GRACEFIELD SCHOONER

September 2011

Gracefield Public School

117 Bayview Drive
St. Catharines, ON, L2N 4Z7

Telephone:
905-934-1411
Fax:
905-934-1876
Email:
grf@dsbn.edu.on.ca
Web:
dsbn.org/schools/Gracefield

MRS. LISA DOYLE
Principal

MR. JOHN DICKSON
Superintendent
905-641-1550

MR. DALTON CLARK
Trustee
905-937-6960

Greetings!

A warm welcome back to all of you, I look forward to the years to come as the new principal of Gracefield! I hope you enjoyed your summer with family and friends, finding time to feel the sunshine amidst the raindrops and that you kept cool in the summer heat. I spent some relaxing time with my family, camping and house boating on the Trent-Severn waterway. I look forward to hearing the stories about your summer adventures.

Here we are, beginning another new school year full of hope and anticipation of the good things to come. I have heard so many wonderful things about this community and am excited to be here. I cannot express in words how warm and welcoming this community has already been! Thank you to all of the families that have introduced themselves over the summer. I look forward to meeting everyone. Please be sure to stop by the office or catch me in the yard so we can get to know each other.

Our enrollment continues to increase as we welcome new families to our Gracefield school community. As well, we welcome some new staff members. A complete staff directory is included in this newsletter.

A few updates regarding staff...
We are welcoming a few new staff this year. Miss Pagano, as the teacher of our 1-2 class, she is coming from Simcoe Street School and has been with the DSBN for the past 6 years. Ms. Gibson, who is taking on the role of Learning Resource Teacher; she will be with us in the afternoons, and is also working at Grand Ave in the mornings. We also welcome Mrs. Parker, an educational assistant assigned to the primary division. She is bringing 15 years of experience as an educational assistant.

Also, I'm not sure if everyone knows, but Mr. Teather retired at the end of June and we wish him the best in his retirement years. We do not have the position filled yet as it goes through a posting process, but we will continue to have a relief caretaker and I will be sure to let you know about the successful candidate when the process is complete.

I'd like to welcome all the families who are new to the Gracefield area. I'm sure that as you visit and become involved with your child's education you'll find that it is a great place to educate your child. Education should be an exciting partnership amongst the students, parents, teachers and the community at large. If all of these partners do their best I guarantee that every student will develop to his/her potential. Research indicates that children whose parents show a strong interest and support for their child's education will be more successful. If we expect our children to be the best they can be, we owe it to them to be the best parents and teachers we can be! Never hesitate to contact your child's teacher if you have a question, concerns or compliments. It has been my experience that volunteering is a way to understand the workings of a school. Consider becoming involved! This includes, yet is not limited to, volunteering in a classroom, chaperoning on a trip, attending School Council Meetings, and attending our school's special events, such as assemblies and sports activities, etc. Be sure to support the daily habit of reading by modeling reading for your child. Turn everyday activities such as planning and preparing meals or managing the laundry into a learning experience. With your support, this will be your child's best year ever!

I urge everyone to let me know how I can support you in your child's education. I am passionate about ensuring success for all! I encourage you to help me learn more about the school by filling out my online survey at www.surveymonkey.com/s/YT2PMFB.

The library continues to look better and better. The flooring was just completed last week and the movers came on Wednesday and our library teams and our school volunteers have been working very hard to try to get it set up for the start of the school year. Thank you very much to all parents who have volunteered so far! I really appreciate your time and support, we couldn't do so many things without your help.

Our teaching and support staff have been working hard to prepare the classrooms, lessons and materials for the children's return. Our relief caretaker, Robin, has prepared the building inside and out for our students' arrival. Mrs. Pearce has been completing all the administrative tasks in anticipation of the beginning of a new school year. I thank all the Gracefield School Staff for their efforts in preparing for a smooth opening!

Please be sure to attend our "Meet the Staff" Open House on Thursday, September 15, from 6-7 p.m. where you will have an opportunity to meet the staff over pizza and refreshments, and visit your child's classroom. Please R.S.V.P. on the last page of the newsletter so we can order the correct amount of food and drink.

Yours in education,

Mrs. Lisa Doyle
Principal

"A Great Place to Learn"

ACHIEVING SUCCESS TOGETHER

September is an exciting time for students because they are entering a new grade, usually with a new teacher or possibly a new division. Students and parents alike may be a little nervous about some of these changes with the new school year.

