

George Street Middle School

Information Handbook 2023-2024



575 George Street
Fredericton, N. B.
E3B 1K2

Phone: 506-453-5419

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School Web site: <http://georgest.nbed.nb.ca>

Ms. Michelle Ashfield, Principal

Mrs. Lindsay Edmondson, Vice Principal

Mr. Jacob Lingley, Vice Principal

Mission Statement:

**At George Street Middle School, we believe that all students can learn and we will work to help them achieve high standards of learning.
We are committed to do what it takes for our students to become responsible and resourceful life-long learners.**

Welcome to



George Street Middle School

Welcome to another exciting year at George Street Middle School.

Our school is an amazing community of learners from a variety of backgrounds, beliefs and experiences and it is this diversity that makes us an incredible place to be. I encourage students and families to embrace our community with open hearts and minds.

Kindness and respect are the foundation of our community. Every individual in this school belongs here and are an important part of our shared learning experience.

GSMS is an energetic school that offers clubs and activities to meet everyone's interests. I encourage you to get involved and take advantage of everything we have to offer. Being connected and engaged is the best way to ensure you have a rewarding middle school experience.

This handbook provides helpful information about routines, procedures, and expectations. I believe that good communication between school and home, and parental involvement are important components of your child's success at school. If at any time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me or your child's teacher.

I look forward to a wonderful 2023-2024 school year.

M. Ashfield, Principal

Statement of Student Rights And Responsibilities

1. *I have a right to learn at George Street Middle School.*

It is my responsibility to listen to instruction, work diligently, and follow classroom guidelines set by my teachers.

2. *I have a right to hear and be heard.*

It is my responsibility to not disrupt when others are speaking, to communicate respectfully in tone, volume, and word choice; to not use language that is discriminatory or inappropriate.

3. *I have a right to be respected at George Street Middle School.*

It is my responsibility to not antagonize, harass or hurt people's feelings. It is my responsibility to treat others with kindness and respect.

4. *I have a right to be safe at George Street School.*

It is my responsibility not to verbally or physically threaten or harm anyone else.

5. *I have a right to expect that my personal belongings will not be tampered with, stolen, or damaged by other students.*

It is my responsibility to respect the personal property of others and their right to privacy.

At George Street Middle School we envision:

- A school that has high standards for students and staff.
- A school that is structured and orderly.
- A school that is safe and is based on respect and determination.
- A school where student learning is the responsibility of the entire school community: students, teachers, teacher assistants, administration, and parents.
- Students and staff who take pride in their work.
- Students who have a mastery of concepts.
- Grade eight students who are independent learners, are high school ready, and are role models and leaders for the grades six and seven students.

GEORGE STREET MIDDLE SCHOOL SONG

George Street Middle School,
Lifelong learning is the rule.

On the field-purple and gold,
We are fast, brave and bold.

We work hard, we're proud to say,
We learn and try our best each day.

We're the Bears, strong and free,
A building full of history.

It doesn't matter who you are,
At George you'll always be a star.

We're the Bears! Blazing our trail.
George Street Middle,
Best without fail!!

School Schedule

Time	Grade 6 and 7	Grade 8
7:50-8:10	Student arrival time. Students enter through grade level doors and go directly to class. Grade 6 use gym door, Grade 7 and 8 use front door.	
8:10-8:20	First bell rings. Students should be preparing for morning classes. Breakfast available.	
8:20	Students should be seated and ready for announcements. If you arrive after this time you must sign in at the office.	
8:25- 8:35	Announcements and Homeroom items	
8:35 – 10:15	Instructional Block 1	
10:15 – 10:30	Nutrition break	
10:15 -11:20	Instructional block 2 (part 1) grade 6 and 7	Instructional block #2 Grade 8
11:20-11:45	Grade 6 lunch Grade 7 options	
11:45-12:10	Grade 6 options Grade 7 lunch	
12:10-12:15	Grade 6 and 7 transition time Return to homeroom, prepare for afternoon	
12:10-1:05	Instructional block #2 (part 2) grade 6 and 7	Grade 8 12:10- homeroom 12:15- leave for cafeteria 12:40 – options 1:00 - homeroom
1:05-2:45	Instructional block #3	
2:50	Dismissal – We complete this in several steps. First we call busses and then we call for students who are walking or being picked up.	

