

HAWTHORNE 2 BILINGUAL ALTERNATIVE

Hawthorne Handbook · 2008-09-01 21:34

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This is the Hawthorne II Bilingual Alternative Handbook's final draft after the revisions and discussions that occurred during the year 2007-2008. The principles and working points stand as they are and should be respected. And yet, it continues to be a work in progress. Any member of our community who wishes to take issue with aspects of the handbook should bring their ideas to a **school council** meeting or should write in the comments section of this entry.

When some point warrants it, a committee can be formed to fine-tune it further, as is currently the case with the dialectic around the place of competition and the value of collaboration in our school culture.

HAWTHORNE II BILINGUAL ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL HANDBOOK

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Philosophical Approach Represented By Core Values

Hawthorne's alternative identity is based on its unique approach to the Ontario curriculum, core values and a culture of parent/family involvement.

Members of the Hawthorne Community have agreed on the following Core Values:

COMMUNITY

Community is the cornerstone of Hawthorne II. It can be experienced at the beginning and end of every school day as parents drop off and pick up their children or at the various organized events throughout the year (potlucks, concerts, etc). All members of the community (students, teachers, parents and administrators) are expected to be actively engaged in our school community. Relationships are valued and strengthened in the interests of developing a safe, supportive learning environment.

Families at Hawthorne reflect the diversity of the city we live in. We welcome, respect and wish to foster diversity in our school community.

Community as a core value is taught through school activities that make us aware of our surroundings from our immediate neighbourhood to the global village. Our individual well-being is linked to the well-being of the community which supports and nurtures us and our children.

COLLABORATION

At Hawthorne, we emphasize a non-competitive and collaborative environment to help our children see that both their own and others' contributions have intrinsic value. Teachers, parents /caregivers, administrators and children collaborate on creating the best possible education. The practice of calling teachers by their first names is an important expression of this partnership. Collaboration is also sought through inclusive and consensual decision making.

We strive for a non-competitive environment within the classroom and school wide initiatives. There are optional opportunities for competitive activities (e.g. sports teams). When students participate in competitive activities they will be held to a high standard of respect toward their teammates and opposing teams.

RESPECT

Mutual respect is intrinsic to a child centered educational approach in which each child is understood as a unique learner with their own process of maturation and their own individual strengths and weaknesses. Respect is also about recognition of each other's needs and rights - children's, teacher's, parent's, administration's and the rights of those beyond our school community.

HOLISM

Holism is the belief that the development of all aspects of being from the physical and artistic to social responsibility and emotional self-awareness are equally important and interconnected. A holistic perspective not only views intelligence in a broader, multifaceted way, it is also an understanding that there are various learning styles which differ from person to person. As a core value, holism emphasizes integration of perspectives and variety of expression, such as presenting classroom topics through an interdisciplinary approach.

BILINGUALISM

Hawthorne's particular practice of teaching French and English from kindergarten is unique within the TDSB. It is an alternative to the standard curriculum (See Curriculum details below.) As a core value, it focuses our attention on the multicultural nature of our society, valuing this diversity by giving specific focus to French language and culture.

Community Expectations

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

In working together, teachers, parents/caregivers, and administration can work collaboratively toward the common goal of educating our children according to our core values. When parents work with our teachers and teachers let parents know how they can best support the whole classroom, our school benefits in many ways:

- Relationships between community members are strengthened
- Children understand that we all value their education
- Teachers get much needed support in the education of our children

Family involvement at Hawthorne is vital to our success and is therefore requested of all families. There are a variety of ways to be involved in the school which accommodate professional obligations and changing family structures. Whether people are involved directly in the classroom, on a committee or at an event, we value and respect the time that family members are able to give.

Some examples of involvement:

- School council participation and executive positions (See Governance section)
- Organizing special events
- Committee membership: Peaceful Schools, Eco-school, French
- Class representative
- Making calls for the phone tree system
- Offering after school or noon hour clubs or programs

VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM

Parents are a dynamic and valuable part of the classroom experience. Parental involvement in the classroom fits into two general categories: parents with a specific expertise to share (e.g. music, visual arts, crafts, gardening) and parents interested in generally helping out.