Parents, the following are some tips for success that you can implement to assist your child(ren) to have a successful year:

✓ Talk to your child(ren) about their first day. Nervousness about new situations and new people is a natural occurrence. Be positive with them and let them know that you and the school staff are here to help and are always ready to answer questions.

✓ Set a regular "homework time" which occurs, as much as possible, at the same time each day. Amounts of homework differ from grade to grade, and teacher to teacher, but a solid routine for any homework will only add to your child's success. This may include regular homework in the older grades such as projects or studying for tests. In the younger grades, this may be a time to share a favourite book with your child. Make sure to ask questions about how a student's day went at school.

✓ It's important that students have a quiet, distraction-free area. This needs to be well lit and comfortable with minimal interruptions. Remember that it does not need to be fancy, but conducive to a student's concentration.

✓ Review your child(ren)'s organizer each day for notes from the teacher. Organizers are a great communication tool for parents and teachers.

✓ Get involved! Please stay current with phone calls and emails to/from your child's teacher. Come in and volunteer at the school. Offer to chaperone on school trips when there is a need. Show interest in projects and work that is brought home to build your child(ren)'s confidence. Join the active and supportive School Council at Gracefield and support your child(ren).

GRACEFIELD REMAINS GREEN

In an effort to continue to reduce paper and photocopying costs, as well as be more environmentally friendly, we are asking parents to access our monthly newsletter and calendar on the internet. Individual classroom teachers may also choose to send their classroom newsletters or messages this way, or they may have a classroom website or blog. If you do not have access to the internet, simply complete the form at the end of this newsletter and we will ensure you continue to receive a paper copy each month.

USE OF PERSONAL TECHNOLOGY AT SCHOOL

Electronic devices such as iPods, MP3 players, and cameras are very popular with adolescents today. However, the staff of Gracefield believe that these items do not have a place in our school. Many of these items are very expensive, contain personal information and they are the target of theft. These items should not be brought to school as we cannot be responsible if they are lost or stolen. Photographs of students or staff are not permitted without the express written consent of the appropriate person.

Students may bring cell phones to school. *However*, doing so must be in compliance with the District School Board of Niagara's policy in this regard which states that

➜ all cell phones are required to be turned off as soon as students arrive on school property

➜ all cell phones must be stored in the student's backpack until dismissal

➜ cell phones are not to be used during the school day, including any features of the phone, eg games, texting, camera …

Students will be permitted to use the office telephone, for the purpose of communicating with home, provided they have the proper hall/phone pass from their teacher.

ACCIDENTS CAN HAPPEN

Each year a Student Accident Insurance Plan is made available for all students on a voluntary basis. The plan provides protection for **DENTAL DAMAGE DUE TO ACCIDENTS, FRACTURE BENEFITS AND OTHER IMPORTANT COVERAGES**, which are **NOT** covered under the Provincial Health Plan. Some parents may have Dental Plan coverage through their work but many of these plans are limited in one way or another, while this accident coverage is not. You should compare to make sure you have the coverage you need or desire.

UNDER THE EDUCATION ACT THE BOARD IS NOT PERMITTED TO PROVIDE INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR ACCIDENTS TO PUPILS, THEREFORE, the Board recommends consideration of this plan to any parent who wishes to obtain this kind of insurance. Although the policy has all the advantages of a group plan, it is essentially a direct contract between the parent and the insurance company.

Details of these plans are described on the application form which we should be receiving soon. If you require further information, you may contact **Reliable Life at Box 2046, Hamilton, L8N 9Z9 or call toll free at 1-800-465-0661.** If you wish to subscribe to this insurance, please complete the form and mail it *directly* to Reliable Life Insurance Company in the enclosed stamped envelope immediately, but preferably before **September 30th,2009. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH.**

You may also enroll online at www.insuremykids.com (**for all plans except the basic plan**).

If the enrolment form for the Student Accident Insurance Plan has not been received or it has been misplaced, please contact your school office.

FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

☎ Please call the school before 8:30 a.m. (or 12:30 for afternoon students) if your child is going to be absent. We have an answering machine that is on 24 hours/day. This will reduce the number of call backs Mrs. Pearce needs to make. She tracks the attendance of all our students twice daily. If we don't hear from you, and your child is not in school, we will make every attempt to reach an adult on your contact list to ensure the safety of our students.