Lunch and Options

Cafeteria: All classes will eat in the cafeteria. Students may bring a lunch from home or purchase from the cafeteria. Payment can be made using cash or debit. Parents may also arrange for a cafeteria 'Zip card using the link: <https://cws.givex.com/cws4.0/compassgroup4/> Students have access to microwaves in the cafeteria.

Lunch periods are complemented by a lunch options time of 20-25 minutes.

Options: students typically have the *OPTION* of the following locations:

- Library and Resource Centre
- Supervised classroom work, as needed
- Outside on the 'Strip' (our playground area along Regent St)
- Noon-hour clubs, as offered
- Peer Helpers for homework
- Balcony to watch gym activities (during winter months and rainy weather)
- Gym for organized games
- Student Lounge
- Select PRA locations (music, art, tech lab), by rotation

We are a closed campus. Unless a parent/guardian picks them up and signs them out, students are to remain at school during lunch.

Fire Drills/Crisis Response

Throughout the school year, fire drills and crisis response training will be held. When a drill occurs, each student must:

1. Know the proper exit from any part of the building. Each room will have this information posted.
2. If the fire alarm should ring when classes are not in session (i.e., during lunch), leave the building via the nearest exit and proceed outside to the designated area for your homeroom class.
3. Walk in a quiet, orderly manner.
4. Stay with your teacher.
5. Exit the building and stay out until instructed to return.
6. Refrain from talking at all times.

Practice lock-down and evacuation drills are held to prepare students to respond appropriately in the event of a crisis. Our designated evacuation site is St. Paul's United Church.

Work Habits and Expectations

At George Street, we believe grades should reflect a student's level of mastery of prescribed outcomes. We believe grades should:

1. Guide student learning.
2. Report to parents their child's level of mastery of the learning outcomes.
3. Guide teachers in planning instruction.

Report cards use a 4-point scale to reflect learning outcomes and provincial standards. Attitudes, behavior, and work habits are reported separately.

Homework

Homework must be kept current and is important to student achievement. Students are instructed and encouraged to use an agenda to record homework, schedule their time and stay on track. It is important to establish organizational habits that will help students produce their best work. Failure to complete homework will result in disciplinary measures such as detentions or loss of privileges. Please check your Teams pages, teacher specific homework pages, and email for regular updates from teachers. Teachers will communicate with parents where the homework can be found in the initial month of school.

Late Assignment Policy

Steps for this policy are as follows:

1. Noon detention with teacher is assigned.
2. Home is contacted and additional noon hour(s) may be assigned.
3. If work is not completed after steps 1 – 2 above. Admin is contacted and student will lose privileges such as school dances, school trips, and other events and rewards until the work is submitted.



Library/Resource Centre

George Street has an excellent librarian and library facility. Books may be signed out to be read at home or in class. Overdue materials are subject to a fine. Accounts must be clear before new sign-outs are accepted. Desktop computers are available in the resource center for student use. No food or beverages are permitted.

Attendance

Regular attendance at school is expected and mandatory under Section 14(d) of the Education Act. Students who miss school without cause often create difficulties for themselves, other students, and school staff.

A phone call from the parent/guardian to the school is required if the student is absent or arriving late. Please call 453-5419 to leave message or email child's teacher and the admin assistant (christen.english@nbed.nb.ca) to provide the following information:

1. Student's name
2. Date of absence and reason

Automated calls are made if an absence is not excused by parent communication.

Please note that if a parent plans or permits prolonged or frequent absences, the teacher will not provide additional personal time to make up that instruction.

Attendance letters are sent if there is an accumulation of days missed. The letters will detail the number of days absent and request a meeting.

Signing In and Signing Out Policy

Sign In- Students arriving late or returning after an appointment must sign in at the office, no parent required.

Sign Out – A parent or guardian must be present to 'sign out'. Please ring the doorbell or call the office to have your child signed out.

Tardiness

George Street Middle School and the Education Act of the Province of New Brunswick believes that punctuality is important. Tardiness not only interferes with the student's learning, but also disrupts the educational process of others. Parents may be contacted if a student is tardy on a regular basis.