Teachers have different working styles/needs in the classroom and parents can communicate directly with their child's teacher to plan how to contribute. Teachers may also request volunteers for specific tasks and may post these opportunities outside classrooms. All volunteer scheduling in the classroom is arranged through the teacher.

Some volunteer jobs in/for the classroom include:

- performing, teaching, presenting or leading activities
- assisting on field trips
- collecting materials from the community e.g. art materials
- reading to children and listening to reading
- volunteering in the library
- playing math or language games with small groups
- facilitating groups with work to do
- helping set up gym equipment
- preparing and supervising art projects
- photocopying
- organizing book club orders for the teachers
- one-on-one tutoring

Helpful reminders for volunteering in the classroom:

- Respect the privacy of the students in the class.
- Respect the teachers' professional responsibility to provide a curriculum which meets the outcomes set by Ontario's Ministry of Education.
- Consider the needs of the classroom first.
- Assist children and let them complete their own projects for a stronger sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

If you have questions about volunteering in the classroom, talk to your child's teacher, an experienced parent volunteer or your Class Rep for some ideas and feedback.

Code Of Behaviour

Hawthorne II has adopted a Code of Behaviour to reinforce the core values of respect, collaboration and community. We emphasize a preventative approach to behaviour problems and the importance of dialogue between parents, teachers and students.

Discipline should not be seen as a way of controlling behaviour, but rather as a way of enabling young people to make responsible choices and develop self-discipline.

Implementation of the Code of Behaviour is considered the responsibility of every member of the Hawthorne II community. Each September, our School Code of Behaviour is sent home. Parents and students can review the Code together so that everyone knows what their rights and responsibilities are. Our Code of Behaviour reflects the community nature of our school, our cooperative learning process and Toronto District School Board policies.

OUR CODE

Students Have the Right to Expect:

- fair and respectful treatment from peers and staff
- a high standard of education
- freedom from physical and verbal harassment
- a safe and supportive learning environment
- sensitivity to their academic, social and emotional needs

Students are responsible for:

- respecting the rights and feelings of others
- resolving problems (conflicts) using words
- completing work to the best of their ability
- showing courtesy and self-discipline in actions and words
- knowing and following rules and procedures
- regular and punctual attendance
- respect for school and public property

Staff Have the Right to Expect:

- respect, co-operation and support from students and parents
- appropriate and considerate behaviour
- a conscientious attitude towards learning
- completion of assignments to the best of a student's ability
- students that are prepared with the appropriate learning materials

Staff is responsible for:

- promoting students' self esteem
- being sensitive to students' needs and rights
- managing a disciplined, organized and safe classroom
- planning and conducting an effective, stimulating program
- assisting students in their learning
- communications with parents regarding academic and behavioural concerns and achievements
- supporting conflict resolution strategies

Parents/Caregivers Have the Right to Expect:

- a high quality education program
- a safe, supportive and sensitive educational environment
- communication regarding academic and behavioural concerns and achievements

Parents/Caregivers are responsible for:

- encouraging a positive attitude towards learning and a supportive attitude to the school's behavioural expectations
- taking an active, supportive interest in their children's progress and school life
- establishing timely contact with the school if there are specific concerns regarding the well-being of their child
- supporting conflict resolution strategies

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Hawthorne has an established procedure for resolving conflicts between community members:

Student/Teacher

If a problem arises with a child, parents are asked to:

- Discuss thoroughly with your child,
- Make an appointment to discuss with the teacher,
- If still concerned, speak to the Principal,
- If resolution not reached, speak to the School Superintendent.
- The TDSB Trustee can also be consulted and involved but communication with staff is always the first step in a constructive process.
- Please do not jump to conclusions or be negative,
- Please do not undermine the teacher's relationship with the child,
- Please be willing to accept all versions of the story,
- Please follow the order in the procedure outlined above.

