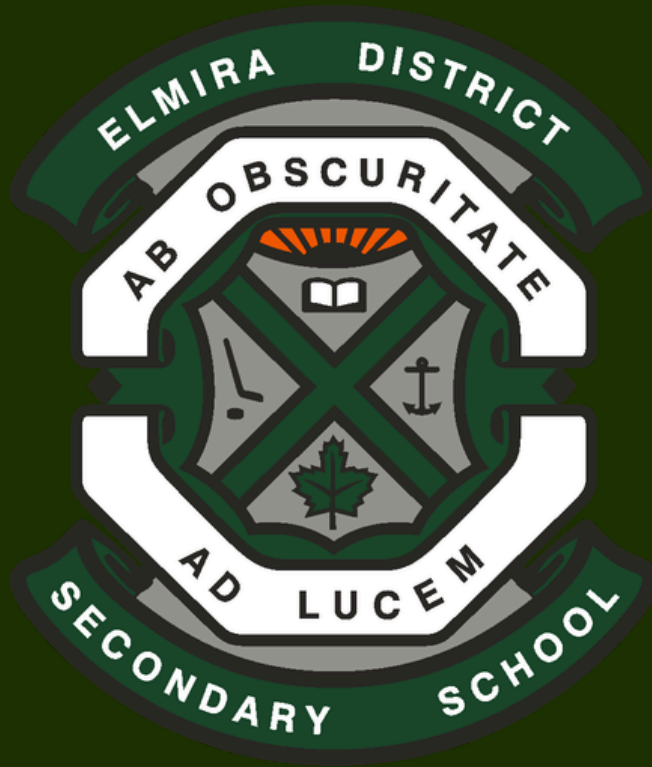




ELMIRA DISTRICT SECONDARY SCHOOL

STUDENT & CAREGIVER HANDBOOK



01

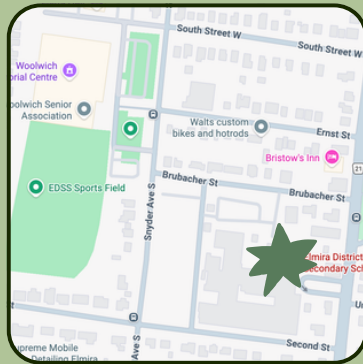
WELCOME

1.1 WELCOME TO EDSS!



SCHOOL ADDRESS:

4 UNIVERSITY AVENUE W
ELMIRA, ON
N3B 1K2
519-669-5414
EDS.WRDSB.CA



Established in 1939, Elmira District Secondary School (EDSS) has served as an educational hub for the Township of Woolwich and northern Waterloo Region for generations. Over decades of growth, EDSS has evolved from a small rural high school into a modern secondary institution, while preserving a distinct sense of community, tradition, and local pride. Known as the Home of the Lancers, our school honours a long-standing tradition of academic excellence, artistic expression, athletic achievement, and skilled trades development.

At EDSS, we believe that academic and personal success occurs when students, staff, families, and community partners collaborate within a safe, caring, and inclusive educational environment.

Our philosophy rests on three foundational pillars:

I. Relational Learning & Well-Being:

Learning is fundamentally human. We prioritize physical, emotional, and cultural safety so every student feels valued, heard, and supported.

II. Equity & Inclusive Community:

Aligned with board policy, we center student identity and agency. Diversity in thought, background, and talent enriches our school culture, and we aim to remove barriers to opportunity.

III. Shared Responsibility & Engagement:

High school is a joint effort. Success requires open communication and active partnership between students, educators, and caregivers.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP



MR. T. SWARTZ
PRINCIPAL



MS. A. SEILING
VICE-PRINCIPAL
(STUDENTS A-K)



MR. J. DENHART
VICE-PRINCIPAL
(STUDENTS L-Z)



