

School Council Meeting

February 9, 2021

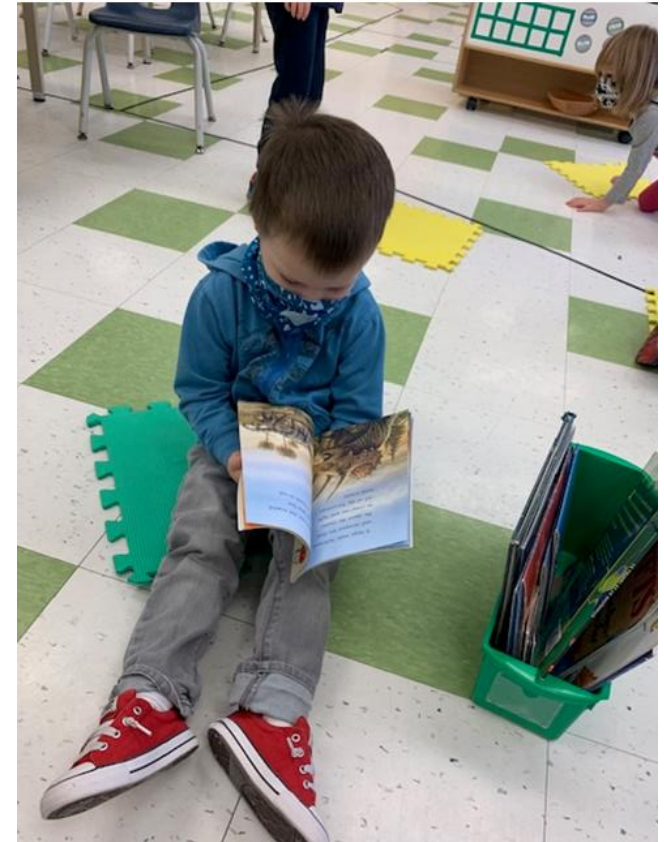


Student & Staff Report



Principal's Report

- Thank you for the snow recess items!!
- Thank you to all families for their support and work during the January remote learning period.
- Thank you for the generous donations of grocery gift cards, masks, mittens, scarves
- Remote learning platforms continue to be in place for all classrooms.
- Report Cards will be sent home with students on February 18.
- IEPs will be updated and sent home to families on March 26. Student and family input into the IEP review is very important.
- Family Day is on Monday, February 15. There is no school for students on this day.



School Routines

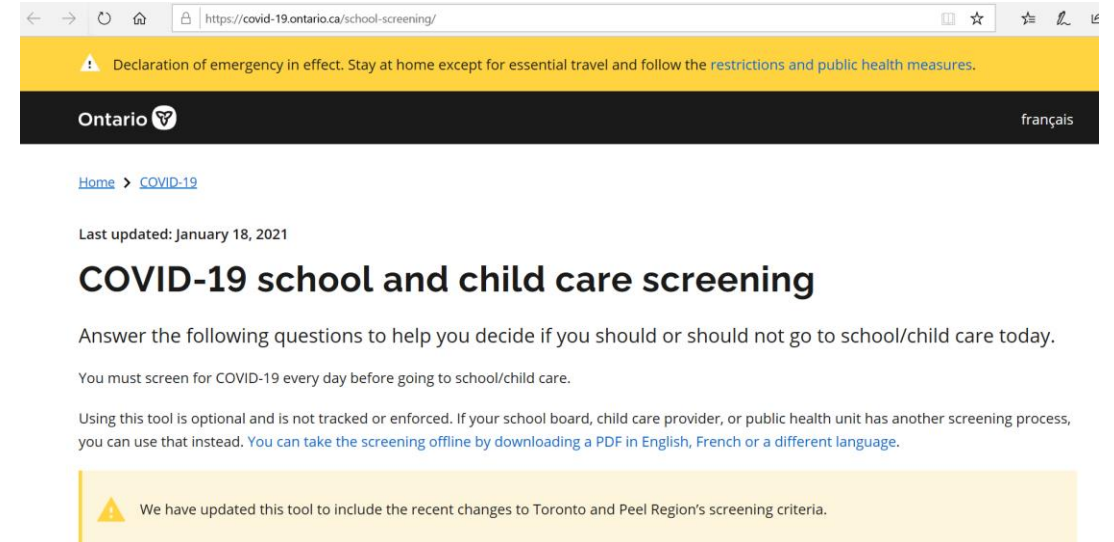
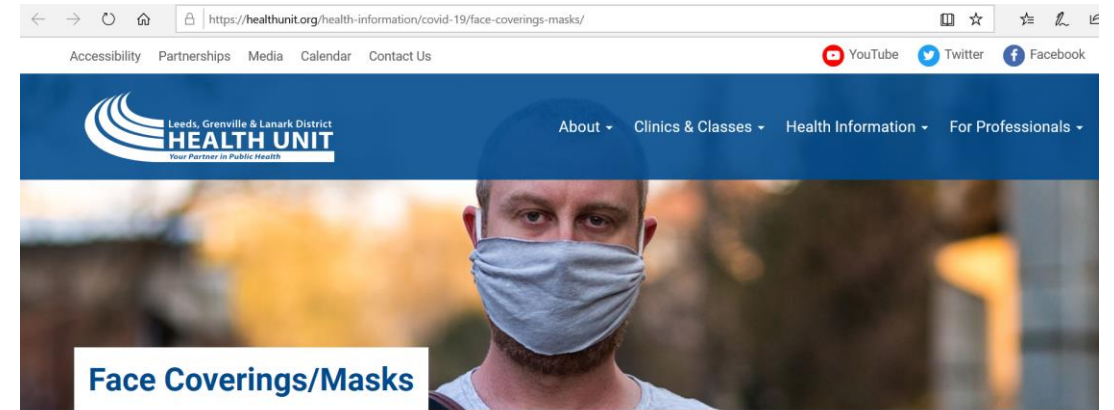
- Daily Screening for every person every day – parents complete daily on behalf of their child: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