A student will be considered tardy when he/she is not at the appropriate location on time. Students who are tardy in the morning, arriving after 8:20, must sign in at the office.

Student Recognition Programs

Student engagement is very important at George Street Middle School. We want students to be actively involved in their learning. This means participating in classroom lessons as well as extracurricular activities. We value student engagement and recognize and reward this in many ways.

GREAT Awards

George Recognizes Excellence, Attitude and Talent certificates: Teachers nominate students who have worked diligently to their maximum potential and who have displayed ongoing positive regard for others. Students are recognized each month and receive a certificate and letter explaining why they were selected.

This award has 3 categories: Leadership, Academics and Citizenship.

T.I. P. Awards (Team Impact Program)

GSMS team recognition stimulates the acceptance and excitement for academics that is traditionally reserved for athletics. Through team awards, GSMS aims to increase student performance, teacher passion and to raise the level of community involvement in our school. It raises the profile of students who perform well, improve, or surpass expectations academically, and demonstrate community citizenship. Students are awarded as a class team in many ways, including recognition at our monthly Recognition Assemblies, Carnival George activities, year end celebrations, among other activities planned throughout each year.

Year End Awards and Celebrations

Additional Student Recognition Awards are held at the end of the year.

- The Athletic Department acknowledges students who have contributed to individual teams and presents major awards such as Sports Dedication, Athletic Leadership, Academic Athlete and Athlete of the year.
- Grade level classes identify students who have excelled in various subject areas.
- We hold an End of Year Awards Assembly on the last day of school. We present school awards such as School Spirit, Helping Hands, Fine Arts, Leadership and Student of the Year.

Each grade level plans end of year outings and classroom celebrations. Grade 8s are treated to a class trip, special activities, and a grade 8 farewell dance.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Student Leadership team

The George Street Student Leadership Team oversees many student activities. The leadership team is selected at the end of each year based on applications submitted.

Clubs

Clubs and activities that draw students from all grade levels meet at noon or after school. These include popular groups such as Global Minds, Yearbook Committee, GSA, Leadership Committee, Drama, Library Club, Art Club, Band, and many others. We are very open to suggestions for new clubs. Students are invited to submit ideas for activities using our “Student Club” form, and we will work to help set these up where possible.

Dances

School dances are held on a regular basis. Students must be in good standing (all work complete – attendance – behavior) to attend our dance. **Dances are from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Students must be picked up promptly at 8:30 pm.** We do not guarantee adult supervision after 8:45pm. Students are required to stay for the duration of the dance unless a parent arrives at the door to pick them up. Admission cost for regular dances is \$5. Special events such as the grade 8 Farewell dance will have a different fee.

On occasion, students may sign in guests from other middle schools. These guests must be in good standing at their own school and their attendance is subject to the approval of GSMS administrators. Invited guests must show their student ID card at the door. GSMS students must arrive with their invited guest and assume responsibility for them and their behavior.

Students are not permitted to bring outside food and beverages. Bags will be left with the administration.

S.P.A.R.K.

S.P.A.R.K. (Student Participation, Activity, Recreation, and Knowledge) is offered as a co-curricular activity. It is an opportunity for students to try new skills, discover hidden talents and spark new interests. SPARK is offered three times a year and runs over four sessions. Students are offered a range of activities/topics such as Archery, Musical Theater, Dance, Art, Swimming, Golf, Community Volunteering, Coding, Robotics, Biking, Movie Making and many more.

Students will have an opportunity to identify their preferred activities and they will then be assigned to one of their top 5 choices. Parents are encouraged to volunteer for our SPARK program by offering a session, facilitating contacts or simply helping with supervision. Fees for activities vary. The SPARK booklet is sent home via email to families prior to students making their selections. Students and parents should discuss selection to ensure they are aware of the costs and/or equipment required. Placing all students is a complex process. Once placed, we avoid swapping students around.

How do students get involved?

As new clubs, activities, and teams develop, announcements will be made. Students need to listen carefully to morning announcements, so they are aware of meetings, tryouts and audition times. As well, this information is frequently posted on our school website. For athletics, parents and students are encouraged to check the website frequently under the Athletics tab.

