

GEORGE R. ALLAN SCHOOL



PARENT HANDBOOK

Message From the Principal

Welcome to the first edition of the George R. Allan Parent Handbook. This publication provides the community with a practical reference guide to school functions.

George R. Allan is a highly regarded dual track school offering excellent programs in both English and French Immersion. The school delivers an academic curriculum based on Ministry of Education guidelines. Literacy and Numeracy instruction are supported by a well equipped dual-language book room. Comprehensive Music, Physical Education and Information Technology programs are delivered by specialist teachers. To further serve the needs of the students, George R. Allan holds monthly assemblies to highlight character traits, school life and achievements in clubs or teams.

The Home and School Association and School Council are actively involved in the school. Parents work with students in clubs, organize many fundraising events, assist in team sports, and act as volunteers in several capacities. Extensive parent involvement is part of what makes George R. Allan unique.

Ongoing communication is an essential component of effective home-school partnerships and the student agendas, monthly classroom newsletters and the George R. Allan Parent Handbook aim at establishing such a link. They are useful reference manuals about the school. The Handbook is made available through the efforts of parent volunteers and the Handbook Committee.

Yours in partnership,

Michelle Rodney Bartalos

Who was George R. Allan?

Countless students have graced the hallways and classrooms of the school bearing his name, but how many know about the man who was honoured by naming a school after him?

George R. Allan, 1860-1940, was born in Guelph, Ontario and moved to Hamilton with his family at the age of 4, where he lived the remainder of his life. He began a career at *The Hamilton Spectator* when he was just 12 years old, working his way up from messenger boy in the book-bindery department to being put in charge of all of the mechanical departments of the paper. His career at *The Spectator* spanned 60 years, but he didn't stop there. As a man who believed deeply in the value of education, George R. Allan was elected as a Board of Education Trustee in 1904. He held this post until his death in 1940.

His obituary of February 28, 1940 described him this way: "He was behind every project that advanced the status of education in Hamilton. Mr. Allan had occupied all the offices of importance, including that of chairman, a post he held in 1913, the same year his brother, the late John Allan, was mayor of Hamilton. The first committee on which Trustee Allan sat was the building committee and this may have had something to do with the enthusiastic interest he evinced in all building projects of the board. He saw the schools in Hamilton grow from small, poorly equipped buildings, to the modern, handsome edifices of today."

In tribute to his long standing service to the Board of Education, it was decided in 1927 to name one of the most modern and up-to-date schools in all of Canada, the newly built public school in Westdale after Mr. Allan. A great honour indeed!

Table of Contents

School Information (Yellow Section):

School Contact Information _____	1
School Mission Statement and Vision _____	1
Bell Schedule _____	2
HWDSB Days of Significance _____	3

New Student Orientation (Green Section):

Getting to and from School _____	5
First Day of School Procedures _____	6
Students Entering Kindergarten _____	7
Student Arrival _____	8
Before and After School Care _____	9
Class Placement _____	10
School Supplies _____	11
Appointments & Illness _____	11
Personal Belongings _____	12
School Lunches _____	12
Lunchtime Supervision _____	13

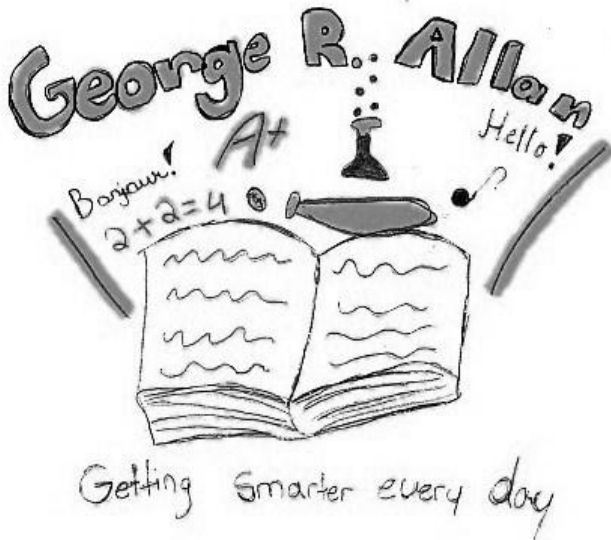
Policies and Procedures (Blue Section):

Allergies and Medications _____	15
Birthdays _____	15
Bullying Prevention Programs _____	16
Child Custody _____	18
Code of Conduct _____	18
Cold Weather and Outdoor Play _____	21
Dress Code _____	21
Emergency Contact _____	22
Emergency Evacuation _____	22
Emergency - Secure Schools _____	23
Homework _____	24
Inclement Weather Policy _____	26
Nutrition Policy _____	27
Safety Procedures _____	28

General Information (Pink Section):

Charitable Events _____	29
Education Quality & Accountability Office (EQAO) _____	29

English as a Second Language (ESL)	31
Extra-Curricular Activities	31
French Immersion Program	33
French Immersion Advisory Committee (FIAC)	34
Gifted Identification Process	34
Grades / Report Cards	35
Home & School Association Events	36
Parent – Teacher Communications	38
Parent Meetings	39
School Communications	40
School Council	41
School Photos	41
Sources of Information	42
Special Education Sub-Committee	43
Special Education Support	44
Students Building Leadership Skills	47
Volunteering at George R. Allan	47
Your Guide to the School System	48
Acknowledgements	53
References	53
Feedback Survey	54



School Contact Information

George R. Allan Elementary School
900 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 1K6

Telephone Number: 905-522-0601

Fax: 905-522-4998

Email: grallanweb@hwdsb.on.ca *

*please note that this email address is checked only once per week. If your question/issue is time sensitive, PLEASE call the school at 905-522-0601.

Website: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/grallan>

Principal: Michelle Rodney-Bartalos

Vice Principal: Jennifer George (0.5)

School Mission Statement and Vision

George R. Allan School opened its doors in 1927. It was named after a Hamilton City Trustee. Approximately 450 students attend our school. We offer programs in English from Junior Kindergarten through Grade 5, and in French from Senior Kindergarten through Grade 5.

Vision:

A future in which all students achieve their full potential.

Mission:

Educating all students to become lifelong learners and contributing citizens in a challenging, changing, multi-cultural world. Achievement Matters. Engagement Matters. Equity Matters.

Bell Schedule

Primary and Junior Classes:

Time	Event
8:57 am	Warning Bell
9:00 am	Entry – Instruction Begins
10:10 – 10:20 am	Morning Recess
11:40 am	Lunch
12:37 pm	Warning Bell
12:40 pm	Entry – Afternoon Instruction Begins
2:00 – 2:10 pm	Afternoon Recess
3:20 pm	Dismissal

Kindergarten Classes:

Time	Event
9:00 am	Morning Entry
11:30 am	Dismissal
12:45 pm	Afternoon Entry
3:15 pm	Dismissal

HWDSB Days of Significance

Hamilton is the fourth largest city in Ontario and welcomed more than 16,000 new residents between 1996 and 2001 alone. Almost one quarter of the city's population comes from outside Canada and 10 percent are members of visible minorities. Quite simply, Hamilton is a cultural mosaic where people from different countries and backgrounds have come for a fresh start - to live, work and play.

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board recognizes the diversity of our students and celebrates it. As a useful resource and a testament to the belief that different races, cultures, religions and voices are equally important, the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board provides a Days of Significance Calendar, which can be accessed at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/calendar/dos/index.aspx>. This website also includes brief descriptions of each of the Days of Significance listed.

Additionally, the monthly principal's update newsletter sent out to parents at George R. Allan does include the calendar dates for the corresponding month's Days of Significance.





Getting to and from School

George R. Allan students may walk, bike, drive and/or be bussed to and from school.

If you walk to school, crossing guards are on duty at school arrival, lunch and dismissal time. They are located at Haddon and Sterling, King and Cline and Bond and Glenfern.

Crossing guard times are:

8:30-9:00 a.m.