- Masks:

- Grades 1-12 mandatory; Kindergarten – encouraged
- Masks can be worn under a neck gaiter or scarf.

<https://healthunit.org/health-information/covid-19/face-coverings-masks/>

- Masks are worn throughout the day – including recess and gym – when physical distancing of at least 2 meters is not possible.
- Mask breaks are incorporated into the school day
- Send extra masks to school with your child





Remote Learning Platforms

- Inclement Weather -Snow Days
In the event of an inclement weather day (school buses cancelled) ALL students will be learning remotely - asynchronously. The school will be closed to all students if the buses are cancelled. Students access learning materials from the class platform (TEAMS/D2L or use non-digital materials provided in advance by the teacher.
- School/classroom closures

Mental Health Supports

<https://smho-smso.ca/>

The screenshot shows the top of the smho-smso.ca website. It features the School Mental Health Ontario and Santé mentale en milieu scolaire Ontario logos. A navigation menu is visible on the right. The main banner is titled "Student Mental Health Action Kit" and "Practical resources to support student mental health during COVID-19". Below the banner are three buttons: "For Educators", "For Parents & Families", and "For Students".

Tip Sheet for Parents and Families



Supporting Mental Health and Wellness During the Return to School

Going back to school after a summer break can be a adjustment, even under normal circumstances. This year brings additional challenges and stress because of COVID-19. It's important to acknowledge that returning to school will look and feel quite different this year, whether it's in-person learning, remote learning or a combination of both. You can help your child best to know what to expect, be flexible when things are uncertain, and feel confident about the return to school.

Understanding stress

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected everyone in unique and varied ways. Many families have experienced financial employment, social and health challenges. Some have experienced isolation, fear, grief and loss. We have also all witnessed the public, a personal journey and the impact of a global crisis in our society during this time. For some, this has been very stressful and painful. Children and youth will be returning to school with their own COVID-19 story.

Children and youth who have experienced may be associated with feelings of anxiety. This is a natural response. Anxiety can show up in different ways. Your child may tell you that they are feeling fearful or overwhelmed. Or you might notice things like frequent headaches, trouble sleeping, irritability or emotional outbursts. Your child might seem withdrawn or overly tired or nervous. Being watchful for signs of anxiety can help you to provide support early, before the problem worsens.

There are two main ways we can help young people who are experiencing stress:

- Help them to find ways to cope with feelings of anxiety
- Find ways to help reduce the stress itself

Not all stress can be avoided, but sometimes we can reduce it. Having tools and strategies ready to cope with stress is important, as that we and our children can be less negatively affected.