✎ If your child is in danger of suffering a severe anaphylactic reaction to bee stings, nuts or other allergies, please inform the office immediately so that an emergency plan can be put in place to ensure that your child's medical needs are met immediately.

❖ Please inform the school if there are special custody orders for your child.

✑ Please do not send medication to school with your child or do not place it in your child's backpack. All medication, including over-the-counter drugs, must be stored at the office with your written instructions for administration. Please contact Mrs. Doyle for further information.

☻ Kindergarten students will be dismissed to their parents or a designated daycare provider only. Please communicate any changes in routine with Mrs. Mayer.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

Please observe the directional signs for entering and exiting our parking lot. As well, we are instructing the children to walk on the sidewalk and not *through* the parking lot. Please do not park in the areas not designated as such.

Some suggestions to ease the congestion:

☆ Walk your child to school. The exercise and fresh air is beneficial.

☆ Car pool if driving is absolutely necessary.

☆ When dropping off students, use the "kiss & ride" system of letting them off at the open gates at the (gym) west corner of our parking lot.

Your co-operation in making Gracefield School a safe place for your children is appreciated by everyone.

GYM SHOES / INDOOR SHOES

Our custodians have worked extremely hard this summer to make our school sparkle and shine and we have new flooring in our library. We can show our appreciation by ensuring that our students have clean shoes to wear inside the building. In addition, for safety reasons and to help develop positive attitudes and total involvement in physical education classes, students need proper footwear for the gym.

VISITOR SIGN IN & SCHOOL SECURITY

Most visitors are welcome to the school. Should you have to pick up a student early, or drop something off for your child, during school hours, we ask that you enter through the front doors and see Mrs. Pearce. Items which you are dropping off may be left with the office and we will call down your child at the next class break. Please write a note in the student organizer for the teacher if you need to pick up your child early. All visitors who wish to enter the school will need to sign in and wear a visitor's tag. Wearing the visitor's tag signifies to staff and students that you have stopped by the office before walking through the school.

At regular entry times, we ask that your child wait outside their assigned entry door and refrain from using the front door. At dismissal, if you are picking up your child, we ask that you wait outside your child's assigned exit door. Students should not exit or enter through the front door because of congestion in the hallway. Students who walk home with a younger sibling are encouraged to meet them outside their dismissal door. Kindergarten students will be dismissed to their parent or to a designated caregiver.

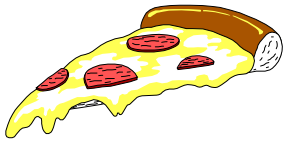
NUT ALLERGIES

We are asking students to only bring nut free snacks and foods to school. We are trying to make the school a "Nut-Aware, Nut-Free Zone" for several reasons. Peanut and nut allergies are usually severe and can be fatal. Even tiny amounts of nut particles or residue can cause someone with a nut allergy to have a strong reaction. Without treatment, this person could die within minutes. Gracefield School can only be a "nut free" school with your commitment and co-operation. Please read labels to see if peanut or nut products are present. Try to avoid products that do not carry a list of ingredients. If foods containing nuts are inadvertently sent to school, they will be stored at the office for a short period of time. If you do not pick them up, they will then be discarded. Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

MILK PROGRAM

Chocolate and white milk will be available at a cost of 75¢ for 250 ml. We will be accepting pre-orders every month. Payments will be made at that time for the whole month. Pre-orders will be delivered to the student's room just prior to the lunch break. The milk program will begin on Monday September 12th. Order forms will come home in the first day envelopes, please return orders by Friday September 9th. Thank you to the 7/8 class for organizing and delivering the milk.

HOT LUNCH DAYS



Once school gets underway, we will provide information from GSAC as to the availability of hot lunches. A schedule will be posted on the front page of our website.

Things to know:

If you have a child in Grade 3 or Grade 6, please do not book any holidays or doctor's appointments from May 23 through June 6, 2012. EQAO, the provincial assessment, will take place during this time span (specific dates for Gracefield School will follow). EQAO testing is mandatory for all Grade 3 and 6 students in the Province of Ontario

This year, our school photographer will be *Lifetouch Photography*. **Our school photo day will be Wednesday, September 28, 2011.**

Gracefield student organizers will be distributed the first week of school to all students in Grades 1 through 8. The Gracefield School Code of Conduct is included in the organizer. Please take the time to read through the organizer with your child to establish a clear understanding of the school's policies and procedures. The **cost of the organizer is $5.00.** Please send this in as soon as possible to your child's teacher.

