

Dear Students,

Mental Health Week

May 3-9 is Mental Health Week. We have all experienced the stress and pressures of the pandemic restrictions. Mental Health Week is a great time to think about how to protect and promote your mental health, practice skills to manage stress, and reach out to others to offer support or if you need extra support. Next week is also Education Week in Ontario and the theme this year is #StrongerTogether. We are all stronger when we take care of ourselves and each other.

Here are some ideas to protect and promote your mental health [Tips for Thriving While Learning Remotely](#) and focus on self-care [Self-Care 101 for Students](#).

Strategies and exercises to help manage stress:

- [Mental health literacy](#),
- [Breathing exercises](#)
- [Muscle relaxation exercises](#)
- [Gratitude exercises](#)
- [Thought-changing exercises](#)
- [Distraction exercises](#).

Asking for help or helping a friend:

If you or a friend need extra help, speak to a trusted adult or reach out to a community resource. Here are tips on how best to support a friend: [Be There Golden Rules](#).

Sometimes it's hard to ask for help. Here are some suggestions on when and how to start that conversation: [No Problem is Too Big or Too Small](#)

Vaccine Update:

Good news! Next month, more people will be eligible for a vaccine, including older students. According to [an updated Ontario schedule](#), by May 24th, individuals 18+ will be able to start booking an appointment. If you live in a [“hotspot” location](#) with a postal code starting with K1T, K1V, or K2V, your turn could come earlier than that.

Vaccines are safe and effective at preventing serious illness, hospitalization and death from COVID-19. The sooner we all can get a vaccine, the sooner we can ease restrictions.

For those under 18, please know the science is advancing and considerable research is taking place on new vaccines.

Continue to monitor the Ottawa Public Health [COVID-19 vaccine page for local updates](#) and sign up for the OPH vaccine newsletter. Information

is updated frequently. Please book an appointment if you are able and encourage your family members to get their shot.

Police Involvement in School - Indigenous discussion group (May 6)

First Nations, Métis and Inuit students are invited to share your perspectives as part of the OCDSB [review of police involvement in schools](#). A member of the Indigenous Education team together with the human rights and equity advisor will facilitate the virtual discussion group.

Date: May 6, from 3:30-5:00 p.m.

To register: [Click here](#)

Relay for Life

You're invited to join the board-wide Relay For Life, May 28 from 2:00-4:00 p.m. To get to know more about the event, [watch the video](#) and be part of a global movement to end cancer.

- **To register**, [visit this link](#). Participation in the event is free, but you're encouraged to fundraise and support the cause. The first 200 students to register will be entered into a raffle for one of four \$25 gift cards of their choosing.
- **Survivor stories:** If you are currently battling cancer, or are a survivor, you can share your story on the event day as a pre-recorded interview. If you're interested in sharing, please fill out the following form before May 7th: [Survivor Story Form](#)
- **Performances and entertainment:** If you're a singer, dancer, stand up comedian, or any other type of entertainer, you can showcase your talent in front of OCDSB at the Relay For Life. To submit an act, please fill out the following form before May 7th: [Performances Form](#)
- **For updates:** Follow the OCDSB Relay for Life Instagram account for more updates [@ocdsbrelayforlife](#).

Black Excellence: Career Advice - Opening Doors for Others

As part of our Black Excellence Discussion Series, we are inviting four professionals to share their experiences and offer career advice for students.

Date: Tuesday, May 18, from 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Format: Livestream via [YouTube](#)

Panel:

- Dominique Dennerly, coach, facilitator, and management consultant
- Dr. Joy Harewood, Director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging and Associate Clinical Professor at SUNY College of Optometry (former OCDSB student)
- Dr. Kwadwo Kyeremanteng, a critical care and palliative care physician at The Ottawa Hospital
- Faisa Omer, Mental Health Counsellor (former OCDSB student)

For bios and to learn more, [click here](#). You can submit your questions for [the panel via our Google Form](#).

Save the Date! May 20 - Rainbow Youth Forum (7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.)

OCDSB invites students of all ages to join us for this virtual event that celebrates our diversity. The 16th Annual Rainbow Youth Forum will include Decolonizing Gender, Drag Storytime, workshops, Chill Zone and a Rainbow Spring Fling Dance! The RYF encourages safe and inclusive school environments by providing an opportunity to enhance knowledge and awareness about equity and diversity issues. Registration link and more details will be shared shortly.

Q&A on the Stay-at-Home Order in Ottawa

What kinds of activities are still available to families during the new Stay-at-Home Order in Ottawa? Ottawa Public Health shared [some answers here](#).

COVID-19 Resource Line for Arabic and Somali speaking families

Do you or your family members need services and information in Somali or Arabic? Call the Ottawa Immigrant COVID-19 Resource Line (OICRL) at 1-844-833-1234.

Visit the [Ottawa Public Health Multilingual Resources for Diverse Communities page](#) for more helpful resources in multiple languages.

Celebrating Cultural Heritage

May is an opportunity to celebrate and learn more about the diverse cultural heritage in the District. Watch for more information on our website next week, as we mark Asian Heritage Month, Jewish Heritage Month and South Asian Heritage Month.

In case you missed it...

Thinking about Summer School?

For information, including a list of available programs and how to register, visit www.summerschoolinottawa.com.