Ways to support your child with the return to school

Take care of you, so you can be your best to support your children.

This has been a very difficult time for everyone. It's especially hard on parents, who have been juggling as many things these past several months. This includes supporting your children's learning at home, often while trying to manage your demands, staying on top of household responsibilities, caring for a family relative, etc.



www.smho-smso.ca



INFO SHEET

For Parents and Families

Noticing Mental Health Concerns for Your Child

Individuals and families have experienced the COVID-19 pandemic in unique and varied ways. For some, significant changes to daily routines, a sense of isolation and loss, and various other factors may have led to new or increased mental health concerns. Emotional and behavioral difficulties can arise at any time, and can affect anyone.

As families prepare for the return to school, it is important to consider signs that could indicate that your child is struggling with emerging or existing mental health problems. Identifying problems early, and providing caring support, goes a long way towards prevention and/or easing of difficulties.

You know your child best, and can notice changes in their behaviour or emotions. Right now, however, it can be difficult to know whether things you observe are just normal ups and downs associated with the pandemic, part of return to school stress, or related to an emerging mental health concern.

Here are some ways to consider whether your child might be experiencing a mental health problem, a red flag help. While we use the term "child" throughout, we recognise that your child may actually be a teenager or young adult. To make these signs, they are still your child.

How would I know that my child is experiencing a mental health problem?

Parents and caring adults may notice changes in behaviours and emotions that could be potential signs of a mental health problem. Ask yourself:

- Are these behaviours and emotions out of character for my child?
- Are they having a negative impact on my child's ability to enjoy everyday life?
- Are they having a negative impact on my family life?
- Are they getting in the way of my child's progress at school?
- Are these concerning behaviours happening more often?
- Are they more intense?
- Are they lasting longer?



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The infographic is titled "REACHING OUT" and features a green background with a white speech bubble. It includes several sections: "You might be thinking:" with three examples of common thoughts; "How do I start the conversation?" with two suggestions; and a call to action: "If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency department." It also provides contact information for the CONNECT to CONNECT helpline.

The infographic is titled "SELF-CARE 101" and features a blue background with a white speech bubble. It includes several sections: "EAT" with advice on healthy eating; "HYDRATE" with advice on drinking water; "SLEEP" with advice on getting enough rest; and "MOVE" with advice on physical activity. It also includes a section for "ENJOY" and a call to action: "If you or someone you know is in crisis, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest emergency department." It also provides contact information for the CONNECT to CONNECT helpline.


Developed by: A. Williams & Associates

KidsHelpPhone: https://kidshelpphone.ca/

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Get support right now through our texting service

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 **Phone**


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Live Chat is temporarily closed


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 **Resources Around Me**

Find a youth program near you

GO NOW →

We're here for you

Start typing to search 



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211 Ontario

Health, Social, and Community Programs & Services **Call 211**

Children's Mental Health Agencies (free services):

[Children's Mental Health Leads Grenville](#)
1-800-809-2494

[Open Doors](#) Lanark
1-877-232-8260

[Cornwall Community Hospital](#) SD&G
1-844-361-6363

[Valoris](#)
Prescott-Russell
1-800-675-6168

For adult services mental health, addiction, problem gambling visit:

ConnexOntario

1.866.531.2600
www.ConnexOntario.ca

LGBT Youth Line
1-800-268-3678
Text 647-894-4275

Hope for Wellness Help Line counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada.
1-855-242-3310
Or visit hopeforwellness.ca for online chat chat

Staying Safe, Staying Healthy

Stay-at-home orders, with or without school closures, feel different and more difficult for many of us in the winter months. Pandemic fatigue has set in – we are tired and just want to see life return to something that feels more normal. Sometimes it's helpful to remind ourselves that we are running a marathon – it is long, gets harder midway through, but we can pace ourselves and tap into strategies that help to keep us moving forward. We have made it this far and will do our best to push-on to the finish line.

What supports are you drawing on?
How have you coped thus far?
What do you need, and where can you get it, to keep going?



Below are some reminders about things that can be helpful to keep your head above water, manage in difficult times, and protect your wellness. Yes, you have heard these before, because these things matter! And there is help available if you are struggling to put any of these into place or feel completely overwhelmed.

