

Expectations

Students are expected to come to school ready to learn with the necessary materials. These include notebooks, worksheets, textbooks, pencils and pens. Teachers work with students to help them set realistic goals that encourage attentiveness in classes and work completion.

Learning English

School staff know it is difficult to learn English quickly. Students from non-English speaking backgrounds may need special programs to help them acquire the level of proficiency in the English language required for success at school.

There are five courses in English as a Second Language (ESL) and four courses in English Literacy Development (ELD) to help students learn the English language and to help develop their literacy skills. These courses are designated according to levels of proficiency in English, not by grade. Schools may also offer special subject-based courses for students studying ESL or ELD.

Parents need to help their son/daughter to be patient about learning English while encouraging him/her to stay with it. Most students make small gains each day. After a few months they will be more comfortable with the language even though it may take a lot longer to become fluent.

In order to learn the language, it is critical that students have as many opportunities as possible to practise English outside the classroom. Encourage your son/daughter to talk with friends, watch English television shows, read books, magazines and newspapers or go to movies so that they can practise their English skills in a variety of informal situations.

While learning English, it is important for students to maintain their first language. Parents can help by continuing to speak and read to their son/daughter in their first language at home while also reinforcing the learning of English. Being fluent in more than one language can benefit your son/daughter in many ways.

Parent Involvement

Since the school staff may need to contact the home about various issues from time to time, it is essential that the school has an up-to-date record of the student's home phone number, home address and the parents' business/work and/or cellular phone number. Parents are asked to inform the school as soon as possible if this information changes.

It is also important for each student to have an emergency English speaking contact person who the school can call in case the parents are unavailable. The contact person can be a relative, a neighbour or a family friend who speaks and understands English.

One of the main ways for parents to get involved is through the School Council. You are encouraged to

How can I get involved in my son/daughter's school?

speak to your school's principal about this group of parents, staff and community members. School Council discusses and advises the principal on many of the events, activities, policies and procedures that are related to your school.

Research has shown that where parents are involved, students are more successful in school.

Settlement Workers

Most schools south of Major Mackenzie Drive in York Region can put you in touch with a settlement worker who can:

- ◆ help you get settled in York Region;
- ◆ work with the whole family;
- ◆ speak a number of languages; and
- ◆ have a network of people to whom they can refer you for assistance with education, housing, health, legal issues or employment.



Welcome to our Secondary Schools



Board Office

60 Wellington Street West, Aurora, Ontario L4G 3H2

Switchboard

(905) 727-3141

(905) 895-7216

(Newmarket/East Gwillimbury)

(905) 722-3201

(416) 969-8131

(Toronto/Markham/Richmond Hill/Vaughan,Whitchurch-Stouffville)

Fax: (905) 727-1931

Automated:

(905) 727-0022(Aurora/King)

(905) 895-7227

(905) 722-6255 (Georgina)

(416) 969-7170

www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca

Secondary school begins in grade 9 and ends in grade 12. In Ontario, attendance at school is compulsory up to the age of 16.

School year at a glance

- ◆ September to June
- ◆ Two-week Winter Break in December/January
- ◆ Week-long Spring Break in March

In York Region, you may choose to allow your son/daughter to stay home for religious observances. Significant Faith Days for faith communities in our Board are published annually. If your son/daughter is going to be absent, please inform the school prior to the absence.

How will my son/daughter's education be affected by our significant faith days?

Materials and Books

Secondary schools provide all essential materials and books a student needs for his/her studies. There may be additional course fees for other materials.

School Costs

Some costs will need to be paid by students at the secondary school level. Some courses may have an associated fee that will be stated in the course calendar. In addition, there is a cost for a student package that includes a student identification card and student agenda.

Transportation

Transportation is not provided for secondary school students living within 4.8 kilometers of the nearest school or local transit service areas. Some students with physical or intellectual challenges may be exempt.

Registration

Enrol and register your son/daughter in school as soon as possible.

Go to the nearest school in your neighbourhood with as many of the following as possible:

- ✓ landed immigrant papers
- ✓ birth certificate
- ✓ immunization/health records
- ✓ proof of purchase of home or rental lease
- ✓ your home and work phone numbers
- ✓ recent phone bill indicating address
- ✓ cell phone numbers (where applicable)
- ✓ an emergency contact number (in the event the school cannot reach you)
- ✓ previous report card information and other academic records

It is recommended that someone who is able to speak or write English accompany you to register your son/daughter, but it is not essential. The school will assist you where necessary. The school will assess your son/daughter's academic needs and create a suitable timetable.