11:40-12:00 at noon

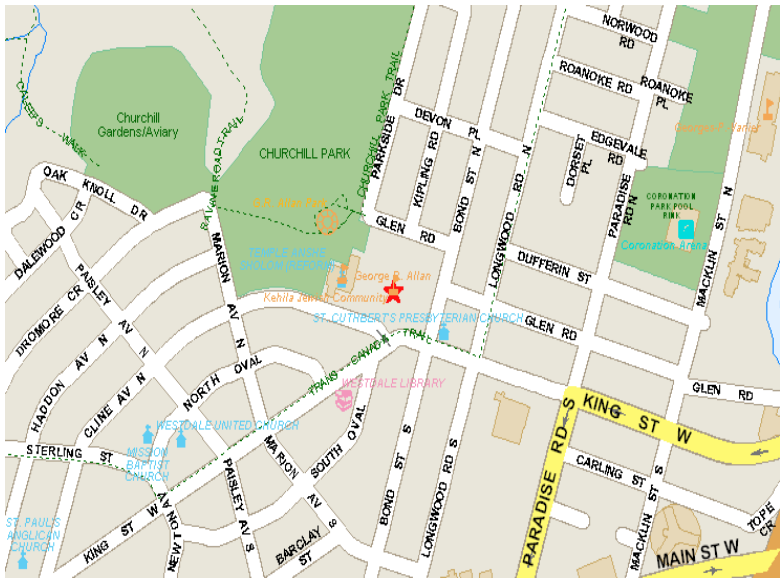
12:20-12:40 p.m.

3:20-4:00 p.m.

Whistle rule: 1 blast to stop the traffic; 2 short blasts means cross.

If you bike to school, you can park your bike at the bicycle racks located at the front of the school along Cline Avenue. Please keep in mind that it is illegal for adults to ride bicycles on the sidewalk; for the safety of others kindly walk bikes on the sidewalk when in front of the school.

If you drive to school, please be advised that the parking lot is for the use of school staff only between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm. Drop-Off Areas surrounding the school are No Parking areas that allow for a 10 minute stopping time. These include the north side of Cline Avenue; the west side of Parkside Drive; and the south side of Glen Road with the exception of the school bus and taxi loading area (See map on next page). Please be mindful of the imposed 10 minute time limit, as cars exceeding this time are frequently ticketed by the city. Areas blocking sightlines that could endanger children crossing are designated No Stopping as opposed to No Parking; in these instances there is no stopping allowed at any time, and no grace period is granted.



First Day of School Procedures

For **students in grades 1 through 5**, school will begin at 9:00am on the date indicated on the present year's School Calendar. Once the early warning bell has rung at 8:57am, students should proceed to the playground at the back of the school, where they will see teachers lined up in front of the back doors. Teachers will be carrying large signs identifying themselves and the class they will be teaching for the current school year. As well, classroom numbers will be painted on the ground.

Children are asked to form a line behind their teacher and classroom number and wait while the rest of their class follows suit. Teachers will then signal their classes as to when to enter the school, which door to use, and will lead them to their classrooms. Students are asked to wait in line for their teacher's signal, in order to facilitate an orderly entry.

Kindergarten students, both JK and SK, classes will commence later in September than the older grades (see next page for Students Entering Kindergarten). Children will enter through the red or blue doors on the west side of the school.

Children entering through the red door are asked to line up behind their teacher, along the wall of the school leading up to the stairs. Children entering through the blue door will be asked to form lines behind their teachers, within the fenced playground area. Teachers will instruct parents and students where they are to line up and enter school during their interviews (see below).

Dismissal

Kindergarten students are dismissed at the end of their day from the red or blue doors (the same one they enter through) on the west side of the school. Classroom teachers release students one at a time, and only to the child's parent(s) and/or appointed caregiver.

Students in grades 1-5 will be dismissed at 3:20pm. They will exit the doors at the back of the school, the same ones they entered in the morning. The playground can be very crowded and busy at this time, and students will not be accompanied by their teachers. It is advised that parents/caregivers and students choose a designated meeting spot within view of the teacher on duty at the beginning of the day, so as to avoid confusion. Teachers are on duty in the playground until 3:35pm. Children who have not been picked will be brought inside to the school office and their parents will be called.

Students Entering Kindergarten

Currently, kindergarten classes run for half days, every day; either mornings (9:00am-11:30am) or afternoons (12:45pm – 3:15pm).

Kindergarten Interviews:

School visits / interviews for Kindergarten children are arranged by the teacher or secretary, and usually take place within the first 6 school days of September. During these visits the teacher will obtain information about the child and the family, which may enhance understanding of the child and assess

his/her developmental needs. Interviews will be arranged for all Kindergarten children who have no previous school experience. This includes children entering JK as well as children entering SK who did not attend JK.

Delayed and staggered entry of Kindergarten students:

Students entering Kindergarten classes in September will begin school later than those in older grades. **Delayed School Entry** in September occurs in order to provide Kindergarten teachers with time to assess those children with no previous school experience. **Staggered Entry** begins once all school visits / interviews are completed. Half of the Kindergarten classes will attend for one full session after the completion of school visits; the other half of each class would attend on the next day. All students (full classes) will begin their regular attendance on the third day. You will be given the dates of your child's interview, as well as his/her first day of school in either June of the preceding school year or at the time of Kindergarten registration if it is later than June.

Student Arrival

Attendance is checked daily, in both morning and afternoon. An answering machine is on from 4:15 p.m. to 8:30 a.m. to record all attendance messages. We depend on our parents to call the school to report their children's absences at **905-522-0601**. When a parent has not called, we resort to our emergency phone numbers. The issue is one of safety. Our system relies on our parents' cooperation.

When students are late, they must report to the office for a late or admit slip. These are recorded at the office and are checked against the attendance sheets. Parents are reminded that late arrivals and absences are recorded on the children's report cards.

When parents are late picking up children after school, at 3:35 p.m., we require that children come back into the school, so that they can be supervised. Children will be brought back to the office and parents/emergency contacts will be phoned.

Before and After School Care

A number of different options for childcare, including before and after school care, are located either within G. R. Allan School, or quite close by. Following is a listing of licensed child care centres within the Westdale Village area:

First Base:

The **YMCA** offers licensed before and after school care for children at various schools throughout Hamilton. At George R. Allan, the before school program starts at 7:30am and runs until school begins; the after school program begins at dismissal and runs until 6:00pm. During this time, there are planned activities including games, puzzles, arts and crafts and outdoor play. A nutritious snack is also provided. For more information or to register, please call the YMCA Child Care Office at **905-317-4916**.

McMaster Students Union (MSU) Day Care Centre:

A licensed child care centre located at 1145 King Street West in Westdale Village, MSU does offer a “pick up from school” service. For more information please visit their website at www.msu.mcmaster.ca/daycare, or call at **905-526-1544**.

Temple Playhouse:

Located next door to George R. Allan School in the Temple Anshe Sholom building at 215 Cline Avenue North, Temple Playhouse is a licensed child care centre offering toddler, preschool and kindergarten programming as well as before and after school care. Temple Playhouse also offers a “pick up and drop off” service to George R. Allan. For more information please call them at **905-528-3341**.

McMaster Children’s Centre:

Located on the McMaster University Campus at Forsythe and Sterling, McMaster Children’s Centre is a licensed child care

centre offering care for toddler, preschool and kindergarten-aged children. McMaster Children's Centre also offers a "pick up from school" service at George R. Allan. For more information please visit their website at www.mcmaster.ca/mcmcc, or call them at 905-526-1222.

Westdale Children's School:

The Westdale Children's School is located at 2 Bond Street North and it located directly across the street from George R. Allan. It is licensed under the Day Nurseries Act and is a non-profit, registered charitable organization as well as a developing member of the Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America. Before and after school care to complement the half day JK and SK classes at George R. Allen Public School is available. This will include a supervised (bring your own) lunch with escorts to/from George R. Allen for the morning/afternoon JK and SK classes. For more information please visit their website at <http://westdale.org>, or call them at 905-529-4678.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has a comprehensive website on childcare services, and includes a "search by area" option providing detailed information and listings for child care centres throughout the province. This service can be accessed at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/finding.html>. In Hamilton, the Coordinated Access for Child Care website also identifies local child care centres. They can be found at <http://www.cafcc.on.ca>.

Class Placement

This process involves a great deal of thought, planning and collaboration among professional personnel, including the principal. We appreciate that parents have a valuable insights into their children's learning styles and needs. Although requests for a specific teacher are not accepted, parents are always welcome to provide information about their children which they believe would assist school personnel in making placement decisions. A newsletter is sent home each spring reminding parents of the process.

