



Westdale Secondary Community Newsletter

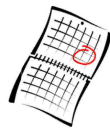
January 2026

Greetings

On behalf of our school staff, we are excited to welcome our students back after the winter break! We hope that students and families were able to find some time to rest, and engage in activities that bring joy, over the past couple of weeks. As we head into January, we have 12 instructional days remaining before semester 1 final evaluations. In the next few weeks, students will be engaged in end of semester tasks, including culminating activities. We look forward to seeing students demonstrate their learning and growth from this past semester.

Sincerely,
Brian Goodram, Principal

Important Calendar Dates



Date:	Event(s):	Audience:
<i>Wednesday Jan. 7th</i>	Executive Functioning Lunch and Learn for Jr. Students (P. 4; Rm. 1062)	Grade 9/10 students with an Individual Education Plan
<i>Thursday Jan. 8th</i>	Co-Op Career Fair (TF2 and TF3; Library/Learning Commons)	Students enrolled in semester 1 Co-Op
<i>Wednesday Jan. 14th</i>	Quiet Days begin (through Final Evaluations); see Other News for details	All students
<i>Thursday Jan. 15th</i>	Grade 9 Course Selection Information Session	Incoming Grade 9 (Class of 2030)
<i>Tuesday Jan. 20th</i>	Last Instructional Day of Semester 1	All Students
<i>Wednesday Jan. 21st</i>	Period 1 Final Evaluations (9am start)	All Students
<i>Thursday Jan. 22nd</i>	Period 2 Final Evaluations (9am start)	All Students
<i>Friday Jan. 23rd</i>	Period 3 & 4 Final Evaluations (9am start)	All Students
<i>Monday Jan. 26th</i>	Period 5 Final Evaluations (9am start)	All students
<i>Tuesday Jan. 27th</i>	Make Up Evaluation Day School Council (6:15pm; Library/Learning Commons)	Students requiring an additional evaluation day / opportunity Parents/Guardians
<i>Wednesday Jan. 28th</i>	PA Day (no school)	All students
<i>Thursday Jan. 29th</i>	Future Readiness Day	All students
<i>Friday Jan. 30th</i>	First Day of Semester 2	All students

Shout Outs / Good News



Gift and Give: The Westdale Way:

Thank you to Ms. Venizelos and Ms. O’Leary for their leadership with the Holiday Hamper / Gift Card initiative in support of Westdale students and families. On Dec. 17th, Holiday Hampers (filled with groceries, toiletries, personalized presents, and gift cards) were delivered to over 50 families. As with last year, our community responded generously with funds and gift cards. Once again, a community donor who wishes to remain anonymous, individually donated \$4,000 worth of grocery gift cards. Collectively, our school community raised over \$13,000! Thank you to all who donated their time and/or resources to contribute to this impactful program.



Little Women Musical:

Thank you to Mr. Iachelli for his tireless work in promoting and instilling a love of theatre arts at Westdale. This past month, Westdale Theatre performed a number of shows of the musical “Little Women”, including matinee shows for students from Westdale’s elementary associate schools. Once again, the production was a success and created lasting memories for many students and families. Thank you to Ms. Baboudjian for the many hours supporting the front of house, Mr. Wilson for his work behind the scenes with the stage crew and set construction, and to Ms. Vivian for her wonderful decoration of the set. As you can see from the set on the stage, the production was professional quality! We look forward to the 2026 production!



Hamilton Basket Brigade:

Thank you to the Hamilton Basket Brigade for their continued support in providing warm winter clothes (jackets, boots, hats, gloves) for students in need and to Ms. Nicosia for her ongoing work with the charity to identify and advocate for our students. This year, Bernie Custis Secondary, Kanetskare Elementary and Strathcona Elementary Schools were also fortunate to receive this support. Warm clothing is available in our walk-in closet at the school. If there is a student in need, please contact the school and staff will support the student(s) in accessing clothing within the space. As with our other supports (e.g., nutrition program), access is universal / barrier-free.



Unified Sports:

Thank you to Ms. Adachi, Mr. Francis, and the PLF4M1 Leadership Class for organizing a Unified Sport Basketball tournament for student-athletes from Westdale, Bernie Custis, Nora Frances Henderson, and Orchard Park secondary schools. Unified Sports integrates individuals with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities on teams for sport training and competition to promote social engagement and development. As you can see from the photo, the event was joyful and represented the true beauty of sport!



Boys Waterpolo Champions:

Congratulations to the Boys Waterpolo team for winning the City Championship after defeating the Dundas Valley Gryphons in the final. Thank you to Ms. Adachi and community coaches Ms. Tonogai and Mr. Sardo for their time supporting the student athletes. Way to go Warriors!



Other News



Semester 1 Final Evaluations:

The Ministry of Education document, *Growing Success: Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting in Ontario Schools* (2010), informs assessment and evaluation practices across the province. *Growing Success* states that 30% of the final grade of secondary courses is based on a final evaluation administered at or towards the end of a course. Final evaluations are based on evidence from one or a combination of the following: an examination, a performance, culminating activity or task, an interview, essay, and/or another method of evaluation suitable to course content.