1.2 GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT & POST-SECONDARY PATHWAYS

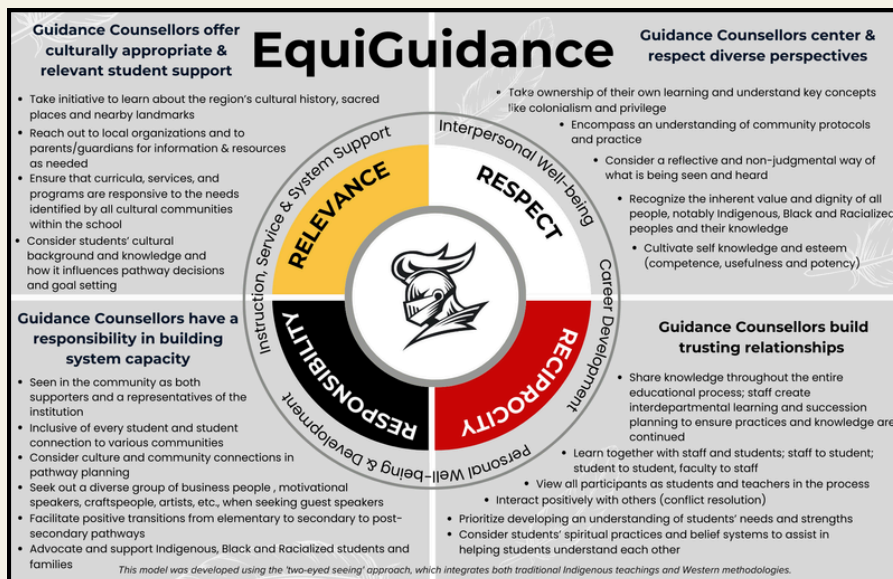
EDSS Guidance Counsellors support students with academic planning, post-secondary transitions, and personal well-being.

- **Academic & Course Planning:** Course selection, timetable changes, tracking graduation requirements (30 credits, 40 volunteer hours, 2 elearning courses, literacy test), and enrolled specialized options like SHSM (Specialist High Skills Major).
- **Post-Secondary Pathways:** Assistance with university (OUAC) and college (OCAS) applications, apprenticeship programs (OYAP), trade pathways, scholarships, bursaries and OSAP funding.
- **Well-Being & Mental Health:** Confidential short-term counselling, coping strategies, and direct referrals to school social workers, Child & Youth Workers, or community mental health agencies.



HOW TO CONNECT...

Students can book an appointment with their alpha-assigned counsellor online through the EDSS website or drop by the Guidance Office (2nd floor) before school, at lunch, or after class. Caregivers can contact Guidance directly to discuss their student's pathway or support needs.



GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS, SOCIAL WORK, AND CHILD YOUTH CARE WORK



MS. HORST
(STUDENTS A-D,S)



MS. ENNS-HILDEBRAND
(STUDENTS E-K, ULEARN)



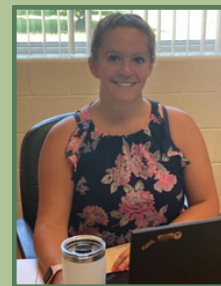
MS. STOVER
(STUDENTS L-R,T)



MR. HILLER
(STUDENTS U-Z, ACE, ELAWS)



MS. PERSTON
SOCIAL WORKER

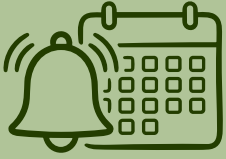


MS. CABELDU
CHILD & YOUTH CARE WORKER



02

DAILY OPERATIONS & STUDENT LIFE



2.1 DAILY SCHEDULE & BELL TIMES

 EDSS DAILY SCHEDULE		
Time	C/D Week	D/C Week
8:10 - 9:25	PERIOD A	PERIOD A
9:25 - 9:30	Travel Time	Travel Time
9:30 - 10:45	PERIOD B	PERIOD B
10:45 - 11:45	Lunch	Lunch
11:45 - 1:00	PERIOD C	PERIOD D
1:00 - 1:05	Travel Time	Travel Time
1:05 - 2:20	PERIOD D	PERIOD C

- Our school is open to students at 7:30am.
- Students must be in their designated period 1 classroom before the starting bell.
- Students have a dedicated midday period for lunch. Food and drinks are restricted to designated areas (cafeteria, courtyard, or foyers) and are not permitted in instructional spaces unless supervised and permitted by the educator.

