



SCHOOL COUNCIL

NEWSLETTER

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BEGINNING *of the New Year*

The beginning of the new year is an excellent time to take stock of the successes and challenges that your school council has gone through for the first half of the school year.

If you had a formal plan, did you meet your goals? If you did not have a formal plan, but, had discussed how far you had hoped to get in the first half of the year, this is a good time to consider if you accomplished your plans.

Here are some tips on taking on the second half of the school year:

PUT TOGETHER A “TO DO LIST” FOR THE BALANCE OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

- Divide up the work so that you avoid volunteer burnout and accomplish more.
- Assess the effectiveness of the council’s communication with the school community and look at ways to improve it in the second half of the year.

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and

tinlids

BOOKS

ARE PROUD TO
ANNOUNCE THEIR
PARTNERSHIP TO
SUPPORT PARENTS
TO ENGAGE IN THE
EDUCATION AND
IMPROVE THE LITERACY
SKILLS OF THEIR
CHILDREN.

*Watch for exciting
events and resources
coming soon!!*

VANISHING VOLUNTEERS

The mid-way point of the school year can often see a reduction in volunteer participation in school and school councils. What can be done to keep volunteers involved and enthusiastic? Here are some ideas:

- Recruit all year, keep volunteers signing up!
- Show some appreciation
 - Write some thank you notes
 - Put a thank you in the school newsletter, be specific about a project they helped with or special talent they contribute
 - Publicly recognize volunteers at school events.

ENCOURAGE RECRUITERS

- Get volunteers to invite a friend to the next meeting.
- Encourage current volunteers to talk about the value they get from being involved with other parents when they see them in a social setting.

TALK ABOUT THE BENEFITS

- Remind parents about the benefit to their child or the school community when they are engaged with their child or school.
- Consider putting an article about the research on the value of parent engagement in the school or council newsletter.

ASK TEACHERS AND STAFF FOR LEADS

- Teachers may know of a parent who is engaged with their child and may be interested in attending school council meetings.

SCHOOL Councils

The key to continuous engagement in a school council is to make every meeting of value to those who attend. When you schedule a topic to be presented or discussed at a meeting, it is imperative that you communicate the agenda to the entire school community. This allows parents who may have an interest in the topic to attend. Often when they see that coming to a meeting is informative and empowers parents to play an important role at school, they will keep coming back.

Below are just a couple of tips that might help your council to continuously attract members;

1. Invite special guests/speakers to speak to parents on topics that are important to them such as:
 - School bus safety
 - EQAO testing and preparation
 - Anti-bullying/cyber-bullying
 - Playground safety
 - Tips for healthy lunches – public health
2. Use time wisely
 - Be disciplined and use a well prepared agenda
 - Do detailed work in committees

- Keep people on track – don't let one person take over the meeting
3. Consider changing up meeting dates and times to see if more parents are available to attend.
 4. Put out the “Welcome Mat” – the mid-way point of the school year is a great time to send out a new message welcoming parents to participate in the school council.

MID YEAR COUNCIL REVIEW

Halfway through the school year is the time to:

1. Review your finances
 - Are you where you expect to be?
 - Do you need to do another fundraiser to meet your goals?
 - If you have excess funds, develop a plan to use them effectively
2. Are any members showing signs of burnout? If yes, are there other members who could lighten their load?
3. Focus on parent engagement as a priority.
4. Reinvigorate the group !! Now is a great time for a group activity such as a pizza night, social etc.



***NOW IS THE TIME TO BEGIN SUCCESSION
PLANNING FOR EXECUTIVE ROLES!!
SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE AND
KNOWLEDGE WITH FUTURE LEADERS.***



GET TO KNOW

your Child's Teachers

Teachers have very important roles in a child's life. They mentor, encourage and inspire every single day. They are also certified and qualified professionals who are governed by the Ontario College of Teachers. The College can help you get to know your child's teacher better.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

Students benefit from great teaching and the excellent preparation of teachers and teachers benefit from well-informed and involved parents.

Here are three easy ways to connect with the College:

FIND A TEACHER:

Search the College's public register and see where your child's teacher received their teacher education, what additional programs or

specialist qualifications they have, and whether they're in good standing with the College. You will see why we can all take great pride in teacher professionalism in Ontario. In those rare cases, where College members have faced disciplinary action or who have limitations on their teaching certificates, we record that information too.

