



ALL ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL

A guide for parents and guardians





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TIPS
and
INFORMATION



School staff work together with parents/guardians to help students succeed.

Make the most of the secondary school years

This guide is designed to help you support your teen through the high school years. When your teen finishes high school, they will be a young adult – this is an important time of growth and development.

Your teen’s experience will be shaped by the staff and students at the school, the range of programs and activities offered, and relationships you and your teen will form. Our secondary schools are full of caring staff who want the best for your teen.

We encourage you to get involved, ask questions and take an interest in your teen’s high school years. You were your child’s first teacher, and remain their most important teacher. Your teen needs your support and guidance during this important stage of development. Partner with us and –together – we’ll help your teen reach their potential.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Many courses and programs to choose from – it’s a chance for your teen to try new things, and discover their interests, skills and strengths
- An emphasis on planning for post-secondary and career pathways
- A wide-range of sports, activities and clubs
- Increased student independence and responsibility
- A greater need for time management and organization

Get involved

Getting information from your teen may not always be easy, so stay connected in other ways:

CONNECT ONLINE

Most schools offer the ability to subscribe to receive alerts from their website. Many schools also have Twitter accounts where they post timely information and reminders. Some teachers run class websites and class Twitter accounts where updates are posted.

The Simcoe County District School Board (SCDSB) also shares news at www.scdsb.on.ca. Subscribe to receive updates and alerts to your email, follow [@SCDSB_schools](https://twitter.com/SCDSB_schools) on Twitter and 'Like' us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SCDSB.

PARENT PORTAL

Create a Parent Portal account to track your teen's attendance and progress. More information is available through the school or at www.scdsb.on.ca in the 'Parents' section.

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

If you change your phone number, address or email address, make sure to give your new contact information to the school. It's a good idea to give the school your personal number – like a cell phone number – so school staff can contact you directly if needed.

ATTEND SCHOOL COUNCIL AND EVENTS

Every school has a school council – a group of parents/guardians, staff, student(s) and community members who meet regularly and provide input to the school principal on a number of topics. Joining the school council or attending meetings is a great way to stay up to date on what's happening at school.



Who to contact

If you have specific questions or concerns about your teen's education, the first person to talk to is the classroom teacher. If you need extra help, you can call guidance, special education or student success. The vice-principal or principal are also available to assist.

Your local school trustee is elected to represent your interests and is ready to hear and discuss your suggestions and concerns. Find your trustee at www.scdsb.on.ca under 'Board'.

RESIST THE URGE TO “RESCUE” YOUR TEEN

High school is an opportunity for your teen to build their advocacy skills and independence. If your teen comes to you with a concern about a mark or another issue, provide advice to your teen on how to deal with it – for example, encourage him or her to speak to the teacher directly. Resist the urge to jump in and “rescue” your teen. Of course, you can always contact the school if you have a concern.



Attendance

Regular and timely attendance is important to your teen's success. High school is an opportunity to continue to build your teen's independence and encourage accountability. Talk to your teen about the importance of being present for class.

REPORTING AN ABSENCE

If your teen will be absent, contact the school as early as you can before the school's start time.

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

The school year calendar is revised annually. It's approved in the spring for the following school year. The calendar is always available at www.scdsb.on.ca in the 'Schools' section. It is also available through your school. The calendar includes PA Days, holidays and final evaluation dates.

Try to plan family holidays around the school year calendar. Extended absences from school can negatively impact your teen's academic results.

Activity fees and fundraising

Schools can charge activity fees for enhancements to the regular school program – things like sports teams and activities, field trips or in-school presentations. Schools also run fundraisers throughout the year to help raise funds for enhancements. Families that need financial support can contact the school office.

PAY ONLINE

Schools now offer the option to pay fees online. Information is available through your school or at www.scdsb.on.ca in the “Parents” section.

Sports, clubs and co-curricular activities

Secondary schools offer a range of sports, clubs and co-curricular activities that take place outside of class time. Encourage your teen to explore the options available – these activities can help teens make new friends, build confidence, and discover an interest or skill.



Program and course selection

Parents/guardians have an important role to play in helping teens research and select program and course options. Decisions made in high school lead to the achievement of future life goals. Students can create course plans using myBlueprint. See page 20 for more information.

Grade 9 & 10

ACADEMIC (A)

Courses develop students' knowledge and skills by helping students understand the theory behind concepts, and identify practical applications of concepts.

