



TDSB Elementary Virtual School Family Newsletter

Happy New Year to all Elementary Virtual School families!

While this year is off to a challenging start, we hope that all students and families are managing well under the current circumstances.

We continue to hear about great things happening in classrooms and are impressed by how well students have persevered. On behalf of all Elementary Virtual School staff we would also like to thank parents/guardians for your ongoing partnership as we continue to navigate the online learning environment together.

For more information and updates, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/virtualschool and follow along on Twitter @tdsbvs.

Mental Health and Well-Being: Finding Calm

Finding calm in our daily lives can be challenging, especially when we're online so much to participate in virtual learning. Calmness is an important part of taking care of yourself - taking a moment for ourselves helps refocus our attention and restore our energy.

Here are a few ideas from [School Mental Health Ontario](#) to find calm in your day.

If you have **one minute**:

Get grounded. Pause. Feel your feet in your shoes. If seated, lightly push your feet against the floor.

Recall. Who is someone that makes you smile? Bring them to mind for a moment or two.

If you have **five minutes**:

Say thank-you. Text a friend and thank them for something they did for you.

Listen. Have a favourite song that you listen to when relaxing? Press play!

Be in the moment. Find a free guided mindfulness/meditation online. Find a style which suits you.

Tidy up. Set your timer for 5 minutes and take a break to tidy up your workspace.

If you have **10 minutes**:

Journal. Write down 10 things you are thankful for.

Sip. Savour. Prepare and enjoy a cup of your favorite tea or other beverage.

Walk It Out. Take a stroll around the block.

Dance. Have a favourite song that makes you want to move. Press play. Repeat.

If you have **30 minutes or more**:

Phone A Friend. Ask them how they are feeling. Share your thoughts and experiences too.

Sweat. Walk, run, weights. You choose.

Stretch It Out. Find a [free yoga class online](#).

Laugh. Watch a funny movie, show or YouTube video.

Check out other [resources to support your mental health and well-being](#).



TDSB Online Learning: Google Meet & Zoom Safety Features

Student safety is a priority at the TDSB and we are doing everything we can to ensure the security of all online learning sessions and the safety of students and staff while participating.

All TDSB teachers, principals and vice principals are aware of the necessary measures to take while utilizing Google Meet or Zoom web conferencing tools and implement the following security measures to prevent unwanted persons from entering class meetings:

- **Google Meet:** The host/teacher can disable non-TDSB people from entering meetings. They can also disable screen sharing and chat for participants, if necessary.
- **Zoom:** The host/teacher can enable waiting rooms and prevent non-TDSB people from entering meetings. There are also several security controls available (e.g. muting, removing participants, etc.) within the meeting itself.

If a teacher and/or class experiences any security issue during a Google Meet or Zoom session, the Principal and IT Services are notified immediately so that the issue can be investigated and support provided. In this time of online learning, we must all remain diligent and continue to work together to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Attendance and Safe Arrival

As a reminder, implementation of the automated daily call-outs to support the tracking of student attendance has been postponed. In light of the current declaration of emergency in Ontario, we do not want to cause families additional stress during a time when everyone is working to balance life, work, remote learning, childcare and countless other things. All teachers continue to take attendance twice daily. More information will be shared once a start date has been confirmed.

Virtual Schools Staff Directories

Virtual School administrative team directories are available online and are updated on an ongoing basis. A number of new staff have been welcomed to the teams this January. Please continue to refer to the links shared below for the latest directories. Elementary Vice-Principal and Principals in each Learning Centre have been designated by grade.

[Learning Centre 1 Virtual Elementary School](#)
[Learning Centre 2 Virtual Elementary School](#)
[Learning Centre 3 Virtual Elementary School](#)
[Learning Centre 4 Virtual Elementary School](#)

REMINDER: Virtual School Code of Conduct

While virtual learning is taking place at home, the same responsibilities and expectations of teachers, students and parents/guardians apply as for in-person learning. This includes existing board policies and procedures such as the [TDSB Online Code of Conduct](#).

Please also review the [TDSB Virtual Schools Code of Conduct](#), which provides guidelines and expectations for schools/educators, students and parents/guardians.



January is Tamil Heritage Month

Tamil Heritage Month is recognized nationally since October 2016, provincially since March 2004 and by the TDSB since January 2016.

The month of January was chosen as it coincides with one of the most important celebrations for Canadians of Tamil heritage, the Thai Pongal harvest festival. Millions of Tamil people around the world irrespective of their religion celebrate Thai Pongal and offer thanks for an abundant harvest.

This year, the chosen theme selected by the volunteer planning committee is **உண்மை - உரிமை - ஒற்றுமை: Truth - Rights - Unity. Unmai (உண்மை)** recognizes that our lived experiences are our truths and these truths shape our understanding of the world around us. [Learn more.](#)

Optional Attendance for 2021-22

Earlier this month, families were sent an email communication to provide clarification on how to apply for [Optional Attendance](#) under the constraints of the current provincial State of Emergency circumstances. Adjustments to this process will ensure that all students/families who wish to apply to another school or program for the 2021-2022 school year, are able to do so. [Read More.](#)

Kindergarten Registration

February is Kindergarten registration month at the TDSB! For more information and to learn about registration options this year, please visit www.tdsb.on.ca/kindergarten.

Virtual School in the News

Check out some exciting stories about the TDSB Elementary Virtual School:

- [CTV: Front-line workers join Grade 1 virtual class](#)
- [CTV News at 6](#)
- [CBC Metro Morning: Virtual gym class gets creative](#)

Technical Issues

To access virtual learning IT support, visit: www.tdsb.on.ca/In-Person-Learning/Student-Virtual-Learning-IT-Support

Ongoing Professional Learning

Teachers continue to take part in professional learning opportunities across the four Virtual School Learning Centres, including the following examples:

- Ongoing Individual Coaching-Mentoring
- Early Reading Intervention Training
- Reading for Inclusion
- Assistive Technology
- Equity and Inclusion in Core French
- New Literacy Resources in French Immersion
- Arts Workshops
- Teen Health and Wellness
- Coding for Beginners
- And many more!