Athletics

Gymnasium / Physical Education

The gymnasium is a multi-purpose center with the balcony seating and stage. The gym floor gets a lot of use and it's important to care for the surface. In order to keep it looking great, we ask that only clean, non-marking sneakers be worn on the gym floor during any activity.

During Physical Education classes, students are asked to wear clothing appropriate for lots of physical movement. Students are encouraged to change into gym clothes as students get sweaty and we want to promote good hygiene. Students can change in our gym locker rooms.

All students attend Physical Education twice a week. Physical Education is a compulsory, curriculum-driven course, prescribed by the Department of Education. Attendance is mandatory and achievement levels are assigned. If a student cannot participate, he/she must bring a note dated and signed by his/her parent/guardian or family doctor stating the reason to be excused from class.

Athletic Teams

For athletic teams, please refer to the Athletics section on the school website for information on the programs, fees and expectations regarding participation.

Parents of Athletes

Please consider volunteering to coach a team. We try to maximize student participation and rely on parents to help. Please contact the school Phys. Ed. Department if you would like to coach.

We believe we can foster a high quality of athletic experience for all participants through:

- Fun, fair play and sportsmanship.
- Quality coaching.
- A safe and healthy environment.

We hope that parents will help foster a positive experience for all by considering the following:

1. Be realistic about your child's physical ability and emphasize improved performance, not winning.
2. Control your own emotions at games and events. Don't yell at other players, coaches, or officials.
3. Be a cheerleader for your child and the children on the other team.
4. Be respectful of the coaches. Remember they are volunteering their time to provide an opportunity for your child. If you have a concern, please contact our Phys. Ed. Department or administration to discuss the issue.

Playing / Practice Fields and Times

Because we do not have outdoor facilities, we will often use Barker's Field (located on Northside just off the walking trail/old train bridge), Queen's Square, and O'Dell Park. Many students will walk or bike to those locations. We encourage the students to travel with a buddy or as a small group.

Students are not escorted by an adult as often coaches are volunteers who meet the team at the field.

If practice or game times are later than 4:00, students should go home after school.

General Information

School Colors

The George Street School colors are purple and gold.

Website

We recommend students and parents check our website at <http://georgest.nbed.nb.ca> for information regarding our programs and school events. There are links to our athletic schedule, school cash, school news, staff directory, and more.

Student Fee

A student fee of \$50 will provide all students with an ID card, locker rental and lock, lab supplies for all Practical and Related Arts courses, and funding for all our positive rewards programs – including guest speakers. Families of two or more will pay a family fee of \$80. Please plan to make this payment within the first month of school; otherwise, please reach out to your child's homeroom teacher to make arrangements.

Phones

Students have access to a phone at the main office. If students need to make a call, they are welcome to ask to use this phone. If a parent needs to relay a message throughout the day, please call the school (506-453-5419) or send an email to your child's teacher or administrator. Cell phones should be kept in lockers throughout the day from arrival until dismissal. Technology for student work will be provided at the school.

Scent Reduction Policy

In keeping with the ASD-W policy (18-758), staff and students should avoid the use of fragrances and perfumed personal care products while in our schools, school vehicles, and school district office.

Lost and Found

All lost or found items are placed in a bin outside the music room. If you are missing something, you should check in that location. Unclaimed items will be displayed once or twice a year. Unclaimed items will be donated to charity at the end of each term.

Personal Items

We encourage students to leave toys, phones, and other valuables at home. Unfortunately, loss and theft of such items can occur. As well, they can cause a distraction for students who bring them to class and may lead to temporary confiscation. Leaving personal items at home, will help with problems related to loss, reduce disruptions, avoid distraction, and maximize learning time. All student bags will be left in lockers throughout the day.

Water Bottles

Water bottle filling stations are available throughout the school. Students should bring a bottle to fill. Bottles should be labelled with the student's full name.

Communication

Parents/guardians should ensure that the school has a phone number where they can be reached any time during the school hours. Additionally, the school uses the program 'School Messenger' to send messages via email. If you do not receive these, please alert the principal, so we can check the correct email address is on file.

