

A Parent's Guide to High School

Get ready for what could be the most exciting and important years your teen spends in school. For the first time, teens will have to make choices about what they will study and what career pathway to choose.

Whatever path your teen chooses, we want to make sure your entire family is ready to meet the challenges and embrace the many opportunities that await your teen upon graduation. Our *Parent's Guide to High School* will provide you with a snapshot of what you need to know to help your teen be successful. To view the online booklet, visit www.peelschools.org/parents/helpyourchild/parentguide.

For more ways on helping your teen make a smooth transition, visit www.peelschools.org/parents/helpyourchild.

Apply for a parent position on the board's We Rise Together Advisory Council

The Peel District School Board is currently seeking parent applications from Black Peel parents to fill three available positions for the We Rise Together Advisory Council, beginning October 2017 and ending June 2018. Peel parents interested in this volunteer opportunity can apply using the online form available at www.peelschools.org/werisetgether. The online application closes Wednesday, October 11, 2017 at 4:30 p.m.

The advisory council will consist of parents, community members, students, trustees and board staff who are committed to achieving the goals set out in the We Rise Together Accountability Report. Parent representatives will provide advice, support and feedback on the implementation of We Rise Together action steps in the areas of Student Leadership, Curriculum, Staff Development and Community Engagement.

An important component of the We Rise Together Action Plan, the following is the selection criteria for parents interested in being a part of the We Rise Together Advisory Council:

- Black Peel parent with a child or children currently enrolled in the Peel District School Board
- one representative from Brampton, one from Caledon, one from Mississauga
- demonstrates a commitment to, and knowledge of the We Rise Together Accountability Report and subsequent action steps
- understands the importance of parent, family and community engagement
- demonstrates a keen interest in public education
- seeks to promote healthy, positive and progressive relationships with the Peel District School Board
- demonstrates advocacy and community development skills

Selected applicants will be contacted. If you have any questions, please contact communications@peelsb.com.

For more information about We Rise Together, please visit www.peelschools.org/werisetgether

Celebrate World Teachers' Day

Thursday, October 5, 2017

Since 1994, parents and students from around the world have celebrated World Teachers' Day to commemorate the work of teachers and their contributions to society. On Oct. 5, take the time to let your child's teacher know he or she is truly appreciated. Thank your child's teacher and let them know they are making a difference.

Peel high school information nights start this fall

Learn about the Peel District School Board advantage and your local Peel board secondary school at an upcoming parent information night. For dates and times, visit www.peelschools.org/schools/informationnights or call the school directly. To find out which secondary school your teen will attend, call 905-890-1010/1-800-668-1146 ext. 2212 or visit www.peelschools.org/schools/findyourschool.

***Please note that dates and times are subject to change. For the most up-to-date information, please contact the school directly.*

Get involved in your child's education

Research shows parent involvement positively affects student success. Becoming more involved brings many benefits. You will get to know teachers, the principal and other parents better. You will be able to share your talents, experiences and ideas. You will inspire youth—and be inspired by them. You will show your child how much you value education. You will gain insights that can help you to boost your child's learning. And you could develop skills and knowledge that can help you in your own career.

There are many ways to be involved. Attending the Peel District School Board's annual parent conference, volunteering at your child's school, talking to your teen about their school day and reading with your child at night are all forms of parent involvement. Visit www.peelschools.org/parents/involved to learn more.

Oct. 18 opportunity to say 'thanks' to bus drivers

Peel schools will pay tribute to bus drivers on Bus Driver Appreciation Day on Oct. 18, 2017. The day will be celebrated with special activities and events that provide teachers, students and parents an opportunity to thank the people who safely transport over 36,000 students to and from school each day.

If your child rides the bus to school, take this opportunity to thank the bus driver for his or her contribution and ask your child to do so too. The Peel board appreciates the important job bus drivers do each school day and Oct. 18 provides an opportunity to give these individuals the recognition they deserve.