AFTERNOON PERIOD ROTATION:

- To accommodate extracurricular schedules, athletic early dismissals, and ensure equitable, optimal instructional time across all classes, afternoon periods alternate weekly between C/D Weeks (Period C follows lunch, Period D ends the day) and D/C Weeks (Period D follows lunch, Period C ends the day).
- Students should consult the annual Semester-at-a-Glance calendar to track weekly afternoon period ordering.



2.2 SCHOOL ACCESS & VISITORS

- Only registered EDSS students and staff are permitted on school grounds during the school day. Students enrolled at other schools (including other WRDSB or private schools) are strictly prohibited from visiting or loitering on EDSS property without prior administrative permission.
- Parents, caregivers, and official visitors must report directly to the Main Office upon arrival to sign in and receive a visitor badge. Unannounced visits to classrooms during instructional time are not permitted in order to prevent unnecessary disruptions to learning.
- Unauthorized individuals or students from other schools found on school property will be asked to leave immediately and may face trespassing warnings or administrative/police referral.



2.3

TRANSPORTATION & BUS SAFETY



- Student transportation eligibility and route details are managed through Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region (STSWR).
- The school bus is considered an extension of the school environment. School conduct standards apply fully while riding on or waiting for school buses, and any inappropriate or unsafe behavior on a bus may result in disciplinary action, up to and including the temporary or permanent loss of bus privileges.
- Students are assigned to their designated transportation route. If a student wishes to ride the bus of another student occasionally, they must attain a guest bus pass in the Main Office with the consent of a caregiver and signed approval of an administrator. This must be done prior to boarding the bus. Guest bus passes are issued subject to bus seat capacity and are not guaranteed.



2.4

WALKING, BUSSING, PARKING DROP-OFF AND PICKUP



- The Main Parking Lot at Brubacher/Klinck St is reserved strictly for EDSS faculty, visiting WRDSB staff, and two disabled parking permit holders. This is no longer a student drop-off pick-up location.
- Additionally disabled permit parking spots are available by the Second St. entrance.
- Caregivers doing student drop-offs and/or pick-ups may not enter the Main Staff parking lot as indicated by signage. Caregivers may drop off and pick up their students at the front-U (unidirectional lane off Arthur St) or at locations in the community. See our [website](#) for 5 minute maps.
- By-Law signage prevents drop-off and pick-up along both sides of second street along the length of the school building.
- Our bus lanes are strictly one direction for busses only at all times.



- EDSS is a walk-to-school site with bussing provided for eligible students. The site was never designed for large numbers of student drop-off and pick-up nor student parking. Check our [website](#) to see locations in the community students can be dropped-off and/or park close to the school.
- The Upper Parking Lot (shown on the left) is strictly reserved for eligible visitors, parents and student vehicles registered with a valid EDSS student parking pass. Parking pass registered students can also use the Emmanuel Church parking lot on First St. and the Waterloo Memorial Centre for parking.



2.5 COMMUNITY CITIZENSHIP & GOOD NEIGHBOUR EXPECTATIONS



- Students represent EDSS whenever they are in the Elmira community.
- Trespassing on private residential property, loitering at local storefronts, or littering in surrounding neighborhoods is strictly prohibited.
- Respectful behavior is required when crossing streets and using public amenities, such as the Woolwich Memorial Centre (WMC).



