

Dear KOTR Families,

We are very excited to welcome all of our students and staff back to school on Tuesday September 5th. If you are new to Kars on the Rideau, we are so pleased to have you join our school community.

At the school, we have been busy preparing for the students' return. We wanted to share some start-up information. We usually send weekly updates to families, but they are not usually this long, so apologies in advance.

Here are few things you should know:

### **Important dates**

- Monday, August 28th: School office reopens 7:30am - 3:30pm
- Tuesday September 5th, 8:00am: First day of school for all students Kindergarten to Grade 8!

### **How should we prepare for the school year?**

Families often ask this question. Here are a few suggestions:

- Focus on enjoying the last bit of summer right now! There is no academic preparation required. However, reading for pleasure is a great way to relax and keep your reading skills sharp at the same time. It is important that students enjoy reading and discovering new adventures in stories.
- Adjust your routines before school starts. In the week before school, students can start moving towards getting up around the time they will need to in order to get to school on time. It doesn't have to be exactly the time for going back to school, but this will allow your children to be able to enjoy the new school year fully without being too tired.
- Transitioning to snacking/eating close to 10am and 12:45pm is also recommended.
- If your child is new to walking, take some practice walks to and from school so they can get used to the route.
- Putting down the devices more frequently is a good change to make before the school year starts. Making sure that your child can tie any new shoes or open any new containers/backpacks/lunchbags is a perfect way to ease worry for that first day.
- Get your school supplies ready! See the list of voluntary supplies later in this message.
- We recognize that students have a range of feelings about starting a new school year. This is normal. Every new school year brings some change and many new opportunities to build new relationships and to learn new things! As you know adults have a huge impact on how children approach the year. It is important to listen and validate their feelings, and to share that there will be many positives, but also many people at the school who are available to support and help. As I've been saying frequently, "Everything is figureoutable!"
- Talk about all the friends they will reconnect with and the new ones they can also make. When children say they really want to be in the same class with certain students, it is important to share that it is very likely that students will be in different classes than some of their friends. This is often the case in a school as large as KOTR. They will have the opportunity to see all their friends at recess. It is important to highlight before the

school year starts that every year each student gets the opportunity to meet even more friends.

### **Staffing updates**

Congratulations to Mr. Brian Arleth who has accepted a position at another school in our board. We wish him the best on his new adventures. Mme Pelland will also be pursuing a new career with the City of Ottawa and we thank her for all the work she has done with our students. Mr. Burman will be continuing his leave for the time being.

We wish to welcome Mr. Rayon Finnikin to our English intermediate team. Mme Emilie Vriend will be teaching Grade 6 French Immersion with Mme Monica Gordon. Ms. Heather Pottle has accepted the position of Office Administrator and we are incredibly happy to have her as part of the office team.

Welcome to the Coyote family Mr. Finnikin, Mme Vriend, and Ms. Pottle!

### **School transportation**

OSTA has shared detailed information about busing information on their [Parent Portal](#). This includes service cancellations due to busing and driver shortages. OSTA understands that accurate and timely transportation information is essential for parents and students preparing for their school day. You can read [OSTA's Transportation Update for the Return to School 2023-24](#) for more information.

### **Arrival and dismissal routines**

- Designated drop/off and pick up areas – Families are encouraged to park on a side street across Rideau Valley Dr. and cross at the crosswalk. Staff will be on duty as of 7:45am. This Walk a Block initiative continues to be in place across the Board. At the end of the day, parents are welcome to park and meet their children at a predetermined area or at the cenotaph close to the crosswalk.
- The large bus loop is designated for school transportation vehicles only.
- Students will arrive on the first day and will be directed by staff to their grade designated area on the yard. Homeroom teachers will be holding grade signs and will have their class lists. They will be gathering their students prior to entering the building, as a class.
  - Students in grades 1 - 5 will be meeting their teachers on the pavement at the back of the school.
  - Grade 6 students will meet their teachers on the lower field (soccer field).
  - Grade 7 and 8 students will meet their teachers in the upper field.
- Students are to head directly to the yard when they arrive to school, whether it's by bus, van, car, or by walking. They are not to enter the school by the front doors unless they arrive after 8am and need to get a late slip at the office. Students are dismissed out of the doors at the back of the school to catch the bus or to meet parents. Only students who catch school van transportation can be dismissed by the front doors at the end of the school day.