Parent concerns with Teacher issues should not be discussed in front of the children, at class meetings or at School Council. Parents and staff must respect confidentiality.

Parent/Teacher

Parents and teachers are asked to start by trying to resolve issues informally by making an appointment to talk face-to face with mutual consideration and respect. If an issue remains unresolved, either parent or teacher is free to go to the Principal or Vice Principal to make an appointment for a meeting to help resolve

the conflict. Difficulties that are unresolved at that level should be taken to the Superintendent. The School Council is not the appropriate place to discuss disputes.

Curriculum At Hawthorne II

Students learn best when they are critically engaged with the curriculum. The current Ontario curriculum is very broad and we believe that students need to be encouraged to think deeply about elements of the content they study, focusing on issues of bias, perspective and social justice. In this way, they become creators as well as discoverers of knowledge. Through a critical approach, students become more conscious of how societal messages influence them and are better able to navigate through the text-saturated world in which we live. A critical approach to pedagogy gives our students the skills they need to become real participants in a democratic society.

Please take note that the curriculum at Hawthorne is challenging. The French program is taught in addition to the Ontario curriculum and requires a strong commitment from parents to having their children in an enriched and rigorous program. Hawthorne is not a French immersion program and uses the TDSB Extended French curriculum from grade 4

FRENCH

Bilingual teachers at Hawthorne II educate students to enjoy and explore the French language. Our goal is to give students an awareness of French as a living language based on an appreciation of French in both Canadian and global contexts.

The primary grades

Beginning in kindergarten, the French language is an integral part of the child's daily experience at Hawthorne. Primary teachers are trained in an innovative French education program AIM language learning. www.aimlanguagelearning.com In the primary grades, the children receive from 20 to 60 minutes of instruction in French, increasing each year. In addition, the French language is integrated throughout the day as part of classroom routines and instructions.

In kindergarten the emphasis is on oral communication (listening, speaking and following instructions) through stories, songs, drama, repetition of vocabulary and class routines. Initiation to reading and writing in French begins in grade one. By the end of grade three, children are expected to: ask and answer a variety of questions in French; apply basic grammatical conventions in conversation; read and demonstrate comprehension of pattern books, simple readers and information books; and write short paragraphs and simple stories using familiar vocabulary.

The junior grades

In grades four, five and six, the amount of French instruction is 60 to 90 minutes (increasing each year) which fulfills requirements for the TDSB Extended French level. There are two components in the junior program. First, there is a language component in which children build on and expand their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. In addition, instruction and evaluation of the social studies curriculum occurs solely in French. By the end of grade six the children will be required to: apply a variety of grammatical conventions and vocabulary in conversation; read and demonstrate comprehension of novels, short stories and non-fiction texts; and write narratives, reports and projects in French.

French is encouraged in the halls, in class, during announcements, for monthly French assemblies featuring student performances, and at an annual "Soirée Française", a night of fun and French.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Varied learning styles and some special needs can be accommodated within the regular classroom. Our teachers are adept at meeting the individual needs of each student and see that as part of their mandate at an alternative school.

If there are serious, on going concerns about a student or his/her well-being, a student may be referred to the School Support Team (SST), a team of paraprofessionals, including the school Social Worker, Psychologist and Speech & Language Pathologist, who meet regularly throughout the year. The request of referral to SST can come from parents or teachers. This meeting is a forum to outline strengths and needs, to brainstorm possible strategies to support learning and in some cases, to make recommendations for more in-depth assessments. These paraprofessional services are available at every school in the TDSB.

If it is determined or recommended that a student needs more intensive support, these needs could be provided through Special Education. None of the alternative schools have Special Education programs or the extra staff required to provide these services as they are not funded for this. Any student who needs access to these services would be required to transfer to their “Home” school, or be offered an intensive support program elsewhere.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Hawthorne II program includes daily physical activity as an essential part of holistic education. Students have three physical education periods per week with the gym teacher and daily physical activity with the classroom teacher on two other days. Students have the opportunity to compete in extra curricular sports teams and TDSB events if they choose to.