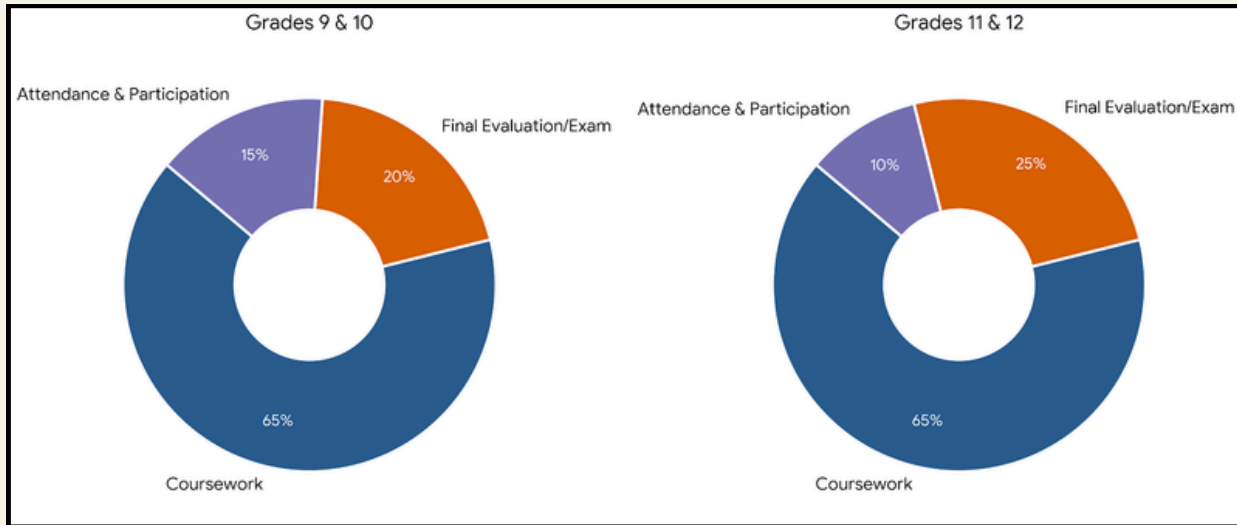
2.6 ATTENDANCE & FINAL GRADES

(ONTARIO MINISTRY OF EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS)

- Beginning in the 2026–2027 school year, the Ontario Ministry of Education requires secondary schools to include attendance and class participation as a formal part of a student's final course mark.



HOW MARKS ARE STRUCTURED...



WHAT COUNTS AS AN EXCUSED VS. UNEXCUSED ABSENCE?

- **Excused Absences:** Will not lower a student's grade. These include illness, bad weather days, approved cultural or holy days, and pre-approved school activities (e.g., sports, music, debate).
- **Unexcused Absences:** Unexplained absences or truancy will reduce the attendance portion of the student's grade.

HOW CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION IS ASSESSED:

- In addition to physical presence, teachers evaluate whether a student:
 - Participates in class discussions and contributes ideas.
 - Asks relevant questions.
 - Helps foster a positive learning environment.
- The evaluative rubrics and tools for participation and attendance will vary in accordance with the course of study.

DAILY ATTENDANCE PROTOCOLS:

- **Reporting Absences:** Caregivers must report all absences by email before 8:10 AM. Per Ministry of Education policy, absences reported by phone or voicemail cannot be officially validated — all valid reports must be in writing.
- **Lateness:** Arriving within 10 minutes goes directly to class; arriving 10+ minutes late requires signing in with Attendance in the Main Office.
- **Signing Out:** Students leaving early must have prior caregiver permission recorded with Attendance in the Main Office before departing school grounds.





03

ACADEMICS, ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



3.1

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

(ALIGNED WITH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S POLICY, GROWING SUCCESS)

GROWING SUCCESS

ASSESSMENT, EVALUATION,
AND REPORTING
IN ONTARIO SCHOOLS

First Edition, Covering Grades 1 to 12

2010



- Student learning is evaluated directly against the overall expectations of the Ontario curriculum to ensure consistent provincial standards.
- Grades are based on a balanced collection of evidence gathered over time through teacher observations, student-teacher conversations, and final work products.
- Teachers place special consideration on a student's most consistent and most recent demonstrations of learning, rather than strictly relying on raw mathematical averages.
- Academic marks reflect subject-specific learning, while work habits and personal skills (e.g., organization, responsibility, collaboration) are reported separately.



3.2

COURSE LOAD & SCHEDULE ADJUSTMENTS

- Students in Grades 9, 10, and 11 must maintain a full-time timetable of 4 courses per semester (8 credits per year).
- Grade 12 students with 24 or more accumulated credits may apply through Guidance for a study period (spare).
- Drops for Grade 11 or 12 courses must be completed within 5 instructional days following the issuance of the mid-term report card.
- Courses dropped after this threshold will remain permanently on the Ontario Student Transcript along with the grade achieved at the time of withdrawal.



