



Westdale Secondary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON -WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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Principal: Mr. B. Goodram
VP's: Mr. S. Barr, Ms. S. Beauchamp-Wyatt,
Mrs. L. Schaap

Dear Students, Parents/Guardians of Westdale Secondary School:

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year at Westdale Secondary School. If you are an incoming grade 9 student or a new student to our community, we welcome you to Westdale, a school with more than 90 years of history, tradition, and excellence!

Included in this letter are some key pieces of information for all our students and families. We want to assure you that the staff at Westdale are committed to support you as you prepare for the path of your choosing.

At Westdale, we are committed to providing a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment for all our students, staff, and community. HWDSB's Code of Conduct informs our commitment to this work at Westdale: [Code of Conduct | Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board \(hwdsb.on.ca\)](#)

Bell Schedule:

- Westdale Secondary School is a semester school with a 5-period day. Senior (grades 11 and 12) lunch is period 3, Junior (grades 9 and 10) lunch is Period 4.
- New this school year, we are implementing a Day 1 / Day 2 schedule where periods 1 and 2 will flip. A Day 1 schedule will run on odd numbered calendar days (e.g., September 3,5,9,11,17) and a Day 2 schedule will run on even numbered calendar days (e.g., September, 4,6,10,12,18). Please see the new Day 1 / Day 2 Bell Schedule below.

DAY 1 SCHEDULE (Odd numbered calendar days – 1,3,5,7,9)	DAY 2 SCHEDULE (Even numbered calendar days – 2,4,6,8,0)	TIMES:
Period 1	Period 2	8:00am-9:15am
Break/Transition Time	Break/Transition Time	9:15am-9:20am
Period 2	Period 1	9:20am-10:35am
Break/Transition Time	Break/Transition Time	10:35am-10:40am
Period 3 (Jr. Classes/Sr. Lunch)	Period 3 (Jr. Classes/Sr. Lunch)	10:40am-11:55am
Period 4 (Sr. Classes/Jr. Lunch)	Period 4 (Sr. Classes/Jr. Lunch)	11:55am-1:10pm
Break/Transition Time	Break/Transition Time	1:10pm-1:15pm
Period 5	Period 5	1:15pm-2:30pm

Every Day Counts:

- With 88 instructional days each semester, regular daily attendance is critical as it ensures students have the time to learn, practice, apply and demonstrate their learning and skills with their peers and teachers.

HWDSB
BE YOU. BE EXCELLENT.

- As a school, we understand that there are factors that can make school attendance difficult, and we want to partner with students and families to support regular attendance. Please reach out to school staff for support – we are here to help!
- Students, please show respect for yourself, your teachers, and your peers by arriving on time for your classes.

Lunch Period Expectations:

- If remaining in the building for lunch, students are to eat in the cafeteria. There is no eating or loitering allowed in the hallways/stairwells as this is a fire code violation and we want to be mindful of classes in session.

Grade 9 Students – Welcome to Westdale!

- Grade 9 Orientation will run over two days. **Wednesday, August 28 is from 11:00 am –1:00 pm** and will be an opportunity for students to drop-in and pick up their HWDSB issued laptops. Students can head directly to the Library/Learning Commons for laptop pick up. Devices will only be distributed to students who have completed the Digital Tools Evaluation Permission Form, which is available in Parent Portal, so please do so ahead of time. Paper copies of the form will be available on site as well.
- On **Thursday, August 29** students will meet in the auditorium at **9:00 am and the day will run until 1:00 pm**. A pizza lunch will be provided. Students should bring a lock so they can select their locker on this day, and also bring along their laptop as they will be using it during orientation activities. We look forward to welcoming everyone!
- Our Student Success teacher, Krista Girolametto (kgirolam@hwdsb.on.ca), is always available to support all our students, but particularly to support our students transitioning into high school. Parents/Guardians, if your student is struggling, please reach out for help right away.

English as a Second Language Students (ESL):

- While we will have translators at key events, consider loading the Microsoft Translator APP on your phones as we can use this app for conversations and assemblies. For any other needs, please contact our ESL Department Head, Tracy Kuder (tkuder@hwdsb.on.ca 905-522-1387 Ext. 3771).

Student Services Information:

- 2024-2025 student timetables will be shared by HWDSB the week of August 26th.
- Grade 9 students are all automatically registered for the Grade 9 Orientation Wednesday, August 28, 2024, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and Thursday, August 29 from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Please check your email or the school website later this summer for more details and instructions for this in-person event.
- Guidance Counsellors will be available the week beginning Monday, August 26. Students can make a guidance appointment by accessing the Guidance course on the Hub and clicking on the “Book Appt” icon in the navigation bar. This platform will be made available to students beginning Thursday, August 22. Students may attend appointments in the Guidance office in-person or on MS Teams.
- **Counsellors are available to meet during the week of August 26th with students who meet one of the following criteria:**
 - *Student needs a timetable change based upon Summer School results*
 - *Student needs a course change based upon an unsuccessful attempt in a course last school year*
 - *Student’s schedule contains an error (e.g. five courses in one semester or two courses in one period)*
 - *Student’s timetable shows a SEEGUI code in any period*
 - *Student is missing a pre-requisite for a course in their schedule*
 - *Student requires a change impacting post-secondary admissions or goals*
 - *New registration to Westdale Secondary School*
 - *Student who has left Westdale Secondary School deciding to return*