Building Access

To help ensure safety and security, all exterior doors are locked. If you need to drop something off to your child, please ring the main doorbell and the administrative assistance will direct you.

If entering the building for any other reason (meeting, etc.), all visitors must sign in at the office.

Parent Involvement

There are many opportunities for parents at GSMS. We invite parents to help build, grow and contribute to our learning. Frequently, parents have talents, interests, connections and experiences that they are able to share, and these opportunities help enrich learning. Please consider joining the following:

Home and School

The GSMS Home and School Association is a parent group that focuses on school improvement and student welfare. We host monthly meetings to plan events and seasonal fundraisers. The Home and School is a fun group that provides you an opportunity to be connected to the school, meet new families and contribute to the improvement of your children's school.

Parent School Support Committee (PSSC)

The PSSC ensures the parent voice is heard in setting education priorities and planning for improvements in the school. It is an advisory committee which addresses broad issues related to education and enhancing student learning. The PSSC meets monthly.

Coaching

Student recreation is an important part of our school culture and contributes to healthy, active lifestyles. It takes many volunteers to create these opportunities. Coaching is a rewarding experience. We are seeking coaches for the following sports/seasons:

Soccer: September to the end of October.

X-Country: September to the middle of October

Basketball: Late October to end of January.

Badminton: End of January until March.

Volleyball: March to the end of May.

Track & Field: May and June.

Interested coaches can email Mark Graham: mark.graham@nbed.nb.ca

SPARK

The spark program is always looking for new activities. If you can share your talents or make connections to set up an activity, please let us know by contacting administration.

Grade 8 Farewell Dance

While this event happens in June, it takes a lot of planning and preparation. The parent planning committee coordinates decorations and food. Administration supports the committee with tasks related to the building and communication but planning and labor is provided by the parents. This committee generally starts up in late winter. Please watch email for information or contact administration.

Student Drop Off and Pick Up

Between 7:45-8:20 am and 2:45-3:10 pm, please do not park, drop off or pick up in front of the school on either side of George Street. This poses a significant safety risk as the area is congested during peak transportation times.

Please do not stop/drop on the on the opposite side of the street. It is not safe for students to be crossing the street between cars and buses.

No drop off before 7:50 am when the school day begins.

Pick up and Drop off

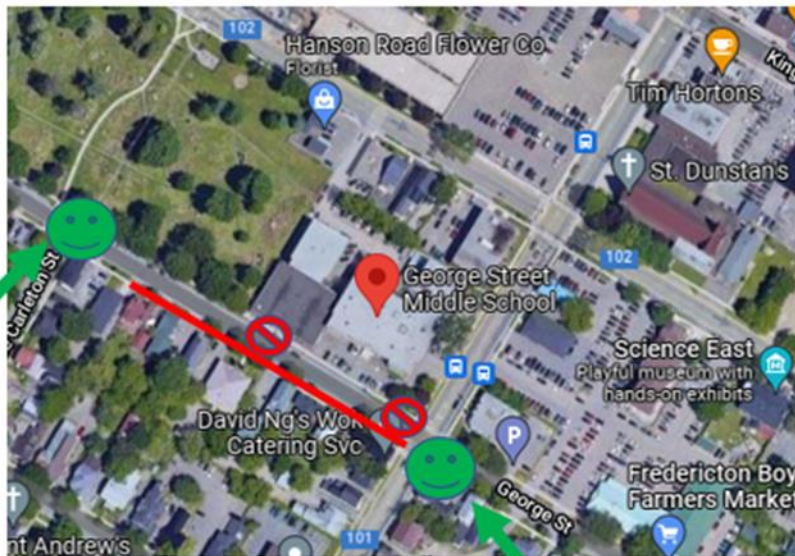
Please use **Carleton Street or the Market to pick up/drop off**. There are cross walks in these areas, students may cross safely and walk the half block to school. Please be courteous drivers as you pick up/drop off. It is busy and congested and driver patience / attention is important.

School Drop Off and Pick Up



**= Please drop off at Carleton St or Market.
Students may then use the crosswalk in these areas.**

Drop Off
and Pick
Up area



Drop Off and
Pick Up area



= Please do not drop off in front of the school, please do not drop off on the uphill/south side of the street.