THE ARTS

Music, Drama and Art are taught by every teacher and/or by an Arts - specialist and are supplemented through parental involvement. Parents with background in the arts (and others) are encouraged to contribute to the learning experience of all children in the class either on a regular or occasional basis. Our goal is to have parents help to deliver the curriculum in a fresh and exciting way. Parents also provide extra curricular arts and creative activities such as the Drama Club.

ENRICHMENT

Hawthorne II offers an enriched program with Art, Drama, and Music performances, workshops and lessons throughout the year. The Enrichment committee (parents and teachers) assesses our Enrichment needs and brings artists and other resources to the classrooms using dedicated School Council funds.

STUDENT COUNCIL

Hawthorne students in grades 1 - 6 are represented on the Hawthorne Student Council. Information and discussions at Student Council meetings are relayed to the student body through regular class meetings. Student council is facilitated by parent and teacher representatives.

REPORT CARDS AND TESTING

The Ontario Ministry of Education has a structured curriculum, marking standards, and testing. These are part of the evaluation system at Hawthorne II. Teachers are obliged to grade according to Ministry of Education standards.

As partners in our children's education, parents can use a variety of methods to stay informed of their child's development. It is helpful not to rely solely on letter your child's teacher.

The Ontario Ministry of Education standardized EQAO tests for grade 3 and 6 are conducted at Hawthorne II. Some parents choose to have their children avoid these tests for various reasons including: stress it may cause their children or a philosophical objection to standardized testing. It is a parent's right to make such decisions regarding their child's education.

Community Life At Hawthorne II

REGISTRATION

There are no geographic boundaries prohibiting children from attending our school. In January/February before a child is to enter junior kindergarten, parents are invited to an Open House, including classroom visits and orientation. Registration for Junior Kindergarten begins following the Open House. Parents should assess their own commitment to alternative education, a bilingual program, and parental involvement, at this time.

For registration into Grades 1 to 6, an interview with the Principal or Vice-Principal is required. This interview is to assess the student's level of French which will determine suitability for the program. Parents will be required to provide a copy of the child's latest report card for the interview. For detailed and current information about the TDSB Optional Attendance system see www.tdsb.on.ca

START OF SCHOOL DAY AND SAFE ARRIVAL

Parent interaction and access to school spaces is a valued part of drop-off and pick up routines at Hawthorne before and after class time. The school day starts with 15 minutes of staff supervision before classes begin. Primary students are supervised in the library where parents are welcome to stay until class time. Junior students are supervised on the third floor. All students should be in their classrooms when announcements begin

For our Safe Arrival Program, please notify the school by 9:00am if your children will be late or absent that day. In the event the child does not arrive, the Administrative Assistant will attempt to contact you. You must sign in if you arrive after 9:00am. Also please sign out at the office when leaving the school for an appointment or for illness.

LUNCH PROGRAM

Parents are welcome to join the supervised lunch hour. Children bring their own packed lunches. Parents are encouraged to provide nutritious and litterless lunches (reusable containers and cutlery, etc.) For more information: <http://www.wastefreelunches.org>. Any waste brought to school in lunch containers will be brought home.

Due to allergies Hawthorne II is a peanut-free zone.

There may be additional restrictions from year to year. This information will be sent home to parents and available at the office.

Parents also volunteer with fundraising activities such as selling pizza (see committees). Children who are able to go home for lunch are welcome to do so.

NON-VIOLENT TOYS AT SCHOOL

We try to maintain a school atmosphere that is collaborative and free from violence. Children are encouraged to resolve conflict peacefully. To this end, violent toys, including toy guns or swords are not allowed at school. Toy weapons found at school will be taken away and returned to parents. For more information on violent toys please see:

<http://www.truceteachers.org/toyactionguide.html#intro>

<http://www.lionlamb.org>

FUNDRAISING

Hawthorne Harvest: Each October parents are asked to donate to the Hawthorne Parent Teacher Community Association (PTCA), suggested amount: \$50 per child. The money is used to bring artists, scientists, musicians, dancers, etc. to Hawthorne for enrichment in all classes

Other fundraising events may be held during the school year as orchestrated by our Fundraising and Special Events committees. The Hawthorne PTCA, which all members of the Hawthorne community belong to, is a registered charity so donations are tax deductible.