3.3

LATE & MISSED WORK PROTOCOL



- Students are responsible for submitting evidence of learning on or before assigned due dates.
- Students are encourage to utilize support strategies and develop time management habits to support the timely completion of course work (i.e. agenda, seeking out support from a teacher early on)
- Unsubmitted work will be recorded as "incomplete" on grade reports, which directly impacts final mark determination and may put credit attainment at risk.



3.4

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

- In accordance with Growing Success and board policy, academic work must reflect a student's individual effort. Cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized AI usage, or submitting work completed by others compromises academic integrity.

Progressive Responses:

1. Teacher and student conference to discuss the work submission, process and intent
2. Direct contact with caregivers and an administrator.
3. Re-doing the assessment or completing an alternate assessment under direct supervision.
4. Notation on file impacting academic awards, honors, and scholarships, along with potential disciplinary consequences.



3.5

CHROMEBOOKS & EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

- WRDSB provides a 1:1 Chromebook to secondary students to ensure equitable access to digital learning tools.
- Caregivers of incoming Grade 9 or new students complete the digital Chromebook Agreement & Opt-In Form via the School-Day portal (or request a paper copy from the Main Office.)
- Completing the opt-in form once grants a device assignment for the student's entire secondary enrollment in WRDSB.
- Returning Grade 10–12 students who already hold a board device and students utilizing Special Education Amount (SEA) equipment do not need to re-apply.
- Students in Grades 9 through 12 must bring their assigned device to school every day fully charged.
- Students who opt out of receiving a WRDSB Chromebook are encouraged to bring their own computer or iPad to support their learning.
- Devices remain board property and must be returned upon leaving EDSS or graduating. Unreturned devices will be disabled.
- Families are liable for repair or replacement fees resulting from loss, theft, or physical damage caused by neglect or misuse (e.g., \$50 for first-time accidental damage repairs; up to \$400 full replacement for lost/damaged hardware).



Elmira District Secondary School
Home of the Lancers

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Morning Announcements

S.T.A.R. FORM

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

BUS INFORMATION

WEEKLY EVENTS

GUEST SPEAKERS

NEWS AND

Complete the Student Technical Assistance Request (STAR) Form on the left hand side of our website homepage for help with your Chromebook!



04

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR, CONDUCT & SAFETY STANDARDS



4.1

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR & CONDUCT POLICY

- EDSS enforces a progressive discipline model to maintain a safe, welcoming, and productive school environment where all community members are expected to demonstrate respect, civility, and responsibility.
- EDSS maintains a safe space free from physical violence, fighting, pushing, tripping, as well as non-consensual physical contact and consensual rough-housing or play-fighting.
- Weapons, replica weapons, and related paraphernalia are strictly forbidden on school property and at all school-sanctioned events.

Violations will result in immediate administrative intervention and mandatory caregiver notification. Progressive discipline will be applied, which may include:

- Restorative practices and formal administrative interventions
- In-school or out-of-school suspension
- Police involvement (where required by law or board policy)



4.2

PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICE EXPECTATIONS

- During instructional time, phones and headphones must be silenced and stored out of sight (e.g., inside a backpack).
- Cell phone use during class time in hallways, washrooms, and change rooms is strictly forbidden.
- Smartwatches cannot be worn during assessments or evaluations.
- Personal devices may be used in hallways between classes and during lunch; students on a valid spare may use their devices in the cafeteria only.
- If a device becomes visible during class, the student will be reminded and asked to place the device in their bag or locker.
- If the student does not follow the expectation, the student will be referred to an administrator at the Main Office, and asked to place their device in an envelope that will be stored in the Main Office vault.
- The student will receive their device back from the office at the next natural break. For example, if the student has their device stored during Period A or B, then they will get their device back at lunch time. If it is stored during Period C or D, they will receive it at the end of the day. Students will be responsible for picking up their device at the Main Office.

Progressive discipline will apply for continued non-compliance, which may include:

- A phone call home
- Requirement to hand in the device for the entire instructional day
- Suspension
- Taking photos, audio, or video without explicit consent violates board policy and privacy.
- Students bring personal electronics at their own risk; EDSS is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items.