APPLIED (P)

Courses develop students' knowledge and skills by emphasizing practical, concrete application of the concepts.

LOCALLY DEVELOPED (L)

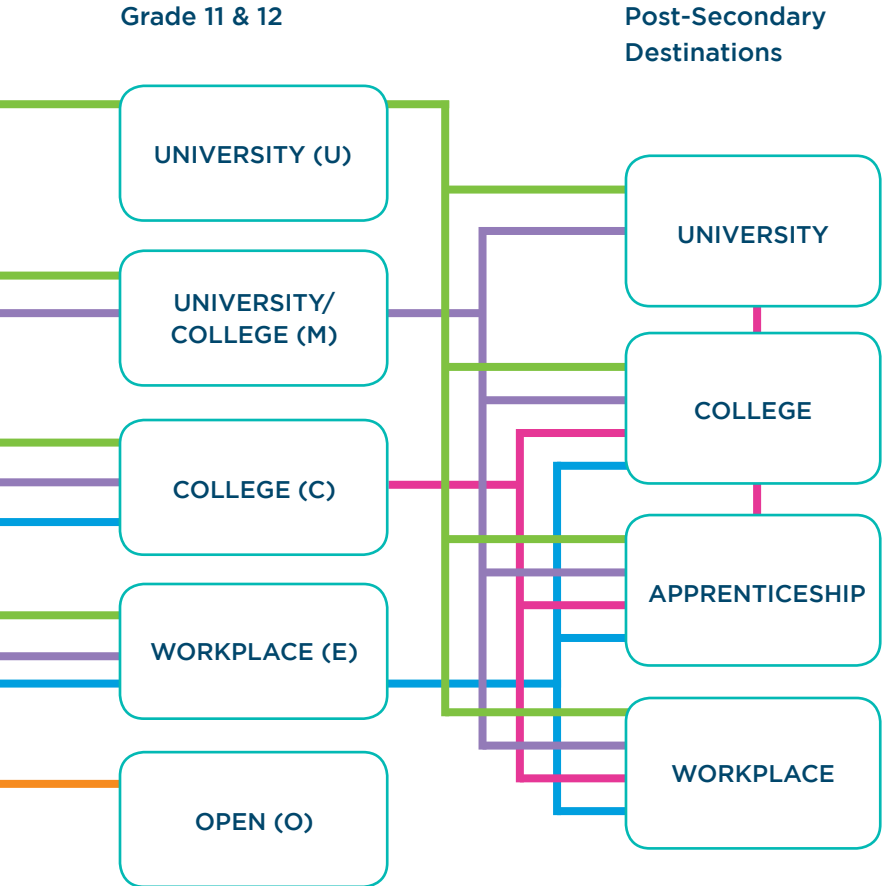
Courses focus on essential skills to build a student's knowledge and understanding, and to develop their literacy, numeracy, problem-solving, decision-making and communication skills.

OPEN (O)

Courses allow students to learn concepts and skills designed to prepare them for further study in the subject area. Expectations are designed to be appropriate for all students.

COURSE CALENDAR AND COURSE SELECTION PROCESS

Course selection begins in January every year. There are certain courses students are required to take (compulsory), and others that they can choose (optional). For a comprehensive overview of course selection, visit connect.scdsb.on.ca/pathwaysparentguide.



UNDERSTANDING A COURSE CODE

Sample course code:

MFM2P - Foundations of Mathematics

The first letter is the subject area:

- | | |
|--|--|
| A Arts | B Business |
| C Canadian & World Studies | E English & ESL/ELL |
| F French (Core, Extended and Immersion) | G Guidance, Career Education, Special Education & Cooperative Education |
| H Social Sciences & The Humanities | I Interdisciplinary & Computer Studies |
| L Classical & International Languages | M Mathematics |
| N First Nation, Métis and Inuit Studies | P Health & Physical Education |
| S Sciences | T Technological Education |

The number identifies the Grade:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Grade 9 | 2 Grade 10 |
| 3 Grade 11 | 4 Grade 12 |

The letter identifies the course type for Grades 9 & 10:

D Academic

L Locally Developed

O Open

P Applied

The letter identifies the course type for Grades 11 & 12:

C College

E Workplace

M University/college

O Open

U University




HOW DO I KNOW WHICH COURSE IS THE RIGHT ONE?