- **All other course changes can be made beginning Wednesday, September 4, 2024. Priority will be given to students with incomplete timetables.**
- All students must attend the courses on their timetable until they are seen by a guidance counsellor. Spaces in courses are limited and we cannot guarantee that course changes will be possible.
- In late September, Guidance counsellors will be conducting an information session to support Grade 12 students with their planning for graduation and post-secondary opportunities. More information will follow in September.
- All Ontario Universities will participate in a fair-style (no presentations) university fair on the following dates:
 - October 5-6 from 9:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre
 - For more information about the virtual university fair, and virtual presentations, please use this link: <https://www.ontariouniversitiesfair.ca/>
- The Ontario College Fair is returning in-person on the following dates at the Enercare Centre in Toronto:
 - October 16 from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm
 - October 17 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
 - For more information about the virtual college fairs please use this link <https://ontariocollegefair.ca/>
- Westdale Secondary School will be hosting visits from a variety of colleges and universities beginning in late September. Information will be communicated with students, families, and posted on the Westdale Secondary School website this fall.
- Stay connected and up to date with all things school-related by following these links:
 - Westdale Website: www.hwdsb.on.ca/westdale/
 - HWDSB website: www.hwdsb.on.ca
 - Instagram: @whatsupwestdalewarriors

IPads / Laptops:

- Students new to HWDSB (grades 10-12) will be receiving an iPad for the year, in the first few weeks of September. Grade 9 students will be receiving a laptop device to support their learning. Many teachers are incorporating lesson plans and activities that are supported by technology as well as posting course materials, assignments and information on the Hub (online class learning platform).

Bus Pass Letters:

- Students eligible for a HSR School Hour Transit Presto Pass will be able to pick up their letter in the Main Office beginning on Monday August 26th from 9am to 1pm.

Assessment and Evaluation:

- Students are assessed and evaluated on the Overall Expectations of the Ontario Curriculum. The report card represents a student's achievement of Overall Curriculum Expectations as demonstrated to that point in time. Determining a report card grade will involve a teacher's professional judgement and interpretation of products, conversations, and observations. Evidence of the most consistent level of achievement of the Overall Expectations will also be utilized. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment and/or test will not be assessed on that assignment and/or test and will be required to demonstrate that expectation in an alternative manner. Please note that cheating on an exam will result in a zero on that component of the course.

Final Evaluations:

- When planning family vacations, please avoid semester-end dates in January and June as culminating activities and final evaluations occur during these times. Please Note: If there is an extenuating circumstance, (e.g., summer work contract or training camp) a discussion needs to occur with the administration of the school well in advance of the date and documentation verifying the circumstances must be provided.

Parent Portal:

- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to sign up for Parent Portal: A web-based attendance-tracking system that will enable parents to track attendance, view marks, and assist with the selection of courses. Parent Portal is also where parents can update student information and access documents such as the Media Consent Agreement. Parents with their photo I.D. can drop into the Student Services office starting in October from 8:00 to 3:00 to sign up.

SafeArrival Attendance Reporting:

- With SafeArrival, families report a student absence in one of three ways:
 1. Using the SafeArrival website, <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca/>. The first time you use the website, select Sign Up to create your account. Select Attendance then Report an Absence.
 2. Using your mobile device, download and install the SchoolMessenger app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store (or from links at go.schoolmessenger.ca). The first time you use the app, select Sign Up to create your account. Select Attendance then Report an Absence.
 3. Call toll-free 1-844-506-4350 to report an absence using the automated phone system. Using this method does not require setting up an account. These options are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can report a future absence any time.
- Please note: As always, parents are expected to report absences as soon as possible – and then you will not receive notification about unexplained absences. Calls for unexplained absences will be made home after 6 pm. If you have questions, please speak with our office staff. Find more resources on SafeArrival at <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/secondary/supports/safearrival/>.

Prevalent Medical Health Conditions:

- If your student has a life-threatening prevalent medical condition such as, epilepsy, asthma, diabetes and/or anaphylaxis, or a non-life-threatening medical condition that requires an emergency response, please contact the office so a plan of care can be put in place for your student. If your youth already has a plan in place, please call the school to discuss how to complete the renewal form.

School Council:

- Westdale School Council meets monthly, and meetings are generally held the last Tuesday of each month. Our first meeting is Tuesday, September 24th at 6:15 pm in the Library/Learning Commons.

Stay up to date:

- A great way to stay aware of happenings at Westdale is to look at and subscribe to our website which is updated regularly at www.hwdsb.on.ca/westdale ; even better, follow us on X (@WestdaleSS) and Instagram (whatsupwestdalewarriors) for additional sharing of school events and student/school celebrations. As well, important dates and events are displayed on our digital sign in front of the school as well as our new school calendar located in the cross hall outside of the Main Office.

I am honoured to continue to serve the Westdale community as Principal. As a staff, we are committed to providing the conditions for all our students to, as our school motto highlights, “Each Reach for the Stars in Our Own Way”. This timeless motto, created some 90+ years ago, is similar to HWDSB’s new tagline that encourages us to, “Be You. Be Excellent”. I am looking forward to supporting the ongoing work of our amazing staff as we nurture learning environments that honour the unique experiences, interests, and talents of our students.

As we look forward to being together in our beautiful school in September, I want to thank our Custodial, Facilities, and Office Staff who have worked hard over the summer months to clean, repair, and prepare our school for our collective return.

To our students, I encourage you to get involved, do your best in every activity you engage in, and demonstrate respect. Please know that there is always someone here to help you: Teachers, Educational Assistants, Guidance Counsellors, our

Social Worker, our Grad Coach, CYCP, Office Staff, and our Principal/Vice-Principal Team. This year, we are happy to be welcoming a 3rd Vice-Principal to our PVP team. Welcome to Westdale, Mr. Barr! As a staff, we can't wait to connect with our 1500 plus Westdale students that make this school such an exciting place to be. Please enjoy the rest of your summer and stay safe!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Goodram', written in a cursive style.

Mr. B. Goodram
Principal