Transportation

School Bus

To ensure safety, bus students should be respectful of the authority of the bus driver. Students who misbehave while on the school bus are subject to disciplinary actions and possible suspension of bus privileges.

- Students must travel on their assigned school bus and get off at their assigned stop. The only exception to this is in the case of an emergency where the administration has been notified and the proper form has been filled out and sent by administration with the child.
- Students are not permitted to travel on a bus that is not their designated bus (even with a note from the parent)

Bus Riding Rules and Expectations

- While waiting for the bus, students should respect private property such as trees, gardens and fences. If transferring, please follow the rules and direction of staff at the transfer site.
- No pushing and shoving or rough play while at a bus stop, on the bus or near the bus.
- Students are to remain seated and facing forward while the bus is in motion. Students are not allowed to change seats without the driver's permission.
- At the discretion of the bus driver, students may be given an assigned seat.
- Quiet conversation using classroom voices is expected between students seated on the same bus.
- Disruptive conduct and aggressive play are not permitted on the bus.
- Lewd, vulgar, obscene behavior and gestures of any type, and inappropriate language is not acceptable on the bus.
- Physical or verbal assault directed at students or driver, participating in fighting, bullying, threatening and/or harassment of others may result in suspension from the bus.
- Vandalism may result in suspension of bus riding privileges. Additionally, the responsible student, parent and/or guardian will reimburse for damage to the bus.
- Bus windows are to be left closed unless permission is given by the bus driver. Students should not extend head, hands, or arms out of bus windows. Students should not throw anything out of the window.
- Students are responsible for helping to keep the bus clean. Eating is not permitted on the bus.
- Items prohibited at school, are also prohibited on the bus.

Other Transportation

Students who walk, bike or who are dropped off at school should not arrive before 7:50 a.m. (the arrival of the first bus).

Bike racks are available at the school, but the school is not responsible for vandalism which may occur. Biking students should wear a helmet and lock their bike. Do not leave bikes overnight as theft may occur.

School Culture and Etiquette

The New Brunswick Schools Act requires students to come to school neat, tidy and properly dressed.

The culture of George Street Middle School is honest, respectful and courteous. We demonstrate this social norm in the way we speak and dress. When at school, you are expected to be: mindful of the positive school image we wish to project, considerate of others and appreciative of the school as a place of learning and work. We ask that you respect the following social norms:

- Please do not wear clothing with slogans or images referencing drugs, alcohol, or material that may be considered inappropriate or offensive.
- Please refrain from using profanity.
- Please be polite and treat others with respect.
- Please do not make comments that are derogatory, suggest intolerance or are harmful to a person's social-emotional wellbeing.

Behavior and Discipline

The behavior policy at George Street School has three main goals:

- To foster a climate of mutual respect.
- To create a positive learning environment for all students and staff.
- To ensure the safety of students and staff.

Most behaviors are relatively minor in nature and are resolved through communication and cooperation with the student, and the student's parents.

When minor behavior is persistent or a behavior is substantial, the student may be referred to administration and/or an intervention plan developed.

George Street Middle School reserves the right to perform a student search and/or locker search as necessary to maintain safety, security and orderliness of our building and grounds. If items are recovered that are considered in violation of safety, security and orderliness in a way that might disrupt regular operations, these will be confiscated, and a consequence will be applied.

GSMS reserves the right to discipline a student for actions taken off-campus, including via technology, if they are intended to have an effect on a student or teacher or they adversely affect the safety and well-being of a student or school.

All stakeholders play a role in ensuring a safe and positive learning environment. As stated in the letter from the superintendent, parents, students and staff who have knowledge of a "threat or high-risk behavior" should report this information to the principal.