Governance

Hawthorne has an active School Council. All parents and caregivers of Hawthorne students are voting members of the council. School Council meetings are held monthly and all Parents/Caregivers, Teachers, Administration and interested Community are most welcome. At the Annual General Meeting held at the end of the academic year, there is a Parent Council election for executive positions.

EXECUTIVE

The executive meets monthly with the principal and / or vice principal. The Executive is made up of the following positions and may include other positions when appropriate and agreed upon by Council and administration (e.g. Grade 7/8 committee chair)

2 Co-Chairs: one ongoing chair and one new each year. Duties include scheduling and chairing of School Council meetings monthly; scheduling and attending Executive meetings, plus responsive and proactive involvement in school issues and events.

Treasurer: Keeps Hawthorne's accounts current; provides reports at least 3 times/year at School Council meetings; pays enrichment artists, prepares deposits.

Secretary: 2 people recommended: 1 secretary, 1 alternate. Duties include: minutes at all meetings; publication, archiving posting and dissemination of minutes to parents, staff, administration.

Past Co-Chair

Chair of School Improvement Committee

Chair of Enrichment Committee

OTHER ROLES (NOT ELECTED)

Class Representatives

- Coordinator (1 - school wide) compilation & organization of Class reps, phone trees, email list and implementation of "sibling policy" (Only eldest child receives letters, newsletters etc.)

- Class Rep. - 2 per class, class contact to the school council and contact person for telephone tree messages, contacts parents on behalf of teacher, etc.

COMMITTEES

School Improvement Committee (SIC)

Chair + 3 coordinators (one for each sub-committee) The SIC was started in 2005/6, following a school-wide survey in which parents and senior students identified their 3 highest-priority areas to focus on. Those areas are: French, Peaceful School, and Eco-school. The Chair, coordinators and members work with the teachers and administrators (at the fall and spring SIC meetings and on an ongoing basis throughout the year) to plan and implement projects that support these values and make them an integral part of the life of the school

Peaceful School Committee: 1 coordinator, parents and teachers. Works on initiatives identified at the fall SIC meeting. Parents and teachers work together to plan events (Peace Week), facilitate student council and address peace-related concerns brought to the committee by members of the school community. A member of the Peaceful School Committee also co-facilitates the Hawthorne Student Council.

Eco school: 1 coordinator, parents and teachers . The Eco School committee supports environmentally positive initiatives throughout Hawthorne II both in the classroom and through extra curriculum activities. Earth Week activities, the litterless lunch program, and the Green Club are examples of events planned by the eco-schools committee. Action plans are developed annually at the fall SIC meeting.

French Committee (Enrichment & curriculum): 1 coordinator, parents and teachers. French committee members meet on an ongoing basis to discuss the implementation of the bilingual curriculum. French funding is allocated, resources chosen and curriculum is monitored and updated at these meetings. In addition, there is a lot of teacher and parent interaction on this committee because events such as the annual Hawthorne Soirée Française or les journées françaises are jointly organized.

Registrars: 2 people, responsible for welcoming new families/children to school in the fall (i.e. “Welcome” tea), : Kindergarten Open House organization (early January through February). Kindergarten registration-requires coordination with Administrative Assistant and Vice/ Principal, as well as organizing tours of school and classrooms. Ideally one Registrar will participate on Hawthorne’s Staffing committee

Special Events Committee: 1 chairperson plus 4 other members minimum. Special Events coordinates activities such as school potlucks, fundraising events, teacher appreciation events etc. This committee may work collaboratively with Fundraising and French committees to sponsor individual activities.