THE STANDARD:

Sign-up for our e-newsletter geared specifically to parents and members of the public.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS:

Learn about the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession (care, trust, integrity, and respect) and see the Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession to understand how teachers' good work is inspired and guided.

Within our province, the Ontario College of Teachers is one of about 40 self-regulating organizations that govern professionals such as doctors, nurses, lawyers, engineers and early childhood educators.

Governing almost 243,000 members makes us one of the largest such organizations in Ontario.

Established in 1997, the College exists to serve the public interest by regulating Ontario's teaching profession. By law, every teacher who works in a publicly funded school or school system in the province must be a member of the Ontario College of Teachers.

The role of the College is to:

- Set the standard for great teaching
- Approve the programs that people take to become teachers and to remain current throughout their careers
- License teachers who meet Ontario's high expectations for certification
- Investigate complaints against those who cross professional boundaries

The College's work is open and accessible. It's all part of protecting the public interest – in other words, your children, their welfare, and opportunities for learning. Visit the College website at www.oct.ca to learn more about how the Ontario College of Teachers sets the standard for great teaching. Please note that all materials, presentations and resources produced by the Ontario College of Teachers are also available in French.

Visitez notre site à www.oceo.ca pour découvrir comment l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario fixe la norme pour un enseignement de qualité. Veuillez noter que tous les documents, présentations et ressources de l'Ordre sont également disponibles en français.



Parents
ENGAGED IN EDUCATION

and



THE TORONTO ARGONAUTS

**ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE
THEIR PARTNERSHIP TO
SUPPORT PARENTS TO
ENGAGE IN THE EDUCATION
AND THE PHYSICAL /MENTAL
HEALTH OF THEIR CHILDREN.**

*Watch for exciting
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Inspiring

Your Child

to Learn and

Love Math

WHEN YOU SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO LEARN, YOUR POSITIVE APPROACH HELPS INFLUENCE YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS.

To access this important resource from the Council of Ontario Directors of Education is available at:

http://www.ontariodirectors.ca/parent_engagement-math/en/index.htm

Parents Engaged in Education highly recommend this resource that provides simple ways to engage with your child in exploring new ways to remove math intimidation and enjoy learning math!

Parent POWER

Parents, we can't tell our kids to do well in school and then fail to support them when they get home. You can't just contract out parenting. For our kids to excel, we have to accept our responsibility to help them learn. That means putting away the Xbox and putting our kids to bed at a reasonable hour. It means attending those parent-teacher conferences and reading to our children and helping them with their homework.*

**- President Barack Obama,
July 17, 2009 -**

Success includes the belief that all children can and will succeed, and that parents are the bridge to this success. You as the parent, guardian or caregiver can help your child by connecting with his or her school to find out what's needed to ensure success and how you can help reach that goal. Studies of successful schools report that parent involvement is a major factor in their outcomes, including closing the achievement gap between various groups of students. How can you accomplish this? By adopting the following principles and taking the steps indicated for each age group, you will be able to help your child learn at each step of the way and ensure success in school and in life.

BE RESPONSIBLE.

Accept your role as the parent and make education a priority in your home.

BE COMMITTED.

Once you have begun to work with your child, continue doing so throughout the year.

BE POSITIVE.

Praise goes a long way with children, especially with those who struggle in school. Provide positive feedback.

BE PATIENT.

Show your child that you care through your commitment and encouragement.

BE ATTENTIVE.

Stop your child immediately when bad behaviour appears. Show him or her what to do and provide an opportunity to do it correctly. Discipline should be appropriate and consistent.

BE PRECISE.

Provide clear and direct instructions.

BE MINDFUL OF MISTAKES.

Record your child's performance. Look over all the work your child brings home from school and keep it in a folder. Help him or her correct any errors.

BE RESULTS-ORIENTED.

Gather information on how your child is performing in school. Keep notes of conferences with teachers, request progress reports and carefully read report cards and achievement test results. Ask questions about these results.

BE DILIGENT.

Work from the beginning to the end of the year with your child and the teacher.

BE INNOVATIVE.

Keep learning lively and dynamic.

BE THERE.

Just be there for your child—to answer questions, to listen, to give advice, to encourage and to speak positively about his or her life. Be there to support your child whenever needed.

To support your child in school, consider the following tips:

COMMUNICATE WITH TEACHERS.

- Find out the best time to contact them by telephone.
- Ask for the teacher's e-mail address.
- Find out about Web sites where teachers may list class notes and homework assignments.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES ARE IMPORTANT.