It's best that students select courses based on their strengths, interests and learning styles. Talk with your teen about what they're interested in. Talk to your child's Grade 8 teacher for advice on which courses to take in Grade 9. Your child may not know what their post-secondary goals are at this point—that's okay. There are many opportunities to explore options while in high school. Transitions also exist between post-secondary destinations. For example, a college diploma can provide advance standing for a university degree program.

Go to page 20 for information about myBlueprint, a tool for planning courses, and education and career goals.

Diploma requirements

Students must complete three required components to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD):

-  credits (18 compulsory, 12 electives)
-  community involvement hours
-  Successful completion of the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) or course

Some students may work toward an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC), or a Certificate of Accomplishment. More information about these outcomes is available through your school.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Students must complete 40 hours of community involvement to receive their high school diploma. Students can start accumulating hours during the summer before Grade 9. Meaningful participation in the community helps students build resilience, a key characteristic for success in school and life. More information, including a downloadable form to track hours, is available at www.scdsb.on.ca under 'Students'.

LITERACY REQUIREMENT

Students write the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) in Grade 10. The test measures whether or not they are meeting the minimum standard for literacy across all subjects up to the end of Grade 9. If students don't succeed the first time the test is written, they will have another opportunity. Schools also have the option of offering students a course in place of the test. For more information about provincial testing, visit www.eqao.com.

Students must earn the following compulsory credits to obtain the Ontario Secondary School Diploma:

- 4 credits in English
- 3 credits in Mathematics
- 2 credits in Science
- 1 credit in Canadian History
- 1 credit in Canadian Geography
- 1 credit in the Arts
- 1 credit in Health and Physical Education
- 1 credit in French as a Second Language
- 0.5 credit in Career Studies
- 0.5 credit in Civics

Students must also complete one credit from each of the following groups:

- Group 1: English or French as a second language, a Native language, a classical or an international language, social sciences and the humanities, Canadian and world studies, guidance and career education or cooperative education
- Group 2: Health and physical education, the arts, business studies, French as a second language or cooperative education
- Group 3: French as a second language, science (Grade 11 or 12), computer studies, technological education or cooperative education

In addition to compulsory credits, students must complete:

- 12 optional credits/electives



Assessment, evaluation and reporting

The primary purpose of assessment and reporting is to improve student learning. Reporting to parents/guardians through the report card process provides information about:

- Student demonstration of specific learning skills and work habits
- Student achievement of the curriculum expectations (grade and comment)
- Student attendance (lates and absences)
- Information about second language programming and special learning needs

Assessment and evaluation happens throughout the semester. It's the process of gathering and evaluating information that accurately reflects how a student is doing in the course. Students are evaluated based on the provincial curriculum expectations and achievement levels outlined in curriculum policy documents. All curriculum documents are available at the school. You can download curriculum documents from the Ministry of Education's website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum.

Students will be asked to complete a variety of assignments, including presentations/performances, writing assignments and quizzes or tests. Teachers strive to provide feedback quickly so the assessment can be used for learning. It's important for students to have an opportunity to understand their strengths and areas for improvement.





HOW FINAL GRADES ARE CALCULATED

70% from evaluations conducted throughout the course

30% from a final evaluation administered towards the end of the course

The evaluation is based on evidence from one or a combination of the following: an examination, a performance, an essay and/or another method of evaluation suitable to the course content.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Secondary school progress reports are provided in October and March just prior to student/teacher/parent conferences. Midterm reports are provided in November and April and final reports distributed in February and July.

For more information about assessment and reporting, visit www.scdsb.on.ca under 'Programs' and 'Assessment and Curriculum'.

Future planning

School staff and parents work together with students to help them plan their future.

Encouraging your teen to try a range of programs and courses, and valuing all post-secondary pathways (apprenticeship, college, workplace and university), will help keep options open for your teen. Students will be more driven and motivated if they're encouraged to pursue a pathway and discipline that aligns with their own interests.

During high school, students have many opportunities to explore post-secondary options and careers. One of the first opportunities is in the fall of Grade 9 when students participate in *Take Our Kids to Work Day*.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE WITH MYBLUEPRINT: FREE, ONLINE EDUCATION AND CAREER PLANNING TOOL

Students and parents/guardians have access to www.myblueprint.ca/simcoe. This tool is used to document student learning and to help students plan their future with the Individual Pathway Plan. myBlueprint is customized to the Ontario curriculum and designed to help students create a plan that matches their interests and skills.

How does myBlueprint work?

Create a parent/guardian account to get started:

- Go to www.myblueprint.ca/simcoe
- Pick your teen's high school from the dropdown box
- Create a parent/guardian account by clicking "Are you a teacher; counsellor or parent?"

