

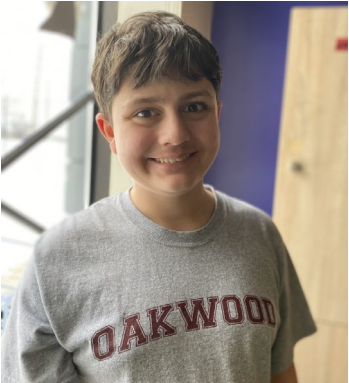


March 2021

Oakwood Academy

Individualized Education JK-12

Director's Message



February has come and gone as swiftly as it usually does, making way for March and all of its opportunity for growth and excitement. Our students had a blast creating virtual Valentine's for their peers and sharing in heart-themed crafts and sensory experiments with their families. Students and staff also participated in *Anti-Bullying* awareness during our *Wear Pink* day. Oakwood is a school that champions and fosters total acceptance and diversity. Our aim is to model to our students that inclusivity is not merely a celebrated singular day, but a practice we engage in and evolve with over the course of our

lives. This ethos is similarly shared in our commitment to *Black History* and *Black Futures* and our dedication as staff and students to not only learning, but also *unlearning*. We do this so that we continually strive to create a school community that embraces possibility, with recognition and acceptance of the past.

This past month has been a unique experience for the staff and students of Oakwood, and I am extremely proud of the tenacity and strength demonstrated by our school community through some of its more challenging moments. I cannot understate how grateful I am to the team and families of Oakwood Academy: whether it be their prompt and successful shift to a virtual learning model in early February; or their commitment to the collective well-being of our community, by following and actively encouraging Covid-19 Health and Safety best practices.

I am extremely thankful that our community has been vigilant in following our updated Health and Safety Policies with our return to in-person learning. I am here to assure you that we have constant access to a Public Health Nurse who

DATES TO REMEMBER

March 8-12
Spirit Week

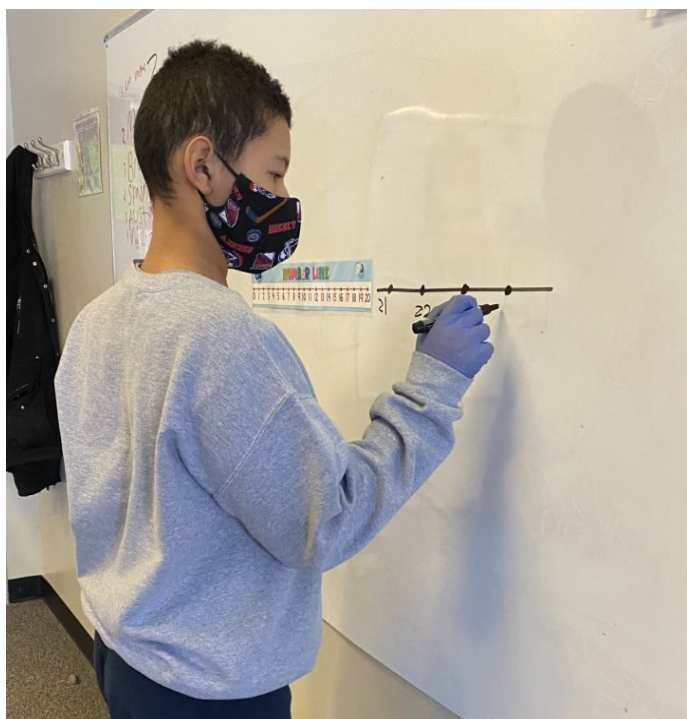
March 9
100th Day of School

March 15-26
March Break - Now
OPEN for Regular
Classes

March 21
World Down
Syndrome Day

March 26
Purple Day -
Epilepsy/Seizure
Awareness

March 31
Casual Day
(optional)



has been guiding us to ensure our Health and Safety Policies and Procedures are being implemented successfully, down to the last detail. We continue to evaluate and update our school protocols, implement staff training and follow the advice of Peel Public Health on a consistent basis. We will continue to inform you of any changes to our policy and protocols as they occur and encourage you to reach out to hs@oakwoodacademy.ca with any of your questions or concerns. The ever-changing circumstances may challenge us in new ways, but I am confident that our Oakwood families and team can continue in our joint efforts to work through these challenges together!

With frequent snow and cold weather in full swing, I would like to remind families to please dress your child(ren) with appropriate clothing and outdoor attire so they can enjoy their time outdoors safely.

I would encourage you to pack your children an additional change of clothes, especially items like socks and extra hats and gloves. In addition to being prepared for the cold and snow at school, it is also important to be prepared for days at home when inclement weather is of concern. We have already experienced a few Snow Days this past month!