School Supplies

Both textbooks and student workbooks are provided to all George R. Allan students. Parents should check with the classroom teacher once school has begun to see if additional supplies are suggested for students to purchase / bring from home. Below is a listing of some common items that students bring in, however please note that not all items are required in every grade:

- Pencil case
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Pencil crayons
- Pencil sharpener
- Binder
- Dictionary (for home use, several are available for use in the classroom)
- Bescherelle or other French verb conjugation books (for home use, several are available for use in the classroom)

Appointments & Illnesses

Out of School Appointments:

If a child needs to be picked up during the school day, parents must check in at the office. A record is kept of all students who are dismissed early.

Illness:

When a student becomes ill or injured at school, the student will receive appropriate attention. If necessary, the parent or emergency contact person will be informed. In extreme situations, an ambulance will be called.

Personal Belongings

Please label all of your child's belongings with his/her name. Also, please check the school's Lost & Found box regularly, to claim any items that may have gone missing. There are two lost and found areas at the school. A small basket for smaller/valuable items such as glasses can be found on the bench outside of the school office. Larger items, such as clothing, are located in a box outside of the school gym.

Valuable items/toys should NOT be brought to school. Toys at school are very distracting to our educational program and can cause many conflicts during recess times. As well, please note that electronic devices are not permitted to be used during the instructional day. Students are asked to leave such devices at home. If it is necessary to bring them to school they do so at their own risk. Students are asked to store devices in a safe place and are not to access them during the instructional day. Assistive technologies and electronic devices for instructional purposes are permitted.

School Lunches

At George R. Allan, we have incorporated "Boomerang Lunches".

What is a Boomerang Lunch? Like a boomerang, students bring their lunch to school and any uneaten food and waste material produced is returned home with them. For sanitary purposes, it is important that food and waste packaging be taken home in a re-sealable container or bag.

Why Boomerang Lunches? Across Ontario, schools are moving toward Boomerang Lunches as a way to make a difference for our environment. The purpose is not to transfer trash disposal responsibilities from the school to home, but to provide parents with first-hand knowledge of the eating habits and preferences of children; to help families to re-think and discuss lunch packaging and preparation; to reduce not only

the number of containers that are thrown away, but all waste sent to our local landfills.

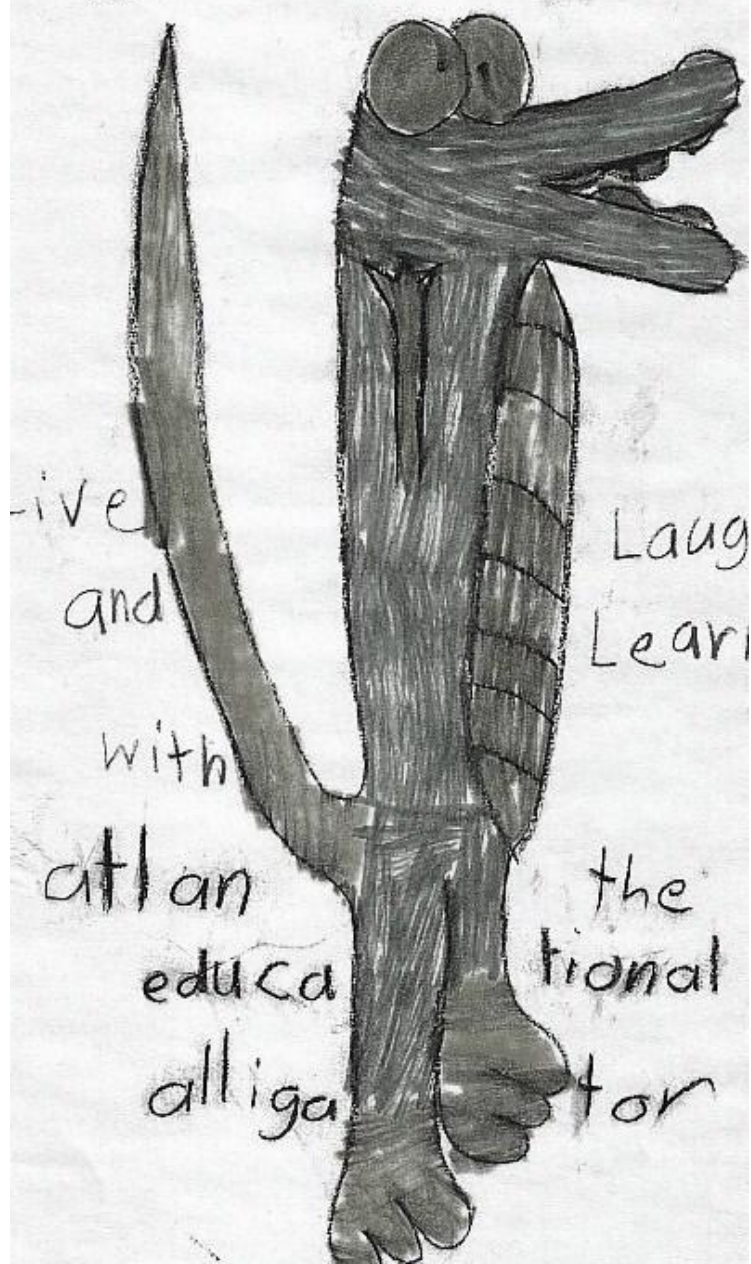
Lunchtime Supervision

Supervised lunchrooms are available for children who stay at school during lunch time. The children eat lunches they have brought from home from 11:40 to 12:00, at which time they go to the playground for the remainder of the noon hour (12:00 – 12:40). If you choose to have your child remain at school over the lunch hour, you and your child will be asked to sign a form indicating a willingness to adhere to specific guidelines.

If your child normally stays at school for lunch on any given day and is going to be absent during the lunch hour, please remember to write a note to the teacher in your child's agenda.



G.R. ALLAN



Allergies / Medication

All oral medications are handled through the office. If your child is required to receive medication while at school, a physician is required to complete an "Authorization for Administration of Oral Medication". As well, the parent must complete an "Authorization Form". A record is kept for each child who receives medication. This process is completed each year within the first couple of weeks of school.

Special arrangements are made for students with life-threatening allergies. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of any special needs their children may have.



Please be advised that George R. Allan School is a nut-free environment. We have many students with life-threatening allergies to peanuts and nut products, and therefore require that all food brought onto school property; including snacks, lunches and classroom treats, be peanut and nut-free.

Birthdays

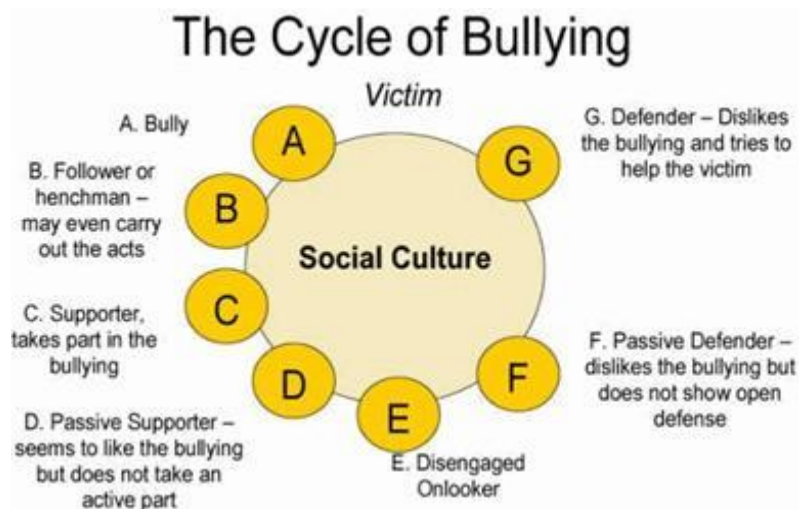
At George R. Allan we ask that you do not send in "treats" for birthdays or special occasions. Your child's special day will be celebrated without the sharing of food. We encourage sharing a special book, event or memory with their class instead. When classroom celebrations occur, teachers may request students bring in snacks that adhere to the nutrition policy guidelines (see page 27).

Bullying Prevention Programs

George R. Allan Public School believes that every student has the right to be treated with respect and to feel safe within the learning environment. Students who are free from bullying are able to give their education the full attention and effort needed for success. Research indicates that bullying behaviour negatively impacts not only the learning environment of a school but can lead to long-term social and emotional problems for all involved. In the HWDSB bullying will not be tolerated and we believe that it is everyone's responsibility to stop bullying behaviour within the school community.