CREATING PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

Creating Pathways to Success is an education and career life planning program that puts students at the centre of their own learning. The program is based on three beliefs and aims to see all students complete high school with a clear plan for their initial post-secondary destination.

- All students can be successful
- Success comes in many forms
- There are many pathways to success

Students will discover their interests, strengths and aspirations as they participate in the program and develop an Individual Pathway Plan (IPP). They are encouraged to record and reflect on their experiences in school, in the community and at home as they discover themselves and develop personal pathway plans.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND BURSARIES

Explore post-secondary scholarships or bursaries your teen can apply for. The following websites are good places to start your research:

www.scholarshipscanada.com

www.electronicinfo.ca

Visit the 'Planning Your Future' section under 'Students' at **www.scdsb.on.ca** for more information about future planning.



PROGRAMS
and
SUPPORTS





Our schools offer a range of programs and courses that cater to individual needs and interests.

Find out what's available at your school in the course calendar. Course calendars are posted at www.scdsb.on.ca under 'Students' and 'Secondary Program Info'.

Programs

SPECIALIST HIGH SKILLS MAJOR

Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) programs are sector-specific programs that start in Grade 11. They're made up of a bundle of courses with options for all post-secondary destinations. In a SHSM, students:

- Complete a bundle of 8-10 courses in a specific field
- Earn valuable industry-related certifications and training related to the selected field
- Develop important on-the-job skills and work habits through cooperative education placements

For more information about SHSM programs available at SCDSB schools, visit www.myshsm.ca.

SHSM Sectors:

- Agriculture
- Arts and Culture
- Business
- Construction
- The Environment
- Health and Wellness
- Horticulture and Landscaping
- Hospitality and tourism
- Information and Communications Technology
- Non-profit
- Sports
- Transportation

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION

Cooperative education (co-op) allows students to earn secondary school credits while completing a work placement. The course begins with an in-school pre-placement learning plan to ready students for the out-of-school work experience. Co-op teachers partner with community employers to create meaningful work experiences that allow students to explore career interests.

DUAL CREDIT

Through dual credit courses, students can earn a high school credit at the same time as a college credit. Dual credit courses give students the chance to experience post-secondary education. The college credit will count towards a college diploma as long as it's a requirement for the college program the student chooses to pursue.

ONTARIO YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

The Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP) opens the door for students to explore and work in apprenticeship occupations starting in Grade 11 or Grade 12 through cooperative education. Students have the opportunity to become registered apprentices and work towards becoming certified journeypersons in a skilled trade while completing their secondary school diploma. Visit www.oyap.com

ALTERNATIVE LEARNING

We have an alternative secondary school with locations throughout Simcoe County. The program is designed for students who have difficulty coping with a large school setting, and who may benefit from the small class sizes, one-on-one assistance, flexibility and close relationships with the teachers. Find more information about Simcoe Alternative Secondary School at www.scdsb.on.ca in the 'Schools' section.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP)

Advanced Placement (AP) provides secondary students with an opportunity for learning that goes beyond the Ontario Curriculum, allowing them to experience university-level programming while still in high school. Many Canadian and international universities recognize AP standing for first year study in specific courses. Contact the guidance office for more information about AP courses.

SUMMER SCHOOL, NIGHT SCHOOL & TRAVEL CREDITS

Students can complete credits outside of regular school hours. Summer school provides options for students who want to reach ahead or earn credits while travelling. Night school is great for students who need more flexibility in their schedule. Find out more about summer and night school at **www.thelearningcentres.com**.

eLEARNING

eLearning allows students to take courses online. eLearning courses offer the flexibility of choice and timing. Students manage their learning independently.

For more information about eLearning visit **www.scdsb.on.ca** in the 'Programs' section.

Homework Help is a free online math help resource for students in Grades 7-10. Homework Help provides live, one-one-one tutoring from Ontario teachers Sunday to Thursday from 5:30-9:30 p.m. ET. Homework Help is funded by the Ontario government and administered by TVO's Independent Learning Center.

Visit Homework Help at **www.homeworkhelp.ilc.org**



Technological education programs

The SCDSB has invested in its technological education programs to ensure students have access to industry-standard equipment, and current, relevant course content. We've also enhanced the safety standards in all our technological education labs.