As shared in the “Important Calendar Dates” section, Quiet Days begin on January 14th. For the five instructional days before final evaluations and through to the end of the semester, there are no extra-curricular (e.g., athletics) or co-curricular (e.g., clubs) activities during this time so students can focus on their course work, including preparation for, and completion of, final evaluations.

During the Final Evaluation period (Jan. 21,22,23,26), all students will participate in evaluation activities for at least 75 minutes per course, with attendance taken each day. Students are expected to complete a portion of the final evaluation during these days. Educators will determine and communicate in advance, the activities occurring during these final evaluation days. At Westdale, all final evaluations will begin at 9am, unless alternative times are communicated by the classroom teacher to their students. January 27th is reserved as a final evaluation make up day, in the event of inclement weather (e.g., Board wide snow day), or previous individual absences on preceding evaluation days. As well, this day may be used to support student success opportunities (e.g., task completion, assessment re-takes, credit rescue) and will be pre-arranged by the classroom teacher and student/family, as appropriate.

As shared in the calendar and our December newsletter, January 29th is scheduled as a Future Readiness Day. This is a regular instructional day where students will attend their semester 1 classes, with attendance taken each period. During class periods, teachers will review and celebrate learning from the semester with students, including feedback from final evaluations.



Parking:

As shared in previous communications, there is no student parking permitted in the school lot. Additional signage has now been posted throughout the lot to remind students of this restriction, in addition to individual reminders and PA announcements. Beginning this month, By-Law Officers will be contacted and tickets may be issued to any unauthorized vehicles parked in the lot. Students are asked to park in approved areas surrounding the school.



Hamilton Public Health Communication:

The following information and graphics are shared for students and their guardians from the Vaccine and Infectious Diseases teams at Hamilton Public Health Services:

Reporting your child's vaccines for school:

Did you know parents and guardians need to report their child's vaccines to public health? Hamilton Public Health Services uses this information to respond to cases and outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases. Up to date vaccine records helps Hamilton Public Health Services respond quickly and prevent further spread of disease and protect the health of children attending schools. Visit [Hamilton.ca/Vaccines](https://hamilton.ca/Vaccines) to report the following vaccinations: Diphtheria, Measles, Meningococcal, Mumps, Pertussis, Polio, Rubella, Tetanus, Varicella

Respiratory Season:

It's respiratory illness season in Hamilton! We are seeing an increase in respiratory infections in our community, such as influenza (flu), COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). Respiratory illnesses spread easily from one person to another and can make people very sick. Especially at risk, are those with weakened immune systems, seniors, infants, young children, and people who are pregnant.

We ask that you use a multi-layered approach to protect yourself, your family, and our community from respiratory illnesses. This includes ensuring that the whole family is up to date on recommended respiratory vaccines.

Below are two infographics that can help you protect yourself, family, and our community. Visit [Hamilton.ca/ProtectYourself](https://hamilton.ca/ProtectYourself) to learn more or call 905-540-5250 for assistance to book an immunization.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND THOSE AROUND YOU FROM RESPIRATORY ILLNESS

Use multiple layers of protection to reduce your risk of respiratory illness for yourself & others



Stay up to date with all of your vaccinations



Screen daily for respiratory symptoms & stay home if sick



Cover your coughs, sneezes & avoid touching your face



Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer



Clean and disinfect surfaces & shared items



Wear a tight-fitting, well-constructed mask in indoor public settings














Choose well-ventilated indoor spaces or spend time outdoors

FALL RESPIRATORY IMMUNIZATIONS

Use multiple layers of protection to reduce your risk of respiratory illness for yourself and others

Immunization is the best way to protect yourself and others — and there's more you can do. Stay home when you're sick, wash your hands often, cover your coughs and sneezes, clean high-touch surfaces, wear a well-fitting mask in crowded indoor spaces, and spend time outdoors and keep indoor spaces well-ventilated

	COVID-19	Influenza	RSV
 Infants & Children	 6 months and older	 6 months and older	Infants born after April 1, 2025 and up to 8 months of age during the RSV season (October 1st, 2025 – March 31st, 2026) Infants 8 to 24 months of age may be eligible if they meet high-risk criteria
 Pregnant People			People between 32-36 weeks pregnant
 Adults 18 - 59 years			Eligible if pregnancy criteria is met
 Adults 60+ years			Some seniors aged sixty and older, and all seniors seventy-five and older. One dose provides multi-year protection, so individuals who received the vaccine last year do not need to be vaccinated again

To find out if you are eligible for fall respiratory immunization, call your family healthcare provider or Hamilton Public Health Services at 905-540-5250 about immunizations for yourself and your family. Visit Hamilton.ca/ProtectYourself and Hamilton.ca/FallRespiratoryVaccines

[hamilton.ca/FallRespiratoryVaccines](https://Hamilton.ca/FallRespiratoryVaccines)