Computer: Acceptable Use Policy

The computers and internet access at GSMS are to enhance the learning and educational opportunities of students and staff. With this privilege comes the responsibility to follow guidelines for acceptable use. This policy has been developed to comply with the New Brunswick Department of Education Policy 311. This policy sets guidelines and rules for students utilizing computers or accessing school wifi services at GSMS. An overview of the policy may be viewed on our website (Technology Education). The entire Policy 311 may be viewed on the Department of Education website at the following location: <http://www.gnb.ca/0000/pol/e/311A.pdf>

With this privilege comes the responsibility to follow these guidelines for acceptable use:

1. Students will not change any settings on computers and iPads without direction from staff.
2. Internet access will be used for assigned research and schoolwork.
3. Websites which promote violent, explicitly sexual, hateful, or socially deviant behavior are prohibited.
4. Students will not download an app unless directed by a teacher.
5. Students who inadvertently access an unacceptable site should report it immediately to a teacher.
6. Students that send a message that is violent, threatening, sexually explicit or disrespectful may have technology rights revoked.
7. Students shall not use the school's technology (wireless and hardware) to send a message with someone else's name or use someone else's email address or enter e-mail correspondence with unknown people.
8. Use of Microsoft 365 including MS TEAMS is for educational purposes only.
9. 'Chat rooms' in MS TEAMS are for schoolwork only and must be directed by a teacher.
10. Student will login to their own accounts using their username and password only.
11. All users of technology must follow the Department of Education's Policy 311. Copies of Policy 311 are posted in the labs. Consequences for computer misuse are: First violation: loss of privileges for two weeks; Second violation: loss of privileges for two months; Third Violation; loss of privileges permanently.

Extra Sources of Information

Anglophone West School District website- <https://asdw.nbed.ca>
George Street Middle School website- <http://georgest.nbed.nb.ca>

School Closure:

On occasion, it may be necessary to cancel bus runs, close schools, or delay school opening. These decisions are made by ASD-W.

For these announcements, please note GSMS is zone is #6 - Greater Fredericton Area.

You can find out about school closures in a variety of ways.

1. Check the ASD-W website – there is an ‘Alert’ icon on the dashboard.
2. Check the GSMS website - there is a tab for ASD-W Late Bus & School Closures
3. Phone 1-888-388-4455 (toll-free) or 453-5454 any time after 6:00 AM for the district automated message
4. Twitter [@ASD_West](https://twitter.com/ASD_West)
5. Local radio stations (full list of stations can be found on the district website)





ANGLOPHONE WEST SCHOOL DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

1135 Prospect Street • Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 3B9 • www.asd-w.nbed.nb.ca

September 2023

Dear Families/Caregivers:

Anglophone West School District is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in schools where students, staff, and visitors feel safe. To enhance safety and security, district protocol requires Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) training of School Administrators, Education Support Services, and district staff. Further to this, partners from Policing, Public Safety, Social Development and Mental Health are also trained in this multi-disciplinary approach.

The protocol requires trained school staff and community partners, as a team, to complete an Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) in all cases where students make threats to harm others. The purpose of the ARTO process is to use the best knowledge, skill, and experience available to assess level of concern so that appropriate interventions can be identified to protect individuals from harm and to ensure a climate of safety in schools and the community. As noted above, a multi-disciplinary approach is used. Please be assured that the school team will be taking measures to deal with all known threats/high-risk behaviours in a positive and proactive manner. If the school team invites you to a meeting to discuss safety concerns about your own child, please be assured that our protocol is being followed and that the goal is safety.

Anglophone West School District will respond to all serious threats. If there is a need, a school may initiate a state of "lock down" or "hold and secure" within the facility. A principal has the authority to declare either condition and will often do so through collaboration with district office officials and/or emergency responders. Please note...a **"hold and secure"** allows those who are in the building to continue with their normal routines but calls for increased monitoring of entrances and for no one to enter or leave the building. A **"lock down"** requires all who are within the building to immediately stop what they are doing and assume a quiet, hiding position within their current space. Staff and students practice this as a drill each year. In either case, it is important for families/caregivers to know that they will not be able to retrieve their child(ren) until the "all clear" is given. The school and district will do their best to provide communication throughout the situation, although the priority will always be to ensure the safety of individuals first.

To help keep our school communities safe, there is an expectation that families/caregivers, students, and community members who have knowledge of a threat or high-risk behaviour will report this information to the principal. It would be helpful if you would discuss this protocol with your child(ren). Our goal is to respond to all threats in a professional manner that provides for a safe, healthy and caring learning environment.

We appreciate your support in helping ensure our schools are safe environments for all students and staff.

Sincerely,

David McTimoney
Superintendent