Oakwood will continue to notify families of any school cancellations due to inclement weather by **7 am** the morning of. Therapists and Teachers will also continue to send out 'Snow Day' activity packages to you by email. These small packages contain ideas for fun and engaging activities, which can all be done from the comfort of your own home.

MARCH ON! Formerly known as March Break, we are continuing our school programming for all of March this year! Previously scheduled to be an optional attendance in addition to the school year, from March 15-25, 2021, Oakwood will now be open for all registered students. We are calling these two weeks, our **March ON!** as students will continue with their regular school programming goals with loads of extra fun themes and surprises too. Bring on the spring during **MARCH ON! 2021!**

Pre-Registration for Summer 2021 is open! Email Admissions today to hold your space with **no deposit needed** until **March 30, 2021**. Re-Registration for the 2021-2022 Academic School Year opens April 13, 2021.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement as we move through this unique school year. I look forward to all of the wonderful ways our school will grow over the coming month.

Keep well,
Trillian Taylor

Ask Dr. Tippy



Ask Dr. Tippy Column- Starting April 2021

Attention Oakwood families! We have an exciting, new opportunity being offered to you through our monthly Parent Newsletter! Dr. Gil Tippy, Clinical Psychologist and Expert DIR/Floortime practitioner, will be providing advice through a monthly **Ask Dr. Tippy** column.

Each month, up to three questions from Oakwood families will be selected to be answered by Dr. Tippy. His answers to these questions will be published in the following month's newsletter. Questions will be chosen on a first come, first serve basis. Similar queries will be combined.

Dr. Tippy will be providing us with his clinical expertise and experienced advice, along with information and guidance to your important questions. Starting this spring, we want to share his expertise with you on some of the most common and shared questions within our Oakwood community. Your submissions can range from general questions about DIR/Floortime, to more specific inquiries about real life challenges you face with your child. Questions can be sent with your name or anonymously.

Please send your question submissions to Ms. Nicola nholland@oakwoodacademy.ca by March 8, 2021 to be considered for the first month's submissions. We look forward to helping you!



Spotlight on: Virtual Learning

by Ms. Nicola

This unique school year has brought about the opportunity for some of our students to attend Oakwood virtually through online learning. Through this collaborative approach with families, therapists and teachers have been able to create home-friendly and accessible activities and curriculum which families and students can explore both during and outside of school hours.

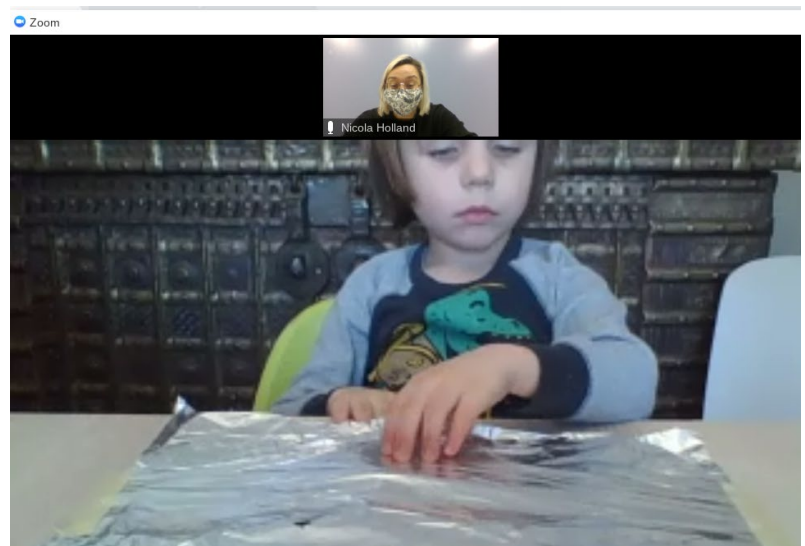
Having the home advantage allows students to explore activities which are of interest to them. For example, baking and food science. This is a fantastic activity which targets multiple skill sets such as: mathematics (counting and measurements); life skills (gathering ingredients, learning how to clean and prepare food safely and independently); sensory exploration (feeling, smelling and tasting new ingredients); fostering creativity (adding new spices, experimenting with different ingredients) and more!