EARLY RELEASE DAYS

Friday, September 23rd is our first early release day. Following that, our next one is on Friday, February 17.

- Students who walk to and from school will be dismissed at 11:35 p.m. (after period 3).
- Morning kindergarten students will be dismissed at 11:15 a.m. There will be no bus pick up at this time. Please make arrangements to have your child picked up at 11:15 a.m.
- There are NO AFTERNOON KINDERGARTEN classes that day.

Regarding students in Grades 1 through 8, on the dates list above, all buses and taxis providing service to the District School Board of Niagara will arrive at their respective schools three (3) hours earlier than the regularly scheduled bus departure time.

Historically, working on a fixed three-hour advanced schedule across the Board provides parents with greater clarity in knowing that their children should be arriving home three hours earlier than normal on these days. Also, as many of the school buses are now double or triple run, logistically we need to shift the schedules forward in order to service these days as safely as possible.

With respect to Junior and Senior Kindergarten Students, for the purpose of kindergarten safety, on these days it is essential that morning kindergarten students do not ride home on the grade 1-8 bus routes since these buses follow the afternoon school-to-home route. These routes may not go by or near the home addresses of kindergarten students who are scheduled on the mid-day school to home buses.

Morning JK and SK students may ride their scheduled buses to school on these days, but parents will be required to pick up their child at the end of the morning class. If a parent cannot commit to picking up their child, they should not send their child to school on these dates.

The municipal clerk of St. Catharines, who oversees the Crossing Guards, has been notified in writing of the 2011-12 School Year Calendar, and specifically the early release days. Crossing guards will be on duty for the student's morning trip to school and their trip to home following the three hour early release schedule.

GRACEFIELD SCHOOL COUNCIL

Gracefield School Council members would like to remind our returning families and also inform our new families that School Council elections will be held at our first meeting on ***Tuesday, September 27 at 6:30 p.m.*** Any parent or guardian of a child attending Gracefield School is able to become a member of School Council. Nomination forms are attached. Please return a completed form to the Principal by September 20. Gracefield School has enjoyed the participation of an active School Council. We look forward to the continued support of our parent community. Please make an effort to attend our first meeting of the school year.

School-Based Immunization Clinics

Did you know that every year in Canada, 1,400 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer and more than 400 will die from it?

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by a Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection. The HPV vaccine is an important medical advancement that makes cervical cancer a preventable disease.

Once again this year, the HPV vaccine called Gardasil® will be offered free to **all female Grade 8 students** through Niagara Region Public Health's school-based immunization clinics. In addition, the Hepatitis B vaccine and the Meningococcal vaccine called Menactra® will be offered free to **all Grade 7 students**.

Parent/student information packages will be coming home with your child in September. Clinic dates and times will be announced through your child's school.

For more information, speak to your school nurse or call the Vaccine Preventable Disease Program at 905-688-8248 or 1-888-505-6074 ext. 7425.

Niagara Region
PUBLIC HEALTH

TODAY'S CORRESPONDENCE

Today your child will bring home a number of important forms which need to be completed. Please return the completed and signed forms to your child's teacher as soon as possible (at least by Friday, September 9, please).

It is vital to keep student information up to date throughout the year. In the unfortunate event that your child takes ill or is injured, we will make every effort to reach you, but we also need additional names and numbers in case we cannot contact you. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

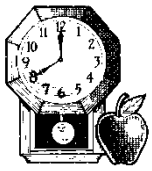
Not included in this package are:

VOLUNTEER DRIVER FORM: If you anticipate driving students to school functions this year at all, please request this form from the office as soon as possible. Each volunteer driver must complete this form each year (one form per driver, per vehicle, per year).

MEDICATION FORM: If any medication is to be dispensed at school, a form must be completed by the parent and the attending physician. All medication included on one of these forms must arrive at the school with the prescription label on the container, with the label information matching the completed form. Please see Mrs. Doyle or Mrs. Pearce if you have any further questions.

BELL TIMES

OUR SCHOOL DAY:



8:30 AM Supervision on the yard begins (students should not arrive before this time)
8:45 AM Bell rings, entry, and announcements
8:50 AM Instructional day begins
10:30 AM Recess
*** 11:15 AM JK dismissal
11:35 AM Lunch
12:35 PM Entry, classes begin
***12:45 PM SK Entry
2:15 PM recess
*** 3:15 PM SK dismissal
3:20 PM Dismissal
Students should leave the school promptly at dismissal. There is no yard supervision after 3:30 p.m.