Definition of Bullying (from HWDSB PPM 144):

Bullying is typically a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.



Students who bully are learning to use power and aggression to control and distress others. Students who are victimized become increasingly powerless and find themselves trapped in relationships in which they are being abused.

Students use power in many ways:

- Size, strength, intelligence, age
- Social status
- Economic status
- Knowledge of another person's vulnerability
- Membership in a dominant group (race, gender, physical ability, perceived orientation, etc...)

The Bully Blockers Blog:

George R. Allan has launched a new website, **The Bully Blockers Blog**, to help put a STOP to bullying. It is an anonymous way for students to post problems they might be having and to get answers on how to solve their problems with ideas from other students.

Students can find the password posted in their classrooms at school.

NO names will be posted on the website. If your child has a problem requiring immediate help, he/she is asked to please inform a teacher at school.

The Bully Blockers Blog can be accessed through the link on the George R. Allan website, at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/grallan/>.

Child Custody

In most cases, when parents are separated or divorced, one or both parents are designated by the court as a custodial parent. Non-custodial parents have the right to access student records and receive any pertinent school information regarding their child. A copy of the court order should be provided to the classroom teacher and filed in the office if a non-custodial parent does not have access to records, or if the non-custodial parent does not have the right to have contact with the child.

Code of Conduct

Rationale:

The code of conduct is meant to help students, teachers, parents, and guardians make George R. Allan School a safe and happy place for everyone to learn. Our code of conduct is based on the Ministry of Education's Safe Schools Policy and the Board of Education's requirements for classroom behaviour, attendance, punctuality and achievement.

Definitions:

At George R. Allan School respect means showing others that we care with our words, actions and attitude; discipline means having respect for the belongings, feelings, personal space and rights of others and ourselves.

Rights and Responsibilities:

Students have the right to:

- Learn and help others to learn.
- Be safe and help others to be safe.
- Try to solve problems by ourselves.
- Ask for help if we need it.
- Be treated fairly and politely by all of the students and adults in the school.

- Treat all people and property with care and kindness.
- Respect everybody's differences.
- Arrive at school on time every day.

The adults' roles are to:

- Ensure that students are safe.
- Provide students with structure, guidelines, consistency and supervision.
- Give students the opportunity to evaluate their own behaviour.
- Help students solve their own problems.
- Help students learn.
- Treat all students and adults in the school with fairness, kindness and respect.

Unacceptable behaviours and consequences

The following sorts of behaviour are unacceptable at George R. Allan School:

- Using words to hurt someone's feelings -- by calling people names, swearing, putting them down, making fun of them or teasing.
- Not co-operating with adults at the school and not following the rules.
- Threatening or frightening people by telling them we will hurt them.
- Hurting people in any way. This includes, but is not isolated to pushing, kicking, hitting or making rude noises.
- Throwing snowballs, ice, rocks, or anything else at other people.
- Breaking or damaging someone else's property.
- Taking someone else's property and not giving it back.
- Touching someone else's private body parts.

Consequences

Consequences for breaking the code of conduct may include any or all of the following:

- A phone call to a parent or guardian.
- Detention
- Problem solving/consultation with an adult to help learn a better way to solve problems.
- Temporary Withdrawl from school to spend the rest of the day at home.
- Suspension from school for up to 20 days.
- Recommendation for expulsion.
- Police contact.
- School Records – information may be added to Ontario Student Record card

Peer Mediators

Our School has adopted the Peer Mediation Program to help our students learn to better handle playground issues. Peer mediation is a problem-solving process that runs for the later part of the school year. Peer mediators are grade 5 students who follow a training program approved by HWDSB and presented by teachers. Peer mediators are non-biased student volunteers who offer fellow students help in solving their playground difficulties.



Cold Weather and Outdoor Play

Time spent outdoors is an integral part of the school day. Children need fresh air and exercise and time spent outside affords students an opportunity to break free from the structure of the classroom.

With the Canadian climate, time spent outside could mean anything from applying sunscreen to donning mittens and a hat, depending on the season. In the winter, it is important that children come to school prepared for the cold. Boots, mittens or gloves and hats should be worn to school and it's a good idea to provide extra mittens, socks, etc. in the event they are needed.

As always, Principals can use their judgement in determining whether students remain inside during recess given the weather conditions. The City of Hamilton's Public Health and Community Services Department recommends individuals stay indoors when the temperature drops below minus 15 degrees Celsius without wind chill.

The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board asks Principals to follow this recommendation and to ensure children are not outside when it is that cold. Questions or concerns regarding outdoor activities in the winter should be directed to Michelle Rodney-Bartalos, our school Principal.

Dress Code

The aim of the dress code is to reflect and promote respect for self and others. Students are encouraged to develop a sense of pride in themselves and in their school. To this end, students are encouraged to be neat, well groomed and to wear age-appropriate clothing at all times.

Clothing that may cause discomfort or distraction will be considered by school staff to be inappropriate. Such clothing **may** include, bare midriff, extremely short skirts/shorts/skorts, tank tops or camisoles with very thin "spaghetti" straps, very low-waisted pants, torn clothing and/or visible undergarments.

Hats are not permitted to be worn in classrooms but are encouraged for outside, especially in the warmer weather.

Clothing with offensive language or clothing that disparages any gender, group, race, creed, ethnic or religious group is strictly prohibited. Clothing with messages or symbols that promote hate either overtly or tacitly will not be tolerated.

Emergency Contact

Does the school know where to reach you at home and at work if there is an emergency?

- If your child should have a medical emergency, your approval is essential for medical treatment.
- If you change your address, your home or work telephone numbers, please let the school office and your children's teacher know.
- Keep the office and classroom teacher up to date on your child's food and/or drug allergies, as well as any injuries or special medical concerns.
- If your child's physical activities must be restricted, please write a note to your child's teacher.

Emergency Evacuation

In case of an emergency that necessitates the evacuation of the school (i.e. boiler failure, water main rupture, etc.), your child would be taken to either Temple Anshe Sholom (215 Cline Ave. N., Hamilton), St. Cuthbert's Church (2 Bond St. N., Hamilton) or Westdale Secondary School (700 Main St. W., Hamilton). We would communicate with you via the local radio stations. Depending on the time of the day, we would either keep the children until dismissal time or we would need to send the children home. If we need to dismiss students before the end of the school day, we would dismiss the children according to parents' emergency instructions.

Secure Schools – Terms Used

“Lockdown” is used when there is a violent incident or threat of serious violence within the school, or in relation to the school.

- Threat is inside the school, or is on school property, and poses an immediate threat to the students and staff.
- Follow current lockdown procedures.
- All movement in and out of the school and within the school is restricted.
- Doors remain open to permit police immediate entry.

“Hold and Secure” is used when the school is secured due to an ongoing situation outside and not related to the school that requires all persons to remain in the building. Examples may include a bank robbery near a school.

- The school continues to function normally, with the exterior doors locked until the situation is resolved.
- Staff member posted near each entrance to ensure no one leaves the building.
- All movement in and out of the school is restricted.
- Exterior facing windows should be covered or blinds drawn, lights dimmed, where possible.
- School most likely to be notified by Hamilton Police Services

“Shelter in Place” is used for an environmental, or weather related situation, where it is necessary to keep all occupants within the school to protect them. This response may be recommended by Police, Fire Department, EMS, etc. Examples may include chemical spills, blackouts, explosions or extreme weather conditions.

- People enter and remain in the school with the doors and windows closed.
- Fans including heating and air conditioning units, should be turned off to prevent air from outside entering the building.
- Normal operations may continue within the building.

Communication to Parent/Guardian in Secure School Situations

- HWDSB will post safety updates on its website: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/>
- Voice messages will be sent to the parent/guardian's contact phone number provided to the school.
- Corporate Communications will be in contact with local media outlets. Watch or listen to the following: CHCH TV – Channel 11, 102.9 KLITE FM , CJXY-Y108 FM , 820 CHAM AM CHML 900 AM, Oldies 1150 AM, WAVE 94.7, CKPC 1380 AM

Current information will be provided on the Secure Schools HOTLINE - 905-521-2535.

During such events, cell phone use between parent and student is restricted. Phone lines must be free for Emergency Services.