Attendance and Punctuality

- ◆ Punctuality and attendance are very important to ensure your son/daughter's academic success.
- ◆ Phone the school when your son/daughter is going to be absent or late.

Homework

Students in high school are expected to complete all homework assigned by teachers. Completion of homework is essential to ensure student success in school.

Names

Children have the right to keep and use their given names. It is your decision whether you wish your son/daughter to have an English name.

The School Day

School hours vary from school to school. Your school will inform you of the exact hours when you register your son/daughter.

A typical high school day consists of five periods, approximately 75 minutes long, one of which will be lunch.

School Organization

1. Semestered System

- ◆ Students study up to four of their courses each day from September to the end of January (the first semester), and up to four courses from the beginning of February to the end of June (the second semester).

2. Non-Semestered System

- ◆ Courses begin in September and finish in June.
- ◆ Students normally have four courses on one day and another four courses on the following day with this two-day cycle being repeated over the school year.

In both cases, students normally complete eight courses in the school year.

Field Trips

Field trips are supervised class visits outside of the school usually at a minimum cost to the student. They give students a learning experience that enriches their program. You will always be informed about these trips and must give written permission if your son/daughter is to participate. We encourage students to participate; however, if you choose to have your son/daughter remain at school, an alternate program will be provided.

Lunch

- ◆ All secondary schools have cafeterias where students may purchase a variety of foods such as soup, sandwiches, hamburgers, french fries, and salads. Students may bring homemade lunches as well.
- ◆ Due to the number of students and the size of the cafeteria, some schools will schedule the school day with multiple lunches. For example, there may be early or late lunches that start and end at different times.

Serious Medical Conditions

Parents are asked to notify the school office **immediately** of any serious medical conditions such as food and other kinds of allergies (anaphylaxis), heart condition, epilepsy, diabetes, etc., that your son/daughter may have. Schools will make special provisions for students who have these allergies (e.g. create a peanut-free environment). Please ask how your son/daughter's school will deal with these issues.

Clothing

Every secondary school in the York Region District School Board has a dress code that is outlined in the school's student agenda. Most students dress informally but that does not mean they have a casual attitude toward their schoolwork. School Councils (a group of parents, teachers and community members who meet regularly to advise the school) may advise upon the school dress code. It is not uncommon for traditional or religious dress to be worn in York Region public schools.

The Safe Schools/Discipline Policy

The Safe Schools/Discipline Policy provides the strategies that ensure a safe and nurturing school environment free from harassment for all students and staff. The policy outlines clear consequences such as suspension and expulsion for students who place the safety of other students or staff at risk. Any forms of harassment (racial, sexual, gender) are not tolerated and consequences will be imposed.

Note:

Policy #260, Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity Policy, has been developed to ensure that all students are welcomed, valued and validated in the York Region District School Board.

Requirements

Secondary schools prepare students for further education and employment. The secondary school program is designed to allow students to complete high school in four years; where appropriate, however, students may choose to study for more than four years to complete requirements.

Each course in a subject is considered a credit. The minimum mark to successfully earn a credit is 50%. Some credits (courses) are compulsory and some are optional. There are two additional graduation requirements – Community Involvement and the Ontario Secondary Schools Literacy Test (Grade 10). Your son/daughter's school will have all of the graduation requirements and course offerings outlined in their course calendar which can be obtained from the school's guidance office. You may also make an appointment to speak with a school guidance counsellor to clarify any questions that you may have regarding your son/daughter's completion of the graduation requirements.

Mark Reporting

In semestered schools:

- ◆ the school year is divided into two semesters: September to January and February to June;
- ◆ a Provincial mid-semester report card is issued to every student in November of semester one and April of semester two;
- ◆ formal parent-teacher interviews occur within a week following the mid-semester report cards; and
- ◆ a final Provincial report card is issued at the end of each semester.

In non-semestered schools:

- ◆ the school year is divided into two halves;
- ◆ a Provincial progress report card is issued in November and April;
- ◆ formal parent-teacher interviews occur in November and April; and
- ◆ a final Provincial report card is issued at the end of June.