4.3 SMOKING, VAPING, ALCOHOL & ILLICIT SUBSTANCES

- Smoking, vaping, or using tobacco, e-cigarettes, cannabis, alcohol, or illicit substances anywhere on school property (including parking lots, athletic fields, and adjacent property) is strictly prohibited by law and board policy for all.
- Washrooms are intended for personal use. Gathering in stalls, loitering, or vaping in groups compromises safety and intimidates others. Students may be asked to see an administrator if they are not using washrooms appropriately.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES FOR VAPING/SMOKING:

- First Possession/Use Incident: Immediate administrative referral, hand over of any vapes/cigarettes, caregiver notification, and official reporting to by-law.
- Repeated Misuse or Possession: Repeated by-law reporting may result in by-law imposed monetary fines as well as progressive discipline measures under WRDSB procedures, including out-of-school suspensions, and potential expulsion proceedings.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES FOR ILLICIT DRUGS/ALCOHOL:

- Immediate suspension from school.



4.4 BULLYING PREVENTION & CYBERBULLYING

(POLICY 6009/PPM 144)

- Bullying — defined as repeated, persistent, aggressive behavior involving an imbalance of power intended to cause distress, fear, or harm — is strictly prohibited.
- Encompasses physical (hitting, tripping), verbal (name-calling, homophobic/sexist/racist slurs), social (exclusion, spreading rumors), and cyberbullying (sharing hurtful comments, threats, or unauthorized photos via texts, email, or social platforms).
- Violations prompt progressive discipline up to and including formal suspension.



4.5 STUDENT DRESS POLICY

(WRDSB POLICY 6010)



- Establishes an equitable, anti-discriminatory environment centered on student well-being. Students have the right to express themselves through clothing comfortably and without fear of bias.
- Clothing must cover private areas and conform to safety standards in specialized environments (shops, science labs, physical education). Items displaying profane language, violent imagery, hate speech, or drug/alcohol promotion are prohibited.



05

FACILITIES, LOCKER REGULATIONS AND LEARNING SERVICES



5.1 LOCKER ASSIGNMENT & SECURITY RULES

- Lockers are school property assigned to individual students for their personal convenience.
- Students must use only the specific locker assigned to them by the Main Office and their combinations recorded.
- Sharing lockers or sharing lock combinations with other students is strictly prohibited.
- Lockers must be secured with a reliable combination lock at all times.
- EDSS is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged items left inside lockers or change rooms. Valuables should be left at home.
- School administrators reserve the right to search students, their possessions, and their lockers if there is reasonable suspicion regarding safety risks or Code of Conduct violations.



5.2 LEARNING SERVICES & STUDENT SUCCESS SUPPORT

- Individual Education Plans (IEPs): Developed collaboratively to outline instructional, environmental, and assessment accommodations.

LEARNING SERVICES: ROOM 3119

- Learning Services supports students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Special Education Resource Teachers (SERTs) and Educational Assistants (EAs) work alongside classroom teachers to provide tailored academic strategies and accommodations.
 - Academic Accommodations: Access to extra time, alternative work spaces, assistive technology, and scribe/reader support during assessments.
 - Skill Building: Instruction in executive functioning, time management, study strategies, and self-advocacy skills.
 - Transition Planning: Ongoing guidance for key milestones, including the Grade 9 transition and post-secondary pathway planning.



STUDENT SUCCESS: ROOM 2111

- The Student Success program offers flexible support for any student who needs help managing their coursework or keeping up with graduation requirements.
 - Targeted Academic Support: Assistance with assignment completion, test preparation, and catching up on missed coursework.
 - Credit Recovery & Protection: Specialized interventions to help students complete course requirements without delaying their academic progress.
 - Work Habit Coaching: Support with organizational skills, prioritizing tasks, and managing academic workload.
- Accessing Support Students can access Learning Services or Student Success through a referral from a teacher, Guidance Counselor, administrator, or by dropping in during designated resource times. Caregivers who have questions about IEP accommodations or academic interventions are encouraged to contact their child's assigned SERT or Guidance Counselor.