Homework

Homework is an important part of every student's education. Working and studying at home reinforces what children learn in the classroom, which helps them remember the information better, score higher on tests and enjoy more success. Homework also provides valuable skills students need to succeed both in school and in the world of work, including: self-discipline; self-confidence; commitment to tasks; initiative; organization and time management skills; and responsibility.

Please note that work completed at home is not used by the teachers to assess learning. This must be observed by the teacher. However, homework is a key skill which can be tracked, monitored and reported on in the Learning Skills section of the Provincial Report Card. Parents can help their children by arranging time, a quiet work place and by seeing that assignments are completed. Students in a K-5 school receive various amounts of homework, according to their grade level.

For younger students, it is important to see that learning happens in a variety of settings, not just at school. Homework in the early grades promotes good attitudes and study habits and has a long-term effect you'll see when your child moves into higher grades.

How Long Should Homework Take?

The amount of time a student spends on homework depends on the student's needs, age and grade, subject, tests and project due dates. Teachers follow the suggested guidelines of 5 to 10 minutes per grade per night as a general rule but times may vary from individual to individual and at various times within a school year.

Concerned With the Amount of Homework Your Child Is Doing?

Have you noticed your child spends more time on homework than he or she should be based on the 5 to 10 minutes per grade guideline?

Teachers want to know because your child may be receiving more homework than their recommended time or your child may need more time with his or her teacher to understand the literacy and/or numeracy concepts. Speak to your child's teacher about any concerns you have with your child's homework and then, if necessary, talk to your Principal.

To respect the importance of family and recreational time, teachers will be sensitive to days of significance and holidays when assigning homework. No new homework will be assigned over the Winter and March Breaks.

Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of a school closure due to inclement weather or emergency, your child must know where you expect him/her to go. Once children are at school, the Board will try not to close the schools. However, a severe storm could move into the area quickly, and the school might be instructed to dismiss the children early. We would do this according to the specific instructions that parents have given us. It is not possible to phone the families of more than 400 students, nor is it possible for parents to get through to the school if they were to try to call us.

For this reason, we ask that you provide advance instructions for each child's teacher. Prior to dismissal, in case of an emergency, these instructions would be reviewed with each child.

1. Establish the plan
2. Rehearse the plan
3. Keep a copy at home; send a copy to the teacher.
4. Make any changes to the plan in writing

The plan addresses closures that occur DURING school hours. Sometimes, however, schools can be closed before normal hours. In such cases, please listen to the local radio stations and plan accordingly.

Do not send your children to school on days when the radio has announced that the Hamilton-Wentworth Public Schools are closed. If you do not know if the schools are open in the morning, the following radio stations will announce school closures:

CHAM 820 AM
CHML 900 AM
K Lite FM 102.9 FM
Oldies 1150 1150 AM
Y95 95.3 FM

You may also check the Board website for updated information on school closures, at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/>.

Nutrition Policy

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) schools and worksites foster healthy nutrition environments and implement food practices to support the wellness of students and staff. HWDSB's Nutrition Policy began in September, 2010 and is based on the Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide and the Ministry of Education's nutrition guidelines. For complete information, please visit the Board website at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/nutrition>.

About the Policy

The Nutrition Policy guides schools towards offering healthy food choices. The policy promotes healthy eating based on the recommendations from Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide and helps students to make nutritious food and beverage choices.

When does the policy not apply?

The policy does not apply to food and beverages that are:

- Brought from home or off school property (including packed lunches)
- Purchased during field trips off school property
- Sold in schools at non-school events (e.g. sold by a group that is using a classroom for a non-school-related event)
- Sold for fundraising activities that occur off school property
- Sold in staff rooms



Safety Procedures

George R. Allan has many procedures to ensure safety including regular fire drills, criminal record checks for new staff and volunteers, and lock down/evacuation plans (see page 22 for more details). Students are asked to travel in pairs within the school. We ask all visitors to sign in and receive visitor/volunteer tags in the main office upon entering the school. We know that the best way to ensure success is to be prepared. Thank you for assisting us in following our daily routines.

In the interest of student and staff safety the doors located on the western side of the school remain locked at all times. Access to the school by the public is through the front doors. All visitors are required to check in at the office. Volunteers working in the school are required to wear identification.



Charitable Events

Every month George R. Allan students participate in fundraising activities for various charitable organizations. Funds raised assist other students both locally and globally. Through participation in themed monthly 'spirit days', 'runs' or 'walks', students of all ages have the opportunity to donate loonies and toonies for specific causes. Parents have the opportunity to give a one-time donation that is tax deductible if over \$20. Advance notice and details are provided prior to each event.

Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO)

Ontario conducts province-wide tests of students' literacy and math skills at key stages of their education to contribute to public accountability and continuous improvement. ***The provincial tests measure core reading, writing and math skills based on the expectations in The Ontario Curriculum, which are the foundation for success in all other areas of learning and in life beyond school.***

Ontario's province-wide tests assess cumulative knowledge and skills at four key stages:

- Grade 3 (literacy and math tested at the end of the primary division) - testing administered at George R. Allan School
- Grade 6 (literacy and math tested at the end of the junior division)
- Grade 9 (math tested in the first year of secondary school) and
- Grade 10 (literacy tested as a graduation requirement)

As with regular classroom assessments, all students who are able to do so are expected to complete Ontario's provincial tests. For students with special education needs, some accommodations that are consistent with regular classroom assessment practices are permitted. Special provisions may also be permitted for English language learners.

Each question on every EQAO test is based on learning expectations set out in The Ontario Curriculum, which is what teachers are responsible for teaching in classrooms every day. Preparing students for the tests means teaching them

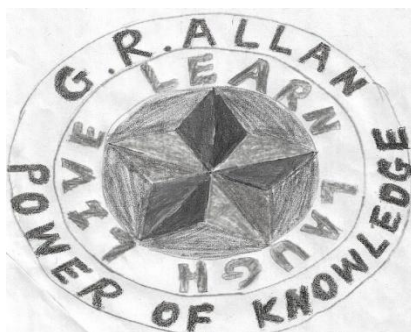
- to understand what they read;
- to clearly communicate their thoughts in writing and
- to use appropriate math skills to solve problems.

These skills can and should be reinforced in all subjects. EQAO tests should not require special preparation. Students are simply asked to demonstrate the curriculum-based skills they have developed through their regular classroom work.

These assessments capture performance at a specific point of time each year. The results should be considered together with other school information about student performance in reading, writing and mathematics.

Grade 3 EQAO testing will be administered **between May and June each year**. Individual test results will be sent home in the fall (ie the following school year), along with comparative results for the school, school board and province.

For more information, please visit <http://www.eqao.com>.



ESL (English as a Second Language)

George R. Allan has a full-time System Itinerant ESL/ELD Teacher on-site; providing students in the early stages of language acquisition with English language literacy instruction through withdrawal or in-class support. This teacher is assigned by the HWDSB to our school. She or he also works with school staff providing assistance on effective instructional strategies for English Language Learners (ELL) in their classes.

When working with students, the System Itinerant ESL/ELD teacher employs a Comprehensive Literacy Approach, adapted for ELLs, that allows students to acquire English literacy skills and develop oral communication proficiency by simultaneously developing reading, writing, speaking and listening skills through authentic, meaningful tasks. The System Itinerant ESL/ELD teacher also provides support to student learning in all other subject areas through in-class support with classroom teachers. The Ministry of Education provides special guidelines for this teacher.

Extra-Curricular Activities

George R. Allan School offers a number of extra-curricular activities to students of various ages. Children will be informed of the timing of each activity and will receive forms, requiring parental permission, should they choose to join or try out. Some examples of current extra-curricular offerings include:

Cross-Country Running: Children in grades 1- 5 will all have a chance to participate in cross-country running, an event where students will run differing distances (dependent on age group), on open terrain (in Churchill park). Students in grades 3 and up who finish in the top 12 times slots for their grade and gender will have a chance to go on to compete against other schools within the school board.

Violin Instruction: The Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board Strings Instruction Program provides an opportunity for George R. Allan students in grades 4 and 5 to learn to play the violin. For more information, please visit the West Hamilton Strings website at <http://westhamiltonstrings.blogspot.com/>.

Choir: Run by George R. Allan's own specialist music education teacher, primary and junior choirs are formed each year with lunchtime rehearsals culminating in an evening concert held each December.