TECHNOLOGICAL COURSES AVAILABLE IN SCDSB SCHOOLS

- Grade 9 Integrated Technologies
- Health Care Technology
- Communications Technology
- Hospitality and Tourism
- Computer Technology
- Manufacturing Technology
- Construction Technology
- Technological Design
- Green Industries
- Transportation Technology
- Hairstyling and Aesthetics

Guidance

The secondary school guidance department serves the school community in a variety of ways:

- Coaches in career/life planning, including college and university scholarship application process
- Helps individual students envision a plan for post-secondary and target short- and long-term goals
- Helps students identify programs that support their learning styles, interests and needs
- Provides information on post-secondary (workplace, college, apprenticeship, university) and career pathways
- Provides personal support and referrals to community resources
- Supports students in academic planning and course selection
- Supports students in establishing effective study habits and exam preparation
- Supports students with life skills like decision-making, problem solving, conflict resolution, stress and time management and relationship awareness

You or your teen can make an appointment to visit the guidance office at any time during the school year. Drop-in appointments are also available.

Classroom technology

Technology is used as a learning and teaching tool in SCDSB schools. By integrating technology in the classroom, we create the opportunity to teach students about digital leadership.

We encourage students to think critically about what is appropriate to share online, and help them to understand relevant laws and consequences of actions.

Students are invited to bring their own device to school. They can access the SCDSB's Wi-Fi network using their school board login.



Special education

Students do not have to be identified as exceptional to receive special education support. Classroom teachers, special education teachers and school administration work with parents/guardians as a team to provide special education resources and support to students who may need it. Student strengths and needs are outlined in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). As your teen transitions to high school, their elementary school will share information with the new school to ensure supports are in place.

SUPPORT IN HIGH SCHOOL

There are various levels of special education support in high school. Students may receive support from their classroom teacher or an educational assistant in the classroom. Students may receive accommodations as part of their course. This is outlined in the student's IEP. High schools also offer a range of locally developed courses designed to meet the learning needs of students. Depending on their needs, students may be part of a specialized program or class.

Like elementary school, parents/guardians are involved in the planning for their teen's learning and support in high school. Assistive technology equipment provided to students in elementary school will be transferred to their high school.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PLACEMENTS IN HIGH SCHOOL

- Students who are identified as gifted have the option of continuing in the Gifted Program in high school.
- A student might spend a portion of their day in a Learning Centre, which is a specialized class for small groups of students. In the Learning Centre, students receive intensive literacy and numeracy support from a special education teacher.
- In some cases, students will be part of a Life Skills class, which provides intensive programming and support in basic literacy and numeracy, technology integration, communication, self-help, social skills and vocational training.
- Some students with a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) will be part of the Secondary ASD program, which is offered at certain locations in the county. This program is designed for students with significant needs in the areas of communication, self-regulation, social skills, self-help, community awareness and academics.

OUTCOMES

Students may work towards an Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD), an Ontario Secondary School Certificate (OSSC) or a Certificate of Accomplishment.

WHO TO CONTACT

If you would like to speak to someone about support, first contact your elementary school. After the transition to high school, you can speak to your teen's teacher or the school administration if you have questions.

More information about special education is available at www.scdsb.on.ca in the 'Programs' section.





STUDENT WELL-BEING

How to analyse scenes from Hamlet and collaborate in small groups to interpret a text (Act 1, scenes 3-4).

a key develop
a key connect
the any liter

Our understanding of the play will open
... will be entered
... reading with





Well-being is a priority in our schools. We help students learn skills and provide supports to enhance social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.

Equity and inclusive education

Our teachers, administrators and system leaders embed equitable and inclusive practices into our daily work to ensure that all members of our school communities are included, see themselves reflected in our schools and can be successful. We value the diversity of our learners, families and communities, and seek to ensure that we remove barriers to success for all students to learn in supportive, inclusive and bias-free schools. We work together with students, families and communities to continuously improve our practices.

RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION

We acknowledge each individual's right to follow or not to follow religious beliefs and practices, free from discriminatory or harassing behaviours, and we are committed to taking all reasonable steps to provide religious accommodation to staff and students. Students must present verbal or written notice from their parent(s)/guardian(s) specifying their accommodation needs relating to religious observances, including holy days on which they will be absent from school.

SAFE SPACES FOR LGBTQ STUDENTS

All students and staff should feel safe and accepted at school and work regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristic. This expectation is part of Ontario's Education Act.