Here are **8 ways to support your mental health** as we move through February and beyond:

- 1. Have a routine:** "What day is it today?!" Time feels different now. Schedules and demands change as workplaces and schools close then open, and access to stores and services shifts. *So. Much. Change.* Your routines or to-do lists will shift and adjust over time as well. Having a basic daily and weekly plan for the important things can contribute to a sense of control over your days, and a sense of accomplishment for getting stuff done (or at least trying to!). Start with wake-times, mealtimes, and sleep-times...the basics! See last month's Newsletter for more tips on the importance of creating routines (and balance) in our lives. All our Newsletters can be found on the [UCDSB website – Student Wellbeing/Mental Health/Mental Health Resources COVID19](#).
- 2. Find a special project:** This could be something you have put off doing, a plan to help someone else, volunteering (safely, while following public health guidelines), or learning something new. Need to organize your closets? Create a playlist for a friend? Shovel the snow for a neighbor? Go for it! A sense of accomplishment or of giving-back and practicing kindness contribute to wellness.
- 3. Move your body:** You don't have to work-out for hours every day, but paying attention to physical activity is important for overall health. Some of us find we sit more and move less right now, sometimes staying inside for longer hours due to cold weather. Can you fit in some movement during the day (indoor dance party maybe)? Or something that takes you outside into the sunshine for a quick walk? You'll feel better for it, physically and mentally. OPHEA has some excellent suggestions and [activities for home](#). OPHEA is a source of many activities for parents and our educators.



Kids Help Phone Call 1-800-668-6868 for support or Children and youth text TALK 686868 Adults text WELLNESS 741741

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School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) supports school boards across Ontario by providing evidence-based resources to help students, families, and schools remain resilient.

Check out these SMHO activities to try with elementary aged children



Follow us on twitter @uodsbwellness

Check out all the mental health and wellness resources at UCDSB's Learning Commons

8 ways to support your mental health—continued

- 4. Sleep well, eat well, and use safe coping strategies:** This means keeping to a sleep routine that gives you the hours of sleep you need, at regular times, and eating a balanced diet. It is much easier to get through the day and cope with stress when your body is properly fueled and rested. Check out this tip-sheet [about sleep](#) from CHEO. And if you find that you or someone you care about is using alcohol, cannabis, or other substances to cope, consider reaching out to services that can help you or a loved one to stay safer and manage risks. Our health units are a good place to start: [Lanark, Leeds, Grenville](#) or [Eastern Ontario Health Unit](#). You can also reach out to a community mental health provider or your family doctor if you are concerned.
- 5. Find something good in every day:** It is easy to feel discouraged, bored, stressed, lonely, and worried during these current times. Take time to note things that you are grateful for each day, despite challenges and no matter how small – a sunny day, speaking to a friend, a quiet cup of tea. A lot of people find that writing in a journal and noting "3 good things" each day is helpful for noticing and tracking bright spots during this pandemic.
- 6. Use screens wisely:** Devices can be very helpful for learning, connecting, and pursuing leisure activities (gaming, watching movies, surfing YouTube, etc.). But finding balance is key. Time on screens can also mean time away from other responsibilities (cooking meals; homework), other activities (getting out for a walk), and sleep. So, stay aware of when screen time might be interfering with putting some of the tips on this page into place.
- 7. Stay connected with others:** While this looks different right now and might not feel as rich as it has in the past, it is important to connect with others. Call a friend, find an online club, speak to someone when you are out getting groceries, say hello to people when you are out for a walk. Even small actions can help us feel less isolated.
- 8. Know your community resources:** If you need help because you don't have things you need (food, shelter, financial reserves); you feel overwhelmed by stress and worry or your mood is exceptionally low; your ability to practice self-care and manage even basic daily tasks have gone sideways; you are worried about someone else... **Help is available.** This tip-sheet for caregivers can help those who are worried [about child/youth mental health](#). These and other resources for mental health are shown throughout this Newsletter (and in every Newsletter). You can also contact your local school to request assistance. **We are here to help.**



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• UCDSB Wellness Newsletters:
http://www.ucdsb.on.ca/for_students/student_well_being/mental_health/mental_health_resources_-_covid-19

• You can also follow “UCDSB Wellness” on Twitter