Lunch Clubs: Lunch clubs are volunteer-led activities that are offered during two time periods during the school year. Each lunch club session will run for 5-6 weeks, with activities being offered once per week, during the recess portion of the lunch hour. Volunteers coordinating lunch clubs include parents, teachers and staff. We try to offer a variety of activities, such as: sports, dance, music, board games, crafts, knitting and more. Lunch clubs are scaled to grade level, and offerings will be available to students in grades 1-5. Lunch clubs are very popular, and at times enrolment exceeds capacity. In this event a lottery system is used to determine placement. George R. Allan's Home & School Association coordinates and funds our lunch clubs.

Sports Teams: Older students will have the opportunity to try out for 4 different sports teams, each offered during different times of the year. Those who make the team will then go on to compete in tournaments/meets against other schools within the board. Current athletic offerings include teams for swimming (open to students in grades 3-5), as well as grade 5 teams for volleyball, basketball, floorball and soccer.

Running Club: All students (as well as their parents and caregivers) are invited to participate in G. R. Allan's running club. The group meets twice per week, either during the lunch hour or after school. Running routes go through Churchill Park. The running club operates year-round, dependent on ground conditions (i.e. not too muddy, icy or snowy).

Mad Science: Twice per year, G. R. Allan hosts Mad Science after-school programming. Sessions run once per week for 8 weeks, from 3:30 – 4:30pm. These hands-on, science programs spark learning as children engage in exciting hands-on activities, watch demonstrations, participate in inquiry-based discussions and take home things that they have made themselves. Mad Science programming requires a fee on registration, to cover the cost of both instructors and materials.

French Immersion Program

George R. Allan is a dual track school, meaning that educational programming is offered both in the traditional English stream as well as in French Immersion. French Immersion is a French-as-a-second-language (FSL) program in which French is not only taught as a subject but also serves as the language of instruction in other subjects. Enrolment in the French Immersion program is optional; at George R. Allan students entering Senior Kindergarten (SK) may enrol in either French Immersion or in the English stream, the latter including a Core French component to meet the mandatory requirement for the study of French in English-language schools.

The principle aim of the French Immersion program is to provide students with the skills they need to communicate in a second language. The program aims to develop strong fundamental skills in oral communication (listening and speaking), reading, and writing.

The ability to communicate in French is a valuable skill, because French is one of Canada's two official languages and because it is a language used widely around the world. Research confirms that knowledge of a second language strengthens first-language skills and that the ability to speak two or more languages generally enhances reasoning and problem solving skills, as well as creative-thinking skills.

The elementary school curriculum for French Immersion is designed to prepare students for success in the corresponding program at the secondary level.

For more information on the French Immersion curriculum, please visit French Immersion on the Board website at http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/programs/fi/pdfs/fi_curriculum.pdf

Watch for information coming out in the new year alerting you to Board information nights about French Immersion programming.

French Immersion Advisory Committee (FIAC)

The French Immersion Advisory Committee (FIAC) is an HWDSB committee chaired by the superintendent responsible for French Immersion. The committee provides advice to the Board regarding the French Immersion program and accommodation issues. Parents may attend FIAC meetings, which are held at the Board office 4 times annually.

Parents should speak with the principal at the beginning of the school year if they are interested in joining this committee. School Council appoints one parent to be the George R. Allan parent representative to attend the 4 scheduled meetings.

Gifted Identification Process

The Hamilton Wentworth District School Board offers specialized classes for students who are identified as exceptional or gifted, beginning in grade 5. The process by which children are identified as gifted by the Board begins with standardized testing of all Grade 4 students, designed to evaluate their level of cognitive functioning. Each year in November and December, Grade 4 Teachers and Learning Resource Teachers administer the Canadian Cognitive Abilities Test or CCAT, which measures both Verbal and Nonverbal skills. This annual process is part of the Board's assessment practice.

This testing is conducted in your child's homeroom and during regular school time. Testing takes approximately two hours to complete, including instructions. No special preparation on the part of the students is expected.

CCAT results are available in February, and results are filed in the student's Ontario Student Record. In order to access your child's scores, contact the school principal and request these results.

If your child is identified as potentially gifted by his/her CCAT results, you will be notified that further testing, requiring

parental approval, will be required before consideration of placement into a gifted class. George R. Allan School is not an

HWDSB site that offers grade 5 gifted classes; however the school does implement the standardized testing of grade 4 students.

Grades / Report Cards

How do teachers determine my child's grades?

Teachers review and assess assignments, tests, demonstrations and projects for evidence that your child is learning the curriculum. This learning means more than just knowing the facts. Students must also show an understanding of what they are studying by communicating and applying what they have learned. They must also demonstrate critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

All work is reviewed with special attention given to the quality of work at the end of a unit of study, term or semester. Teachers do not simply calculate averages. As well as looking at tests or assignments, they also talk to and observe your child in the classroom to gather as much information as possible before making a decision on the final grade.

Report Cards:

Elementary students in Grades 1 to 8 will bring home a fall progress report card in November, and two provincial report cards, one in February and one in June, at the end of the school year.

The fall progress report card:

- encourages early and ongoing communication between you and your child's teacher
- tells you how well your child is developing the learning skills and work habits we know are essential for success – these include responsibility, organization, independent work, collaboration, initiative and self-regulation
- continues to report on all academic subjects — such as language, math, social studies, science and technology — but instead of assigning a grade or mark, it will tell

you how well your child is progressing: “very well”, “well” or “with difficulty”

- highlights strengths and areas to improve before evaluations are completed
- includes comments from your child's teacher that are personalized, clear and meaningful

The elementary provincial report cards:

- also emphasize and give examples of the learning skills and work habits required
- have ample space for teachers to add meaningful, clear and personalized comments so you can understand how your child is progressing
- use letter grades for Grades 1-6 so you clearly understand how well your child is doing
- provide suggestions on how you can support your child's education at home

Included in each of the progress and report cards is a sheet for parent and student comments, requests for interviews and signatures. Please be sure to sign this sheet and return it to your child's classroom teacher as soon as possible.

Home & School Association Events

The George R. Allan Home and School Association is a parent-run organization affiliated with the Ontario Federation of Home and School. Its mandate is to enhance the experience for our students and to provide parents with a voice, both at the school and provincial level. Open meetings are held jointly with the School Council and School Representatives. See Parent Meetings (see page 39).

Your Home and School Association runs a variety of fundraising, community and charitable events throughout the year. Funds raised support our school through programs including the purchase of home reading programs, physical education equipment and Smart Technology. Following is a brief description of select events:

September's Welcome BBQ and Movie Night



Early in the school year George R. Allan School hosts a “Meet the Teacher Night”, an opportunity for you to view your child’s classroom and meet your child’s teacher. Prior to the “Meet the Teacher” time, Home and School hosts a barbeque outside the school with food and drinks available for sale.

Following “Meet the Teacher” time or night, please join us at the back of the school where a large outdoor screen will be set up and a current family rated movie will be shown. Snacks are sold at a concession stand before and during the movie.

October's Pumpkin Hike



Our annual Pumpkin Hike, held late in October, is an event not to be missed! The Hike is a magical family walk through the trails of Churchill Park, illuminated by lit jack-o-lanterns (carved pumpkins) placed along the pathways. Students from McMaster University provide cider and games at the end of the trail.

Dance-a-thon



The dance-a-thon provides an opportunity for each class to come down to the gymnasium and spend time dancing to raise money to support ongoing initiatives at George R. Allan. Students may make musical requests prior to the event. You will be notified of the dance times so that you may come and watch your children dance... or join them!

Teacher Appreciation Lunch



During Teacher Appreciation week in February, we hold a luncheon for our teachers to let them know how much we appreciate all the hard work that they do for our children. Food is prepared and served by parent volunteers.

Outreach Collections



In December, students will be asked to provide a food donation for the North Hamilton Community Health Centre. Early in the month each student at George R. Allan will be assigned a specific food item they are asked to bring in, if possible, to add to our donation. NHCHC relies on these donations to keep their breakfast program operating throughout the year. Children are also asked to bring in a “loonie or toonie” to purchase toys for children in the North Hamilton Community.

Parent – Teacher Communication

Teachers send out classroom newsletters on a regular basis, keeping parents informed about curriculum and special events in the room. Please be sure to sign up for George R. Allan’s email list to receive newsletters electronically, and cut down on all the paper coming home in school bags. Forms will be sent home at the beginning of the school year, or you can email your information to grallannews@gmail.com.