- Be prepared to listen, talk and take notes.
- Write out your questions before you meet with the teacher.
- Ask for specific information about your child's work and progress.
- Review what the teacher has told you and follow up by talking with your child.
- Check back with the teacher regularly to see how things are going as the year progresses.

MAKE SURE YOUR CHILD CONTINUES TO READ.

- Set a special time each day for reading aloud together.
- Encourage your child to read to you when he or she is ready.
- Let your child see you enjoying reading.
- Use audio books that you and your child can listen to together and have your child follow along with the written words in the printed book.
- Play communication games with your child, such as Scrabble or Pictionary, which involve words and explaining what they mean.
- Practice day-to-day reading and writing, such as following a recipe or writing a note.
- Continue to check with the teacher and the paediatrician about your child's language development.

Important tips for parents whose children are transitioning to their teens and secondary school.

- Help your child organize a schedule.
- Help your child set goals with a time limit for completing particular tasks.
- Listen to what your child tells you and is really saying between the lines. Be sensitive to any fears your child might have. Sometimes it is helpful to reserve comments and actions until you have facts about a situation and know how your child thinks and feels about it.
- Discuss peer pressure.

STAY INVOLVED !! BE YOUR CHILD'S BIGGEST CHEERLEADER!!



- Communication is the key to being helpful to your child in the pre-teen years.
- Welcome and get to know your child's friends.
- Become aware of physical and emotional changes in your child.

HIGH SCHOOL

Get Your Child Ready for Work and for Life

- Serve as your child's best coach and mentor.
- Foster your child's independence, and continue to be aware of and support your child's studies and after school activities.
- Continue to stay involved with the school as your child progresses through high school. Know what your high school child needs to succeed.
- Look for programs designed to help students succeed in college and in a career—those that teach study skills, provide tutoring to enhance skills and knowledge and help students choose the right courses to succeed.
- Provide structure. Show your child how to manage time for studies, activities, friends and family.
- Keep on reading. a Continue to make sure your child is reading. a Buy or make available books

in which your child may have an interest. Students who have more reading materials available to them read more and do better in school. Partner with teachers and counsellors.

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 - Continue to make sure your child is reading.
 - Buy or make available books in which your child may have an interest. Students who have more reading materials available to them read more and do better in school.

Partner with teachers and counsellors.

- Get to know your child's teachers and counsellors. High school is the training ground for college and work.
- To help prepare your child for work, you and your child should meet with the school guidance counsellor to choose the best courses based on your child's career interests. counselors.
- Continue to attend open houses or parent nights at school to meet your child's teachers.
- Request parent-teacher conferences when you think they are needed. Communicate with teachers.
- Find out the best time to contact them by telephone.
- Ask for teachers' e-mail addresses so you may contact

them outside of school hours, as teachers are usually not available during school hours.

- Find out about Web sites where teachers may list class notes and homework assignments. 21

Know that counsellors:

- Handle class registration and schedules;
- Can help if there are problems at home, such as divorce or illness, which could affect your child's school work;
- Have checklists of how to apply to college and where to get college financial aid

High school is the training ground for college and work. Help prepare your child for college by encouraging him or her to take challenging courses, such as English, math (in particular algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus), foreign language, science (biology, chemistry and physics, for example) and history or social studies. To help prepare your child for work or post-secondary school, you and your child should meet with the school guidance counselor to choose the best courses based on your child's career interests.

* U.S. Department of Education, Office of Communications and Outreach, *Parent Power: Build the Bridge to Success*, Washington, D.C., 2010.



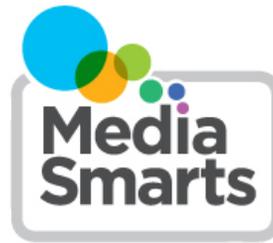
SCHOOL BOARDS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT *in Ontario*



Waterloo Catholic
District School Board



IF YOU WOULD LIKE YOUR SCHOOL BOARD REPRESENTED ON THIS PAGE,
PLEASE CONTACT PARENTENGAGEMENTGROUP@GMAIL.COM



CANADA'S CENTRE
FOR DIGITAL AND
MEDIA LITERACY

Teaching Your Children Safe Surfing Habits – Tip Sheet

TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Be a guide
- Use bookmarks
- Use kid-friendly search engines
- Use safe search filters
- To spy or not to spy

TIPS TO TEACH YOUR KIDS

- How to find the right stuff
- How to avoid the wrong stuff
- How to know if it's legitimate
- What to do when you find something by mistake

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Behaviours with Your Kids*,
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Kids love going online for learning, socializing and having fun, but there are many things in cyberspace that they may not be ready for. The following tips will help keep your kids from running into trouble online.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Be a guide

One of the most valuable things you can do, especially when kids are young, is be a guide to the online world. Kids under 10 shouldn't be using Internet-connected devices completely unsupervised; they need adults to help them find appropriate material, avoid things that aren't appropriate and understand what they see. While you don't have to be sitting beside them every minute, you should check out any new site or app until you're satisfied there won't be any surprises.

