop activity right away when the bell goes and line up
- Refrain from using cell phone in class, in the hallways, or in the playground during school hours
- Use of personal electronic devices are to be used only with permission from the classroom teacher
- Students are responsible for any technology, toys, games and other personal items they bring to school

### PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT RULES

- The field area is to be used for ball playing (e.g., soccer, football, catch/throw ball, etc.)
- One student at a time should use the slides and climbing equipment
- When going down the slide, students slide on their bottom and land feet first
- Do not play tag on the playscape area (Gr 1-6)
- Ball playing is NOT allowed in the playscape area (Gr 1-6)
- Do not eat while playing in the playscape area (i.e., finish eating, then play)
- Do not jump off from the top of any play equipment
- Two people at a time in the hammock (Gr 1-6)
- Do not stand while using the seesaw; four people at a time are permitted to be on the seesaw (Gr 1-6)
- The Spinner is for students who can reach it on their own without help; students are not allowed to lift each other up onto the spinner (Gr 1-6)
- If you cannot independently climb on equipment, then it is not safe to use

## **Extra-Curricular Activities and Excursions**

### **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Extra-curricular activities are a very important part of school life at Bennington. We provide a range of activities for students. Student participation in these activities helps to broaden their experiences and strengthen social skills. Please encourage your child to become involved.

In order to participate in extra-curricular sports activities, the TDSB requires that a parent or legal guardian complete an online permission form. The coach for the extra-curricular activity will send parents a link to the online permission form.

### **EXCURSIONS**

Throughout the year, students may have the opportunity to participate in excursions that will extend individual learning and enhance classroom programs. Parent/guardian permission is required for students to participate in any excursion. Prior to each excursion, parents/guardians will receive the link to the online permission form for the excursion with details about the purpose, destination, time, special requirements, transportation arrangements, supervision and cost of the excursion. Students with medical conditions requiring an epi-pen or inhaler must take these items on every excursion.

## **Getting Involved at Bennington**

### **SCHOOL COUNCIL**

Bennington Heights School Council is a forum for parents to advise the Principal and the Board on academic objectives, school improvement plans, student engagement and other matters of concern to the school community. In collaboration with the principal, staff and community members, the School Council strives to create a learning environment where students can reach their full potential. Bennington parents are welcome to join the School Council and/or to attend the scheduled meetings.

### **HOME & SCHOOL**

The Bennington Home & School Association is comprised of a group of parent volunteers who organize fundraising activities (e.g., pizza lunch, Holiday Bazaar, Fun Fair) and other school wide events. The funds raised are allocated to the school. The Home & School committee is another great way for Bennington parents to get involved in the life of the school.