All students in grades one through five are asked to purchase an agenda at the beginning of the school year. We encourage everyone to make full use of this invaluable communication tool between teachers and parents. Agendas also contain timely information about the Hamilton-Wentworth School Board with special days noted as well as school / study tips.

Remember, the agenda is just one way that staff can communicate with you. There are many situations when a phone call or a face-to-face meeting may be better.

Your child’s teacher will use the classroom newsletter or agenda to keep in touch with you about the following kinds of topics:

- general information about class activities – curriculum, homework, tests, special events
- to arrange for meetings /telephone calls regarding a student issue including a general description of the issue, e.g. "I would like to arrange a meeting to discuss your daughter's attendance"
- follow-up on an issue that has previously been discussed
- to inform you of a minor behaviour/discipline issue

Your child's teacher will not use the newsletter or agenda to discuss any of these issues:

- any sensitive student information that would normally be discussed face-to-face or by phone
- personal information about other students
- specifics about a sensitive student issue which was not initiated by the parent or had not previously been discussed with the parent
- to inform you of a major behaviour/discipline issue
- serious academic or social concerns

Most communication can be achieved through the agenda. When phone call or face-to face meeting is necessary for an urgent issue, you may contact your child's teacher at 905-522-0601.

Parent Meetings

Parent or School Community Meetings are held 7 times throughout the year, approximately monthly (with the exceptions of December, March and June to accommodate for holidays). At these meetings there are reports from the School Council and Home and School Association regarding current, ongoing and upcoming events and initiatives, as well as a report from the Principal and/or teacher representatives about school activities. Occasionally guest speakers will be invited to address current issues of concern to the school community. By attending these meetings, you will meet other interested parents and have the opportunity to get involved and contribute to George R. Allan School in many ways.

Meetings are held from 7:00pm-9:00pm at the school, in either a first-floor classroom or the gym (notices will be posted on the front doors indicating location). The current school year meeting schedule is listed in the grade 1-5 Student Agendas and on the school website, at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/grallan/parent%20council.htm>.

Advance notice of meetings will also be given in newsletters distributed prior to each meeting.

Minutes from Parent Meetings will be provided to the school community via email, hard copy and/or posting on the bulletin board in the front hall of the school for those who are interested but unable to attend.

School Communications

We depend on the children to deliver newsletters. School newsletters will be sent home once per month. Copies are posted near the principals' office and on the G. R. Allan website, at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/grallan/>. Our school newsletters are a very important means of communication with parents. They provide information about the curriculum, school events and important dates. Please remember to sign up for George R. Allan's email distribution list at (grallannews@gmail.com) in order to receive school communications electronically.

School Council and Home and School also send newsletters home. Each group has a bulletin board in the front foyer. Please consult the notes of interest and the minutes of the meetings that are posted. School Council and Home and School have mailboxes. We invite you to contact School Council and Home and School representatives with questions or to communicate a concern. All minutes of the School Council meetings are posted on a bulletin board in the front entrance of the school, next to the main office.

School Council

School Council is a great way to become involved and keep current about what is happening in your child's school. It is mandated by the Ministry of Education that every school has a School Council to act as a voice for parents at the school level, in order to promote and improve student learning through ongoing valued parental, staff and community input. Research shows that parental involvement is the most significant factor contributing to a child's success in school; students succeed when parents have a positive attitude about the importance of a good education.

The School Council at George R. Allan is made up of democratically elected representatives from our parent community. Together, they:

- focus on student learning and the best interest of all students,
- provide a forum through which parents and other members of school communities can contribute to improving student achievement and school performance,
- make recommendations to the school principal and the Board on any matter they see impacting accountability and academic excellence and;
- serve as a communication and information channel between the school and community.

Current School Council initiatives at George R. Allan include committees focusing on Eco-Schools support and arts programming.

School Photos

Early in the fall a professional photographer will visit George R. Allan to take class and individual pictures of each student. Every student will receive a class photograph to keep, along with proofs of their individual photo, which may be ordered for a specified fee. Purchase of any pictures once taken is, of course, optional.

Sources of Information

Please be sure to read the George R. Allan newsletters, distributed monthly, to keep up to date on issues that relate to school functioning and descriptions of various events for students and parents. Additionally, classroom teachers will distribute newsletters containing information as it pertains to their specific classrooms. Other written materials will also be distributed, as they occur. They may relate to information and activities in the community, or be specific to the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board. Newsletters and notices will be distributed either by paper copy sent home in your child's school bag, or emailed directly to you should you opt to join the school's email distribution list (in this case, paper copies will not be sent home, see page 40 for more information on joining the email list).

Other sources of relevant information:

- The George R. Allan Parent Handbook
- Student Agendas (available for purchase to all students in grade 1 through 5)
- The George R. Allan School website at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/grallan/>
- The Hamilton Wentworth District School Board website at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/>
- The Dalewood Middle School website at <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/dalewood/>
- The Ontario Ministry of Education at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/>
- The Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations website at <http://www.ofhsa.on.ca/>
- In the event of inclement weather, you can call the HWDSB hotline at **Hotline 905-521-2535 to hear a recorded message letting you know if schools have been closed for the day. School closures will also be announced on the HWDSB website, along with the following radio stations by 6am on the day of the closure: CHAM 820 AM, CHML 900 AM, K Lite FM 102.9 FM, Oldies 1150 AM, Y95 95.3 FM**

Special Education Subcommittee of School Council

Vision:

To create and sustain a culture of inclusion for children and parents with special needs; as well as their families, in the George R. Allan community.

Mission:

- To identify barriers to inclusion within the physical, academic and social environment.
- To communicate/inform the George R. Allan community regarding special education issues and the viewpoints of those with diverse abilities.
- To work cooperatively with educators, administrators, and the community at large to eliminate factors leading to exclusion.
- To foster an environment in which children can achieve their full potential with the dignity that every child deserves.

To contact the Special Education Subcommittee, please call or email Shirley Rodrigues at:

Shirley Rodrigues

Email: [**shirley.rodrigues@sympatico.ca**](mailto:shirley.rodrigues@sympatico.ca)

Phone: **905-929-6549**



Special Education Support

Common Terms

SRM – School Resource Meeting

IEP – Individual Education Plan

IPRC – Identification, Placement and Review Committee

LRT – Learning Resource Teacher

What is the School Resource Team/School Resource Meeting?

The School Resource Team is a group of school personnel who meet regularly with teachers and parents to discuss, plan and make recommendations to help meet the educational needs of students at the request of parents and/or teachers. Members of the School Resource Team include the Principal/Vice-Principal, the classroom teacher and the Learning Resource Teachers. Other personnel working with the student may be invited if needed. School Resource Meetings are generally held for students working one or more grade levels behind or above their peers.

What is the System Resource Meeting (SRM)?

A System Resource Meeting is as above with the addition of other board personnel such as the school psychologist, the school social worker, speech-language pathologist and the cluster consultant for Special Education. This is the only time an IPRC can take place.

When and Where Do School Resource Meetings Take Place?

Meetings are held as needed, generally once a month during the school year. The normal meeting day is usually determined at the beginning of the school year. Meetings are usually held during the afternoon. In cases where meetings are being held for siblings, we try to arrange back-to-back meetings. Meetings begin at 1:00 p.m. Twenty minutes is allotted for each meeting unless extra time is requested at the time of referral. The Team breaks for recess and lunch at the same times as the students. The meetings will generally take place in Room 27 unless otherwise arranged. Invitations to meetings are sent to parents by the LRT.

How Do I Prepare for SRM?

Teachers will discuss the progress of the student; their strengths then move to the areas of need, and bring along a few 'key' work samples in language and/or math, which reflect skill development in the areas of reading, writing and/or numeracy. Parents are asked to provide their input in terms of academic and social strengths and areas of need as well. Parents are also asked about homework routines (if applicable), developmental milestones and any medical concerns (ex. vision or hearing) as all information helps the school program to be effective for the student.

What happens after an SRM?

The goal of the SRM is to; as a team, develop strategies for success that can be implemented both at school and home. Teachers offer a differentiated program that should meet the needs of most students. Some students require different strategies to access the curriculum. Some of the strategies will be implemented by just the classroom teacher but some may require the support of the LRT. Sometimes, the classroom teacher may make accommodations or modifications to a students' program. Students are not required to 'catch up' on work missed if they are withdrawn for support with the LRT.