Use bookmarks

Create a "walled garden" for younger kids by finding and bookmarking good sites that can be accessed with a single click. Each browser has a slightly different way of doing this: in Firefox, select "Bookmarks" and then "Bookmark This Page"; in Internet Explorer, click "Favorites" then "Add to Favorites"; in

Chrome, click the Star icon; in Safari for Mac, click on one of the Bookmark folders; in Safari for iOS, tap on the Toolbar button to the left of the Address Bar and select “Add Bookmark” and then “Save”.

To avoid your child moving to another page by accident, you can hide the Address Bar and the Search field. This can be done in Firefox by right-clicking near the top of the screen (just to the right of “Help”) and de-selecting “Navigation Toolbar”. Hiding the Address Bar and Search fields isn’t possible in other browsers at this time, but most will allow you to go to “Full Screen” by hitting the F11 key.

Use kid-friendly search engines

Once kids start exploring the Internet on their own introduce them to kid-friendly search engines. Fact Monster (<http://www.factmonster.com/>) is a good source for finding information without the risk of finding more than you were looking for. KidsClick! (<http://www.kidsclick.org/>) is another site which catalogues websites that are useful and appropriate for kids between Kindergarten and Grade 7.

Use safe search filters

As kids get older, it’s natural for them to want to start exploring the Web more independently – but that doesn’t mean that you have to open the floodgates. Nearly all search engines have content filters that you can use to block inappropriate content:

- The best known of these is Google’s Safe Search, which you can use by visiting www.google.com/preferences and then checking the box marked “Filter explicit results” and clicking the “Save” button at the bottom of

the page. If you have a Google account you can also password-lock your Safe Search settings by clicking “Lock SafeSearch”.

- To set Safe Search in Bing, visit <http://www.bing.com/account/general> and select the “Strict” or “Moderate” button. It’s not currently possible to lock your Safe Search settings in Bing.

It is only possible to set Safe Search settings in Yahoo! if you have a Yahoo! account. If you do, you can log in, go to <http://search.yahoo.com/preferences/preferences> and select Strict or Moderate. It’s also possible to lock your Safe Search settings by changing “SafeSearch Lock” to “On”.

- YouTube also has a Safety Mode that allows you to block some inappropriate content. The bottom of each YouTube page has a “Safety” button. If you click it you will be given the option to turn Safety Mode on or off. Like Google Safe Search, Safety Mode can be locked if you are signed into your Google account.

To spy or not to spy

It’s only natural to want to keep an eye on what your kids are doing online. With younger kids, it’s best to do that in person, by sitting next to them and acting as a guide. With older kids you may wish to periodically check your browser’s History logs (though these can be easily cleared, and browsers have settings to disable the History log) or use commercial monitoring software to see what your kids have been doing. If you choose to do so, here are some tips:

- Be open about it. Explaining why you want to keep tabs on them can help your kids to understand

some of the issues they're likely to encounter online.

- Make it part of your family rules. Research has shown that laying out family rules that explain appropriate online behaviour has a strong effect on what kids do online.
- Reward good behaviour with increased trust; the more kids feel their parents trust them online, the more likely they are to come to their parents when they have problems. Talk with your kids, teach them and let them become more independent as they get older.

TIPS TO TEACH YOUR KIDS

How to find the right stuff

One of the best ways to help kids avoid finding inappropriate material is to teach them to find just what they're looking for when they're searching for things online. Here are a few tips to help with that:

- Use online encyclopedias and research sources: If you're looking for general information, you'll get better results looking through an online encyclopedia like Britannica Kids (<http://kids.britannica.com/>) than a search engine. If you're looking for information on a particular topic, there are research sources on everything from Star Wars (Wookieepedia) to hockey (Internet Hockey Database).
- Use several good keywords: When you use a search engine, try to think of all the keywords that fit with what you're looking for. The more words you use the fewer unwanted results you're going to get. Think about what it is that makes your

subject unique: like using Lego Star Wars instead of just Star Wars.