DO YOU READ MAGAZINES?

We are going to be running a magazine subscription fund-raiser this fall. Our students are hoping to make the campaign very successful and your support is very much appreciated. Please save your magazine business for our school. Simply wait to **renew** your current magazine subscriptions, purchase **new** ones or send someone a **gift** through our campaign. The program is serviced by Canadian Community Reading Plan (www.ccrp.ca), a 100% owned and operated Canadian company. They have over 650 magazines to choose from and they guarantee low prices, product satisfaction and delivery. Our students benefit with a good portion of all sales staying with the school here in our community. Be sure and watch for the information that will come home with your child in October. Everyone involved would like to thank our community in advance for saving your subscriptions and making this campaign a great success!!

TERRY FOX

Please support this year's Terry Fox walk at Gracefield.
Start rounding up your change! Wednesday,September 21st bring pennies, Thursday nickels, Friday dimes, Monday September 26th quarters and Tuesday loonies and Wednesday toonies. The walk will be on Wednesday, September 28th at 2pm.

TENTATIVE CLASS ORGANIZATION AND STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

Mrs. Mayer..... Junior & Senior Kindergarten
Miss. Pagano ..... Grade 1 2
Ms. Plat .....Grade 2/3
Mr. Nazwaski.....Grade 3/4
Mrs. Morris .....Grade 5/6
Mr. Kelcey .....Grade 7/8
Mrs. Stieva .....French and Primary prep
Mrs. Gibson..... Learning Resource Teacher
Mrs. Heckel.....Itinerant Instructional Coach

T.B.A. .....Head Caretaker
Mrs. Gaudet .....Assistant Caretaker
Mrs. Parker..... Educational Assistant
Mrs. Unwin..... Educational Assistant
Mrs. Woods..... Lunchroom Supervisor
Mrs.Dobbin ..... Youth Counsellor
Mrs. Pearce .....Secretary
Mrs. Doyle.....Principal

SCORECARD HARRY NIGHT

Gracefield community night at Scorecard Harry's will continue this year. The first Tuesday of every month staff, students and their family and friends are invited to celebrate our school spirit and community partnerships with dinner/appetizers at Scorecard Harry's. A portion of sales will be donated back to the school. I look forward to seeing you there. Since the first Tuesday is the first day of school, I'm not sure if many families will make it out there, however the first Tuesday of October is Tuesday, October 4th.

SCHOOL WEB SITE: http://www.dsbn.org/Schools/Gracefield

For information on Combined Grades from the Ministry of Education click here.

To read our newsletter online, please go to the **SCHOOL WEB SITE:** http://www.dsbn.org/Schools/Gracefield

✂

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER DRAW

Fill in the answers to the following "skill-testing" questions, then hand into your teacher who will ensure it is placed in the draw box at the office for a prize

Name a new staff member: _____

When is the next Early Release Day? _____

When is the *Meet the Staff* event? _____

Name(s):_____

R.S.V.P. to Meet the Staff on September 15th.

# of adults: ____ _____ slices of pepperoni pizza (total for the family)

# of children: ____ _____slices of cheese pizza (total for the family)

✂

We Need Parent Volunteers! Can You Help?

Name: _____

My Child(ren): _____

Home Phone: _____ Other Phone: _____

Days I can assist: _____

I would like to help in the following areas *(please check as many as you wish):*

- ❑ assisting in the classroom, working with a small group of students
- ❑ library assistance, shelving and sorting books
- ❑ transporting students
- ❑ assisting with a book fair and/or Scholastic Book orders
- ❑ assisting with fundraising efforts
- ❑ being interviewed about my job as a _____
- ❑ being a reading coach, reading individually with students once a week
- ❑ being a mentor for students
- ❑ assisting with special lunch days
- ❑ assisting with lice checks of students
- ❑ assisting with Green Club, environmental initiatives
- ❑ other: _____

✂

September 2011 **WEB-BASED NEWSLETTER SURVEY**

✓ I/We prefer to receive a paper copy of the monthly Gracefield Review and school calendar, sent home with our youngest child.

Student's Name: _____ Teacher: _____