Oct. 25 – Celebrate Peel Teaching Assistant and Early Childhood Educators' Appreciation Day

In 2014, the board of trustees declared the last Wednesday in October as the Peel Teaching Assistant and Early Childhood Educators' (ECE) Appreciation Day. This year, the recognition day falls on October 25, 2017. The Peel board appreciates the important work of teaching assistants and ECEs, and the contributions that they make in the lives of children, families and community members.

National Principals' Month

Throughout the month in October, the Peel board will recognize the contribution of our school principals and their impact on education in celebration of National Principals' Month. Starting Oct. 1, take a moment to thank your child's school principal who supports students, staff and the whole community every day. Let them know that that he or she is appreciated and that they are making a difference.

October is International Walk to School Month

According to the 2015 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card, about 91 per cent of 5-to-17-year-olds are not meeting Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines to get at least 60 minutes of daily moderate-to vigorous-intensity physical activity. These declining activity levels are linked to obesity, illness and chronic diseases (i.e., cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer).

Using active transportation for the school journey is one of the easiest ways for students to get regular daily physical activity. Managing time to allow for the walk or bike ride to school will become a positive habit that leads to children arriving on time, refreshed and energized for the school day. In fact, University of Illinois research has found that just 20 minutes of easy walking boosts performance in the areas of the brain that support math and reading achievement.

Walking to school also helps out the environment. Eliminating just four short trips per week can reduce emissions by up to 100 kg of carbon dioxide per year. Families that participate in active travel to school can prevent almost 1,000 kg of carbon dioxide per year and save money in fuel costs as well. Also, when more children walk to school and fewer parents drive their children, the areas near school zones become safer for pedestrians.

That is why our school will be participating in International Walk to School Day on Wednesday, October 4. On that day—and throughout the month, if you can—walk, bike, blade, scooter, skip or hop to school....but don't drive!

International Walk to School month is part of the Active & Safe Routes to School program. Visit www.saferoutestoschool.ca/ for more information.

How to prevent litter at school

Did you know that litter is a safety hazard, discourages development, lowers property values and costs money? According to the Region of Peel, litter can attract animals and insects, harm pets and serve as a breeding ground for disease.

Here are some tips for reducing waste at school:

- Provide your child with a litter-less lunch which could contain:
 - refillable water bottle
 - returnable, reusable or refillable drink containers instead of plastic bottles and cans
 - snacks and sandwiches stored in plastic containers
 - fruit that requires no wrap such as bananas, apples, oranges
- Put trash in the appropriate container. If a recycling bin isn't available, ask where you can find one and hold on to garbage until you can dispose of it properly.
- Reduce and reuse as much as you can before you recycle. Reuse plastic bags, the other side of a sheet of paper etc.
- If you see litter, pick it up!
- Set a good example. Don't be a litterbug.
- Take part in neighbourhood cleanups - litter prevention requires the community to work together.

Registration open – Continuing Education International Languages program for K-12 students

The opportunity to study a language in addition to English and French can benefit all students, society in general and an increasingly independent world, including:

- students with no prior knowledge of a particular language
- students whose first language is English or French and who wish to study their home languages as a second or third language
- students whose first language is their home language

The International Languages program is based on oral communications, reading and writing in languages other than English or French. Grammar and language knowledge are incorporated into each of the three skill areas.

Any student who is currently enrolled in a Peel District School Board elementary or secondary school is eligible to attend.

Classes operate each Saturday from mid-September to mid-June, except for holiday weekends and school vacations. Credit classes are 3.5 hours per day and run from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Elementary classes are 2.5 hours per day and run from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Registration is currently open. In partnership with School-day, Continuing Education offers an online, cashless registration process. Please visit www.peelschools.org/conted/il for further information.

Time for school - A parent's guide to regular school attendance

Elementary school is a wonderful time in the life of a child, a time of great strides in learning and in social and emotional development. Many things affect your child's success, from the quality of his or her teachers, to the makeup of the class. One of the most important factors is your child's regular and timely attendance.

Getting to class on time, and avoiding absences, are critical if your child is to get the most out of school. It seems obvious. But the fact is that elementary students tend to miss an average of eight or more school days during the year. What can you as a parent do to help ensure your child's proper attendance?