- Please consider using the OSTA [walking route maps](#) posted on the school website to help children walk to school safely. Parents are asked to consider parking a few blocks away from the school to help avoid congestion near the school
- Students and parents are asked to not ride their bicycles/scooters, skateboards, etc. through the parking lots, on the walkways, or through the yard when arriving at or leaving the school. Bicycles should be walked safely to the bike racks at the front of the school

### **Attendance/late arrivals/early dismissals**

- When you know your child will be absent or late, please call (613-489-2024) or email ([karsontherideaups@ocdsb.ca](mailto:karsontherideaups@ocdsb.ca)) the school as soon as you are able. You can use the form on our [school website](#) to report an absence.
- Classroom attendance is taken shortly after the 8:00am bell. Students are encouraged to be at school well before 8am and to get organized and into class for attendance. All late students have to check in at the office to get a late slip. Students then make their own way to the class. We do not permit parents to escort students to class.
- If your child needs to be picked up early, please let the office know. We need students to be signed out at the office by a parent or guardian that we have listed as contacts. If your child will be picked up by someone we don't have on our records, please let us know via phone or email to [karsontherideaups@ocdsb.ca](mailto:karsontherideaups@ocdsb.ca)
- All communication about students needing to go home is to go through the office so we are aware of what is happening. Students are not to be texting or calling parents from their cell phones.

### **Daily timetable and other procedures**

- Our instructional day starts at 8am and ends at 2:30pm. Students can be dropped off as early as 7:45am. Supervision begins at that time.
- Students in grades 1-8 have 2 nutrition breaks and 2 recesses throughout the day: 10:00am-10:45am and 12:45pm-1:30pm. Students will eat first and then go outdoors for recess. Grade 1-8 students are all on the yard together. Kindergarten educators will share what their daily timetable between 8:00 and 2:30 and routines look like as it may differ somewhat from the rest of the school.
- Students in grades 6-8 will be assigned lockers on the first day. Students in grades 6-8 will need to bring a lock and it is recommended that they practice using the combination.
- Students will have physical education 3 times a week, so proper footwear and indoor shoes are necessary.
- Teachers will be communicating with you soon to welcome your child to their classroom.
- Extra curricular clubs and teams will be offered this year.

### **Administering medication to students**

In May 2023, the District approved revisions to [Procedure PR.691.SCO Administration of Prescribed Medication for Students with Non-life-threatening Medical Conditions](#).

The full procedure is available at the above link, but some important changes are:

- Schools are not responsible for the handling of *non-prescribed* medication.
- *Non-prescribed* medications are allowed on a student's person only where the student is capable of safely self-administering them.

- Schools no longer require authorization for students to self-administer *prescribed* medication provided that they adhere to the new parameters included in the procedure.

The above procedure applies when a health care professional requires the administration of medication during school hours and school-related activities, on school transportation, during field trips, or at other school-related activities off school premises. It applies only to the handling of prescribed medications for non-life threatening medical conditions (i.e. acute episodes of short-term, non-life threatening illness, such as an infection). Injections by staff are not permitted. Requests of staff to administer or supervise the administration of prescribed medication for students with life-threatening medical conditions will be accommodated in accordance with [Procedure PR.548.SCO: Care for Students with Severe or Life-threatening Medical Conditions](#).

### **Students with serious health concerns or conditions**

Any parent or custodial caregiver of a student with a serious or life-threatening medical condition must complete a form to inform the school. This allows us to be prepared and knowledgeable about how best to support the student and respond should an emergency arise.

The forms can be found in the Parent Portal of the OCDSB website: [www.ocdsb.ca](http://www.ocdsb.ca)

### **School Supplies**

The most important things for students to bring to school each day are:

1. Backpack
2. Litterless lunch as much as possible
3. Refillable water bottle- LABELLED
4. Extra layers of clothing (Students are outside for at least two 25 minute recesses. Students also participate regularly in outdoor learning and have one of their three phys ed classes outdoors in all types of weather.)

School supplies are voluntary. Please see the list below.

#### GRADE 1 TO GRADE 3

12 pencils

2 erasers (preferably white)

1 package of crayons

1 package of coloured pencils

1 package of coloured markers

1 metric ruler

1 pair of blunt scissors

2 glue sticks

1 pencil case (2 pencil cases for grade 1 students)

GRADE 4 TO GRADE 8

12 pencils

2 erasers (preferably white)

1 metric ruler

1 pair of scissors

2 glue sticks

1 package of coloured pencils

1 package of 3-hole lined refill paper

4 different colour duotangs

1 package of coloured markers

1 calculator

1 geometry set

2 highlighters

1 pencil case

3 binders (These are NOT required, but your child's teacher may ask for them in September. Please wait until you hear from your child's teacher. We don't want anyone buying things that won't be used!)

1 combination lock for a locker for students in grades 6-8

We are looking forward to seeing you all in September!

Please enjoy this short [welcome back video](#) from our staff!

Erin Paynter (she/her)

Principal

Lara Eager

Vice-Principal