We encourage students to become allies of their gay, lesbian, bisexual, intersexual, transgendered, transsexual and two-spirited peers. Schools run a range of activities to support the safe and accepting school climate, including leadership development, guest speakers and GSAs (gender and sexuality alliances) or safer space groups.

Positive mental health

Student well-being is critical to student success. When students are preoccupied with emotional concerns, they cannot participate fully in learning. Similarly, students who experience academic challenges due to learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities, or other learning challenges can develop mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression. We are committed to improving the well-being of our students. We provide training for school staff to help them recognize signs that a student may need additional support. School social workers are available to assist when needed. We also rely on the help of community agencies to provide support.

It's natural for students to feel occasional stress, and it is not uncommon for students to need support to assist with their mental health and well-being. You can help your teen by providing practical support, like assisting with the creation of a schedule or offering to help them prioritize assignments. We also encourage students to reach out to someone at school if they're feeling overwhelmed or discouraged. Their guidance counselor, student success teacher, special education teacher or classroom teacher are available to help.

If you feel your teen may need additional support, start by contacting your family doctor. Contact the school as well to make staff aware of your concerns. Schools and parents/guardians need to work as a team to support students.

Supports available in Simcoe County:

- 24-hour mental health crisis line 1-888-893-8333 or 705-728-5044
- Canadian Mental Health & Addictions 705-725-5491
- Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868
- Kinark 1-800-454-6275
- Newpath 705-725-7656

You can also access the 211 directory by phone (**dial 2-1-1**) or online at **www.211ontario.ca** to request information on community resources related to a specific concern.

Safe and accepting schools

CHARACTER EDUCATION

Character education is embedded throughout the school experience. We build inclusive and supportive environments for learning and working through peer-support networks, character development activities, class discussions and more. We focus on 10 character attributes: integrity, responsibility, cooperation, caring, respect, optimism, honesty, empathy, courage and inclusiveness.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Our code of conduct outlines expectations of behaviour. The code of conduct is reviewed with students annually. It's important for parents/guardians and students to understand that the code of conduct covers not only situations that happen during the school day, but also situations that happen after hours that may have an impact on school climate. An example of this is posting defamatory comments about a student or staff member on social media.



SAFETY PROCEDURES

We have a number of procedures in place designed to keep our schools safe.

Shelter in place

Shelter in place is used when there is an environmental or weather-related situation, like a chemical spill outside the building, or a major storm. During a shelter in place, activities will continue inside the school, but students and staff will not be allowed to leave the building. In some cases, the ventilation system will be shut off.

Hold and secure

A hold and secure is used when there is a situation taking place in the community that is not related to the school, like a bank robbery nearby. During a hold and secure, activities continue inside the building, but all doors are locked and no one is allowed to enter or exit the building.

Lockdown

A lockdown is used when there is a major incident or a threat of violence related to the school. During a lockdown, students and staff will move to secure areas, away from doors and windows. Doors are locked, lights are shut off and blinds are drawn. Students and staff will remain quiet. Schools practice lockdown drills at least two times per year. In the unlikely event of an actual lockdown situation, police ask that parents/guardians do not go to the school. Information will be communicated through the school board social media sites (www.facebook.com/SCDSB and www.twitter.com/SCDSB_Schools) and website (www.scdsb.on.ca), through local police and local media.

Fire drills and evacuation plans

All schools have evacuation plans, which include a designated evacuation site. Schools practice the evacuation plan throughout the year during regular drills.

Sign-in at the office

All visitors are required to sign in at the school office.

Criminal record checks for staff and volunteers

All staff and volunteers are required to complete a criminal record check with vulnerable sector screening before working with students.

First aid equipment

Schools are equipped with Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and First Aid Kits. Designated staff are trained in CPR.

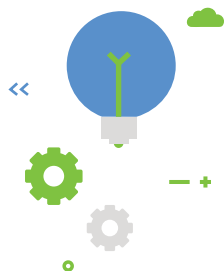
Healthy schools

SCHOOL FOOD AND BEVERAGE POLICY

All SCDSB schools are required to ensure that food and beverages available for sale meet the requirements of the School Food and Beverage Policy. More information about the policy is available at www.scdsb.on.ca under 'Programs' and 'Safe and Healthy Schools'.

HEALTH UNIT PARTNERSHIP

The SCDSB has a partnership with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. Public health nurses provide support to schools on various topics. For health-related topics for teens, please visit the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.





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SCDSB

www.scdsb.on.ca

For an accessible version
of this information,
contact info@scdsb.on.ca.