Is your child missing more? Why does attendance matter?

First, understand that getting to school—every day and on time—matters at every level, perhaps even more so in elementary school. That's because important learning occurs daily, right from the start of class. And because you establish patterns early on. By being punctual and

responsible, children are acquiring positive habits about school attendance. Some other things to consider:

- By being late, children miss important social time with their peers before school begins.
- Students who are late often feel embarrassed or self-conscious.
- Late arrivals can disrupt the routine of the classroom.
- Too many missed school days can increase isolation, as the child stands out from her classmates and misses opportunities to develop socially.
- A last-minute rush can be stressful for the child, and the child may arrive to school in the wrong frame of mind.
- Missing even five or 10 minutes of the day can make it harder for the student to understand the material being taught.
- Frequent absenteeism leads to gaps in a child's skills and knowledge base, cause the child to fall behind his peers and hurt his self-esteem.
- Absenteeism makes it tougher for the child to develop a good rapport with the teachers and makes it harder for students to demonstrate their learning to teachers.

When Time is Ticking

Few homes run like clockwork. The morning routine, especially, can be a mad scramble. But there are effective strategies for getting your little one up and out the door on time.

- Get your child to bed at a reasonable hour.
- Set realistic and consistent schedules and rules at home. Getting ready for school should be part of the child's overall routine, something that's expected every day.
- The night before school, do whatever is necessary to shave time in the morning, such as setting out clothes, packing lunch, and setting schoolbags at the door.
- Have a set morning routine
- If you're running late regularly, set your alarm to get up earlier.

Is it a sick day?

Children do get sick sometimes – they are still developing natural resistance to certain infections, their hygiene behaviours are still developing and germs spread more easily in a classroom. So some missed school is unavoidable, for the child's own well-being, and the protection of her classmates. But there are ways to cut down on sick days.

- Follow other healthy habits, from eating nutritious food to getting enough sleep.
- Some symptoms make school attendance uncomfortable, like a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea. But if you're unsure whether your child is sick enough to miss school, talk to your doctor.
- Some children pretend to be sick to avoid school. Ask yourself if the child's symptoms are vague, (i.e. a headache, upset stomach, fatigue), if your child tends to miraculously recover just after school starts or ends, or if the illness is happening during stressful times at school

or at home. Allowing your child to remain home when there's no real illness sets a bad pattern.

- Once you have reported your child's absence, keep the child in bed or doing quiet, low-key activities. A day off from school shouldn't be a holiday, it should be a time to recuperate from illness, so the child can return as soon as possible.

Set the right example

Children follow the lead of their parents. If you place an importance on regular and prompt school attendance, so will your child.

- Show interest in your child's education by asking about the school day, celebrating school successes, attending school events and parent-teacher interviews, volunteering at school, and communicating with your child's teacher. The more you value school, the more your child will.
- Provide a home environment that encourages learning and curiosity.
- Treat the school hours with respect. If you have to make an appointment for your child, arrange it before or after school or, if that's not possible, at the very beginning or end of the day.
- When it comes to planning family trips, some parents will factor in the schedule in the higher grades, but think little of pulling their child out of school. If anything, younger students can be affected more when they miss an extended period, finding it tough to relearn classroom routines and rejoin their peer group. Learning is cumulative, building on the skills and concepts that were introduced before. And this process is ongoing. Family trips can be wonderful learning experiences themselves. But if they must occur during the school year, please save them for scheduled breaks. We cannot reschedule final assessments so do not schedule vacations in January or June.
- If your child resists going to school, for no apparent reason, talk to him or her about any possible problems with the school, teacher or other kids. However, don't give in to coaxing, pleading or threatening and keep the child at home. That creates a bad precedent.

Need more information?

If you have any questions regarding any of the issues raised here about lateness or attendance, or if you're looking for other tips on getting your child to school, please talk to us. By working together, we can help support a more successful school experience for your child. Visit our website at www.peelschools.org.