- Put phrases in quotation marks: You can also search for a specific phrase by putting it in quotes, so that "official bird" Ontario will only get results where the words "official bird" appear together in that order.
- Search within a site: Sometimes you know there's something you want on a website but you can't find it. Most sites have their own search boxes that let you search just within that website. You can also do this by putting **Site:** followed by the Web address after your search term in a search engine like Google.

How to avoid the wrong stuff

These tips will help kids filter out unwanted and inappropriate results:

- Putting the word NOT (all capital letters, as in **dog NOT poodle**) or a minus sign before a word (without a space, as in **dog -poodle**) will keep you from seeing any search results that include that word.
- In most browsers, hovering the pointer over a link in the search results without clicking it lets you see the Web address it will send you to. It's a good idea to always check on a link before you click it to make sure that it will send you where you think it will.

How to know if it's legitimate

There's lots of fun stuff online – music, games, videos – but not all of it was put there by the people

who made it or with their permission. There are several good reasons to make sure that your kids are getting their content from a legitimate source. For starters, many of the sites that have pirated content also have bad content such as ads for adult material and malware and viruses. Another important reason is that when you use legitimate sites, the money goes to the people who made what you're watching, playing or listening to.

While some illegal sites are pretty obvious, others are quite sophisticated and professional-looking, so there's no easy way to tell just from looking at a site if it's legit. The safest thing to do is stick to sites and services you know are trustworthy. Here are some lists of legitimate Canadian streaming and download services:

Music

- Music Canada has a list of places where you can legally stream and download music : <http://musiccanada.com/>
- Pro-music has a list of legal places to stream and download music around the world, organized by country. Here's their list for Canada: <http://www.pro-music.org/>

Movies and television

- The Motion Picture Association – Canada has a list of legal places to stream and download movies and TV shows: <http://www.mpa-canada.org/>

If you're not sure if something's legit, here are some things to watch out for:

- Does the site belong to the people who made the content? If you're downloading tracks from

a band's own official website, or watching TV from the network website, you can be pretty sure it's legit.

- Does it seem too good to be true? Sometimes there are great finds on the Internet; bands have released whole albums online, either for free or asking fans just to pay what they want. But if something is being offered for free in one place and you're being asked to pay for it somewhere else, it's a good bet that the free site isn't legit.
- Is it something that's not yet available through other legitimate sources? You're never going to find movies that are still in theatres from a legitimate source.
- Does it look copied? Some movies or TV shows that are sold or distributed illegally are actually filmed in the theatre with a camcorder or copied in other ways that hurt the quality of the picture or the sound. If what you're watching doesn't look right, that's a sign that it's not legitimate.

You can also check out the video "What is Copyright and How Do P2P Networks Work": http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=y306vJ-TAAo

What to do when you find something by mistake

The most important thing you can teach your kids is to come to you or another trusted adult if they come across anything inappropriate or upsetting online. Make sure they know that you won't blame them or get mad at them. Keep the conversation non-judgemental and reassuring so they know you support them and trust them.



Parents

ENGAGED IN EDUCATION

Ambassadors



BECOME A PEIE AMBASSADOR AND BE A PART OF YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL COMMUNITY

A P.E.I.E. Ambassador will...

Promote the mission of the organization.

Share the organization's resources with their school community.

Work to engage other parents with their children and their school.

Be their child's biggest CHEERLEADER in school!

Every P.E.I.E. will receive a certificate in recognition of their commitment to the organization.

Follow us on:  Parents Engaged in Education  @parentengagcons

Parents Engaged in Education's mission is to promote and engage parents in their children's education to increase their academic achievement and provide resources and skill building opportunities for parents/guardians and school council members to support children's education in Ontario.

www.ParentsEngagedInEducation.ca

ORGANIZATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENT ENGAGEMENT AND SCHOOL COUNCILS IN ONTARIO

Let's Be Social.

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Learn about College events, conferences and reports.
Keep up-to-date with timely College news.
Engage us in conversation.



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for Great Teaching



Being here can lead to amazing things.

 **Georgian**
COLLEGE


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CHIEN DE GARDE DE L'ONTARIO

ONTARIO'S WATCHDOG
CHIEN DE GARDE DE L'ONTARIO

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Parents

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Parents Engaged in Education is a not-for-profit organization formed by experienced school council members to provide resources and skill building opportunities for parent leaders across the province.

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