Accommodations - are changes in **how** a student accesses information and demonstrates learning. Accommodations do not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. The changes are made in order to provide a student with equal access to learning and equal opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do

Modifications - are changes in **what** a student is expected to learn. The changes are made to provide a student opportunity to participate meaningfully and productively along with other students in classroom and school learning experiences. Modifications require a change in the grade level of the expectations the student is given. Modifications generally happen when students are performing 2 or more years below grade level.

Classroom modifications, accommodations and remediation need to be done and documented before children will be

considered for withdrawal support through the LRT. Resource programs are a **short term intervention** and students should not be in the program for longer than one year. If the child is still experiencing significant difficulty, the annual review should indicate more intense intervention is required – such as psychological or other assessments and/or a referral to IPRC. It is at IPRC that a special education designation and an appropriate placement is determined.

- An IEP **must** be written for:
 - All students who have been designated through the IPRC process as exceptional (including children in regular classes receiving accommodations only)
- An IEP **may** be written for:
 - Students being serviced by the LRT
 - Students who are not being seen by a Learning Resource Teacher but who have been discussed at SRM and require formal classroom accommodations

LRT Support (the level of support is dependent upon the need of the student and scheduling)

- Some students may require completely modified programs in one subject area, whereas others may only require short term assistance with a more limited focus - only one or two areas from reading, writing, math or social/emotional
- Students who require modifications to the curriculum are generally more than two years below grade level and thus would not be able to follow regular grade expectations
- Modified programs are developed by both regular teachers and by LRTS



Students Building Leadership Skills at George R. Allan

At George R. Allan, we encourage students to participate in activities; both in class and extra-curricular, that build and exhibit leadership skills. Some of these activities are Office Helpers, Attendance Carriers, Morning Announcements, Library Helpers, Gym Helpers, Recycling Team, Reading Buddies, Peer Mediators & various lunch clubs.

Volunteer.... and Make A Difference At Our School!

Parents play an important role in the development and education of their children and in the success of the school community. Studies indicate that parents are the most important influence in a child's life outside of school.

At George R. Allan we welcome and encourage participation of parents and community members. We also recognize the time and energy these volunteers give.

There is a common misconception that volunteering in a school requires a huge commitment and a lot of your free time. There are many volunteer opportunities available at our school that are flexible and range from a few hours per month to five hours a day, depending on *your* schedule.

Examples of various volunteer opportunities include (but are not limited to):

- Accompanying students and teachers on field trips
- Preparing classroom materials from home, e.g. cutting, tracing, collating, etc.
- Preparation for events, e.g. baking, cooking, making telephone calls, etc.
- Reading with students individually or in small groups
- Joining George R. Allan's Eco Club
- Assisting with one of the various events the Home and School Association sponsors e.g. Halloween Night Hike, Lunch Clubs, Movie Night

- Joining George R. Allan’s School Council or Home and School Association Executive Committees

Come visit us in the office if you're interested in volunteering at our school. Our Vice Principal, Mrs. George, will speak with you and provide you with the forms necessary to obtain your criminal record check.

Your Guide to the School System

As a parent you will get the most from the school system if you:

- are informed about what your child is learning;
- are involved with the school, and work with the school to resolve conflicts;
- know your rights;
- promote learning in your home;
- know whom to contact to get information;

“How do I find out what my child is learning?”

- The expectations for each grade are kept at the school; ask to see them.
- Or you can read them for yourself on the web-page of the Ministry of Education and Training: www.edu.gov.on.ca
- Attend Meet the Teacher nights, interview days, and Open Houses and observe and ask questions.
- Volunteer in the school. Contact the school’s Vice Principal about how to do this.
- Read your child’s progress report / report cards come home three times a year: it is a summary of information the teacher has about your child, and you can ask for more details.
- Look at your child’s homework and text books.
- Read the school newsletter.
- You can also ask to see the Education Quality Assessment Office’s (**EQAO**) results of your child’s school and the plan the school has made based on these results.

“What do I do if there are problems?”

- First ask to speak to your child's teacher.
- If you are not satisfied after speaking to the teacher, ask for an interview with the principal.
- Does the school have all the information about your child that would help them understand your child's needs better? Don't forget to pass on any medical information or other matters that you wish to share that may be upsetting your child at this time.
- Each school has a **Learning Resource Teacher (LRT)** who can assist children who have learning difficulties.
- The school system has resources and support staff such as speech and language pathologists, social workers, and psychologists, who may assist your child.
- If you continue to feel that problems have not been addressed you can ask that an **In School Resource Team** meeting take place to problem-solve about your child's needs.
- If you continue to feel dissatisfied you can call the Superintendent of Schools.

YOUR RIGHTS THROUGH THE EDUCATION ACT:

You may remove your child from school:

- for religious holidays;
- for up to one half-day per week for music lessons;
- for home schooling.

Discipline:

- Parents must be contacted if their child commits a serious breach of discipline at school.
- Parents have the right to appeal suspensions of their child.
- If the police wish to interview a child during school hours, parents must be informed.

Ontario Student Record (OSR)

- Parents may view their child's Ontario student record (OSR) in the school office. You may request to have information removed or changed if you feel it is inaccurate or not conducive to improving the instruction of your child.

Special Education

Parents have the right to request that their child appear before an **Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)** to determine if there are special needs, which make their child **exceptional**. The process is explained fully in **A Guide to Special Education for Parents and Pupils**, available in every school and on the web site: www.hwdsb.on.ca.

A parent has the right to:

- request an IPRC by writing to the school principal;
- attend the IPRC and the following annual IPRC meetings and bring your representative;
- request a placement in a regular class;
- appeal the IPRC decision;
- request in writing a review of your child's identification or placement after three months;
- receive a copy of your child's **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** within 30 days;
- request an application for School Health Support Services.

The **Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)** is a mandated committee of representatives from parent and community associations that hold public meetings most fourth Wednesdays in the evening at the Education Centre, located at 100 Main Street West in Hamilton. For more information please contact the SEAC Chair (information listed below).

SEAC Chair: Judy Collantino
Contact Judy at 905-527-5092 extension #2273.

Parents Influence the School Board by:

- speaking or writing to their trustee and other trustees;
- joining their **School Council** and or **Home and School Association**; their advice is sought by the Board.
- asking a question at the public session of Board meetings held monthly.
- making a presentation to the Committee of the Whole.

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board

The Board was formed in 1998 from the former Wentworth County Public Board of Education and the Public Board of Education for the City Of Hamilton.

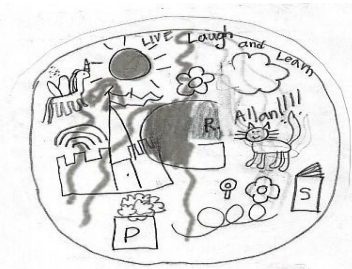
Information about the **Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board and its services** is posted on their web page. See www.hwdsb.on.ca

A list of superintendents can be found at www.hwdsb.on.ca

Trustees are public officials elected to serve you, the students and the school system.

Trustees can help parents by:

- providing information;
- advocating for children;
- working to change policies;
- helping parents to access the system.





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References

All of the information provided in this parent handbook has been sourced, excerpted and/or directly quoted from the following sources:

- George R. Allan School:
<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/grallan/>
- Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board:
<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/>
- Ontario Ministry of Education:
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/>
- Education Quality and Accountability Office:
<http://www.eqao.com/>

Any errors contained in this handbook are unintentional and are the sole responsibility of the authors.

We Want Your FEEDBACK!

This is the first edition of the George R. Allan Parent Handbook, and we would welcome any feedback you have to improve upon it for future editions. Please either:

- Email your comments to **grallannews@gmail.com**
- Fax your comments to us at **905-522-4998**
- Write your comments and drop them off at the School Office, located inside the front doors

Feedback Survey

1. Do you find the information in this Parent Handbook useful?

2. Is there any other information you would like to see included in future Parent Handbooks?

3. Are there any pages / pieces of information that you feel are not necessary to include in future Parent Handbooks?

4. Do you have any comments or suggestions on the organization of the GRA Parent Handbook?

5. Do you have any other comments?

Thank you for your feedback!