

Happy Saturday RPPS families,

The school office re-opened this week and our class lists have been finalized. We are pleased to welcome Laura Thompson, our new office assistant. It's a big transition for us to return to RPPS together. Let's focus on a positive and safe return to school. Here are some suggestions:

- Talk with your child about returning to school. Focus on the joy of learning, seeing their friends and reconnecting with staff, and building routines;
- Practice hand washing;
- Practice wearing a mask;
- Keep the [Ottawa Public Health Self-Assessment Tool](#) handy for daily use. You can also learn more about [COVID-19 testing here](#).
- Check out these [Multilingual Resources](#) from Ottawa Public Health.
- For further resources to support your child, please visit [School Mental Health Ontario](#) and [KidsHelpPhone](#).

Here are some key RPPS updates:

September school routines. Parents and students are asked to review the [How to Train your Dragon guide](#) to familiarize yourself with our start-up routines.

Safe arrival. Our school yard is for use by staff and students during EDP and school day hours (07:00 - 18:00). We ask that parents remain off school property during the day, and at arrival and dismissal times. There are [designated student drop-off and pick-up spots](#) (Access 1 - 4 for gr 1- 6 students and gates on Springfield for kindergarten students). Make sure your child knows where you would like to meet them if you are picking them up after school.

First day routines. Homerooms will line up on the field with their class. Portables will line up on the pavement. All our staff will be available to help students find their way to homeroom lines. There will also be signs with the teacher's name on it. For younger children, one strategy is to write the teacher's name on a card for them to carry as they arrive.

Student supplies. While there is a school supply list on our school website, wait to hear from your child's teacher to avoid unnecessary materials. Students should bring a pencil case only on the first day of school; indoor shoes will not be required in September. Stuffed animals, toys and other soft material items should remain at home. The four most important things (label everything :) for students to bring are:

1. Backpack, snack and lunch
2. Mask
3. Refillable water bottle
4. Extra clothing for changing weather

Ottawa Public Health guidelines: All parents are asked to review the Ottawa Public Health guidelines for symptoms, testing and return to school ([English version](#) / [French version](#)). Parent should [screen their child](#) for symptoms every morning before school and ensure they stay home if they have symptoms.

Vaccinations. We are not able to provide specific information about staff vaccinations; as you will have seen from OCDSB communications, vaccinations are mandatory for staff.

School Ventilation: We have received another 9 HEPA filters for placement in designated areas around the school, including kindergarten and primary classrooms, staffroom, and the wellness room. The OCDSB has created [a school ventilation page](#) with further information.

Dragon Tales: [Click here to see Mme. Mace read Fox and Squirrel Make a Friend.](#) This week's installment of Dragon Tales is about friends who find good ways of playing together to make sure everyone feels included. We know our RPPS students will find a number of ways to play when we return.. You can find all the Dragon Tales [on our school website.](#)

What is your dragon name? Our dragons show many positive character traits. [Click here](#) for a way to pick a dragon name for your child ahead of the school year. Madame Mace is also known as Demon Swift Wings :) Students may look for 5 golden dragons who are hidden around the school once we are back in person.

This week's jokes are about dragons: 1) What do you do with a green dragon?... *wait until it ripens*, 2) What's big, scaly and bouncy?... *a dragon on a trampoline*, and 3) What is a dragon's favourite summer plan? ... *nothing, they just wing it.*

RPPS staff will continue to focus on professional learning on 7 and 8 September (PD days); our topics include literacy and numeracy, anti-racism and equity, bullying prevention, and health and safety. We all look forward to seeing our students back in person.

Madame Mace, Back-in-person Principal

Wellness strategy: We will be working together to help children re-adapt to in-person routines and learning. If your child is coming to school after a difficult evening, morning or weekend, you may send me an email with the subject: Handle with Care. I understand that you are not always able to share details. Nothing else will be said or asked. This will let me know that your child may need extra time, patience, or help during the day.

Watch our new [Welcome Back video!](#)

Updates to Health and Safety Measures

Since our last email, some of our safety measures have been updated. This includes:

- **Masks Required for Kindergarten Students:** The Board of Trustees has mandated that masks are now required for all Kindergarten students, in addition to students in grades 1-12. It's important for parents to know that our kindergarten teams are experts in supporting young children, and will be patient, caring and understanding in helping them learn to wear their masks.
- **Mandatory Vaccines for all OCDSB Staff:** The Board of Trustees has mandated that all OCDSB employees are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This decision was made as a protective measure for employees and students. [Learn more.](#)

- **Mandatory Vaccines for OCDSB Volunteers:** The Board of Trustees has also mandated that all OCDSB volunteers are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. However, please note, the use of in-school volunteers will be restricted at this time.
- **Extracurricular activities:** It is our intention to get in-person secondary extracurricular sports and clubs started as soon as possible this fall. Some may begin as early as the first full week of school. We are consulting with Ottawa Public Health on strategies to limit and mitigate any possible COVID-19 risk. The safe operation of in-person extracurricular activities requires consideration of cohorting, group transportation and volunteers. We want to spend the first few weeks of school helping students and staff settle in and ensure safety precautions are working effectively. We will provide a further update on extracurriculars later this month.

New School Ventilation Reporting

As part of our response to COVID-19, the OCDSB has invested millions of dollars in upgrades to ventilation systems. To help you better understand the changes at your school, we have produced a new school-specific report on ventilation systems and upgrades. [This webpage](#) provides information on actions taken across the district. At the bottom of the page, you will find links to school-specific details.

Important Student Transportation Changes and Cancellations

The Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) is experiencing severe driver shortages and have made many route changes and cancellations. OSTA has posted the full list of cancelled routes according to school [here](#). Families - please check the list and plan for alternative transportation to school. Parents should sign up to the [OSTA Parent Portal](#) to receive latest updates, including bus cancellations, and confirm the status of your child's bus route.

Traffic Safety

With the return to school, we wish to remind all motorists to be extra vigilant for children, slow down, and obey all school bus signals. This is also a good time for parents to emphasize traffic safety with children who may be taking a bus, walking or cycling to school. If possible, please consider parking a few blocks away from your school to help avoid congestion.

Take a look at the OSTA [walking route maps](#), which provides suggestions to help children walk to school safely.

Mental Health

While the return to school in September can be a very exciting time, it can also be challenging for some students and families. Read more about supporting mental health and wellness during the return to school in [this resource](#) from School Mental Health Ontario.

School Supplies

The OCDSB has developed [a common list](#) of recommended personal use items for students in Kindergarten-grade 3, and grades 4-8. You can view the list on our website. Please note, this list of supplies is **strictly voluntary**.

Key dates for parents

- 12 Sept - Firefighters' National Memorial Day (RPPS @ half mast 10 Sept PM - 13 Sept AM)
- 13 Sept - First day of class for all kindergarten students
- 23 Sept - RPPS Open House (virtual)
- 24 Sept - RPPS Terry Fox Run
- 30 Sep - National Day for Truth & Reconciliation (orange shirt day)

Key links for parents

- School office: 08:00 - 16:00 daily; rockcliffeparkps@ocdsb.ca or 613-749-6357
- Student absence reporting: 613-749-3992 / absenceRPPS@ocdsb.ca
- [School supplies list / OCDSB website school supplies](#)
- [2021-2022 School year calendar](#)
- [Request to change learning model](#) (OCV <-> InPerson)
- [OCDSB School Locator](#)

Key Covid links

- [Daily self-assessment for students](#)
- [OPH Out-of-province confirmation of vaccination](#)
- [City of Ottawa vaccination clinics](#)