Enrichment Committee: 1 -2 parents minimum. This committee requires a high level of coordination and planning between teachers, artists who will come into the school and administration. Artists/Instructors need to be found (usually through Ontario Arts Council lists), contacted, booked, greeted upon arrival at the school and paid for their work. Space for the artist must be arranged and coordinated with Staff and administration.

Lunchtime Committee: 1 chair and 2-3 members + volunteers. Committee members organize and coordinate lunchtime fundraising activities such as pizza lunch. They coordinate collection of “rainy day” activities for all grade levels.

Newsletter: (2 volunteers and optional staff) Facilitate student writers group and produce Hawthorne Hotwire

Green Committee: 1 or 2 people to involve students and staff in on-going enhancement of playground and

green space.

Ward 10 Council Representative: 1-2 people (1 regular and 1 alternate). Rep attends monthly Ward 10 council meetings representing Hawthorne, and reports back to school council meetings.

Alternative Schools Advisory Committee Representative: Participates in ASAC meetings and reports to School Council opportunities for advocacy, networking and Board wide initiatives.

Staffing: 1-2 people (usually one of whom holds the Registrar position). Participates on staffing committee made up of teachers, parents and administration. Works to create the best possible staffing model for upcoming academic year. (short time commitment, usually 2-3 meetings during one week in March)

Fundraising Committee: 1-2 people. Primary responsibilities include the Fall Hawthorne Harvest “fundraiser” for the PTCA.) writes and distributes fundraiser tax receipts.

Also, fundraising for the Grade 5/6 trip is usually carried out by a group of Grade 4/5 parents.

Grade 6 Yearbook: 2 - 6 grade 6 parents. Requires meetings of students for compilation of pictures, written work etc. Publication and sale of yearbooks takes place in June.

History

Hawthorne was originally a private school founded in 1969 by Margaret Tilbrook. Inspired by her son’s challenges in the public education system, she set out to create a school in which the child’s needs were central. Hawthorne was located in a large house in the Bathurst and Vaughan area. There were roughly 110 students in attendance by 1975.

When it was to be closed in 1977 due to financial difficulties, a group of parents from the school approached the Toronto Board of Education with a proposal to establish a similar school. The school board accepted a proposal to establish a public school in keeping with the broad spirit of Margaret Tilbrook’s vision and Hawthorne II opened in the fall of 1977 with 30 children.

In 1981, Hawthorne II found a home in Essex school (east building). In 1991, Hawthorne moved in the west building on the Essex School site, moving back into the Essex east building in 2001 as part of the Toronto District School Board’s consolidation of schools. It currently occupies the eastern part of the second floor and part of the third floor (where the office is located), and shares the school space, library, gym and schoolyard with Essex School and the Hawthorne-on- Essex Daycare. Joint ventures are planned and common issues are processed through school-wide committees and meetings of both executives, once per term.

When Hawthorne II was founded in 1977, the students were divided into parallel English and French streams. A re-examination of the program, resulted in the bilingual approach which remains unique in Toronto today. Hawthorne’s alternative education initially meant there were no formal grades and the child centred philosophy was considered radically alternative at the time. Parents of the original Hawthorne school asserted that physical activity was an important part of a child’s learning, feeling and thinking self and this commitment remains.

Through subsequent years, TDSB amalgamation and contractual obligations have affected alternative teaching in some ways. Each year the process continues—of building community, finding ways for school staff and parents to work together and creating innovations in education at Hawthorne. In 2007, the TDSB approved formal recognition and support for alternative schools.

A commitment to providing a pathway beyond grade 6, for a bilingual education offered in an alternative framework, motivated Hawthorne parents to pursue expansion through a committee of the School Council.

In 2007, after several years of planning and advocacy and an eligibility process involving TDSB superintendents, Board and staff, Hawthorne was approved to expand to grade 7 and 8, beginning in September 2009. Hawthorne II Bilingual Alternative Junior and Senior school will build on the success of Hawthorne II and pursue a vision for furthering critical pedagogy and student engagement. Structure and implementation are in development.