Virtual learning has also offered parents and caregivers the opportunity to discuss with therapists and teachers in real time what is and what is not working at home in terms of programming and play. They can also express ideas they want to incorporate into a student's daily schedule which follows their lead in terms of personal interests and areas of discovery. This daily 1:1 communication also opens up the opportunity for Oakwood staff to problem solve and offer support to families as they navigate at-home learning on a daily basis. Parent and family support is so crucial during this time. With the guidance and support of their child's teachers and therapists, the virtual model has allowed families to hone in on areas of learning, engagement and communication they want to focus on while learning from home. Oakwood virtual learning optimizes online time by equally prioritizing parent/caregiver communication while providing support, student engagement and learning.

Students have been able to participate in exciting 1:1 and group sessions, ranging from interactive music classes to yoga and movement. Teachers and therapists have witnessed their students' immense talents with activities they already love to do at home, all while incorporating goals from the student's IEPs and lesson plans. For example, during a nature walk in their neighbourhood, students can participate in a scavenger hunt where they focus on winter habitats and weather patterns while working on pre-writing skills. Students use a sensory bin to draw lines and letters with their fingers into a bed of salt. This provides tactile feedback while working on an academic program.

We are so proud of our Oakwood students and families who are constantly demonstrating their tenacity and growth during these unprecedented times. We look forward to continuing our services both in-person and online. We would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to expand our services and learn in new ways!

Here are some fun, at-home activities from some of the teachers and therapists of Oakwood to keep you busy while you are learning and creating at home!



The Power of Music in Learning

by Ms. Ashling

Music is a wonderful way to engage children in learning, while also building relationships and working on regulation, shared attention and communication. Music can ignite all areas of development and promote skills including social-emotional, academic, motor and language. Here are some suggestions for music-based activities that you can participate in at home...

Exploring Instruments

If you do not have a percussion instrument at home, such as a drum or tambourine, you can utilize pots and pans, empty containers, or anything that your child can tap along with. You can use bells or keys to shake, or even make your own maracas by putting small, hard items into an empty water bottle (such as uncooked rice, beans, beads, rocks, etc.). Encourage your child to explore the instrument, or imitate a rhythm or pattern. This helps the mind and the body work together and promotes skills such as shared attention, hand-eye coordination, as well as concentration and focus.



Encourage your child to explore a wind instrument such as a harmonica, kazoo, recorder, whistle, or anything that they are required to blow! This provides them with a fun opportunity to practice prolonged and controlled breathing, which are skills utilized for expressive speech.

If you do not have any string instruments at home, such as a guitar or piano, you can make one by cutting a hole into one side of a cardboard box (i.e. shoebox, tissue box, cereal box, etc.) and then taping rubber bands or string to the box so that they are running over the hole. Tighten the rubber bands or string to change the pitch. Exploring string instruments promotes creativity and exercises fine motor skills.

The Power of Music in Learning (continued)

GUITAR

Music and Movement

Music promotes social-emotional skills by facilitating expression, increasing validation and providing an opportunity to teach children how to identify, control and respond appropriately to their emotions.

- 'If You're Happy and You Know It' introduces basic emotions such as happy and sad (try adding your own lyrics to further introduce novel feelings or emotions such as confused, disappointed, or shy)
- Music promotes academic skills such as vocabulary and counting. Singing and listening to songs requires children to learn new words and ideas and at times manipulate words and rhymes.
- 'How Many Finger's and '5 Little Ducks' are enjoyable songs that work on counting

- 'Old McDonald' provides children with the opportunity to explore farm animals and their sounds
- 'Open Shut Them' is an action-based song that introduces children to opposites
- 'BINGO' encourages children to work on spelling (try changing the lyrics to other 5 letter words)
- 'Down by the Bay' is a silly and exciting way to explore rhyming words

Music promotes fine and gross motor skills, body awareness and receptive communication. Action-based songs provide children with a fun and memorable way to learn while dancing and singing.

'Head and Shoulders' and the 'Hokey Pokey' provide the opportunity to discuss specific body parts, prepositions and direction.

Music promotes language skills such as auditory discrimination and speech development. Utilize high facial affect when modelling how to shape your mouth and where to place your tongue as you sing. Slow down your pace to provide time for your child to process.

'Apples and Bananas' by The Wiggles, is a fun and silly way to exercise vocal expression by singing vowel sounds such as ah, oo, ee, ii, and ay.

To increase engagement, shared attention and communication during your music activities, you can use strategies such as playful obstruction, by spontaneously pausing when you sing. This allows time for your child to process what you have sung, and can motivate them to actively participate. Utilize high affect with your voice, face and body by dancing in big movements, emphasizing facial expressions and changing the tone and pace of your voice. You can also change the lyrics of songs your child already knows and likes to suit their developmental needs and personal interests. Don't forget to have fun!

Food Science

by Ms. Ashleen

Ice Cream in a Can



If you've never had the chance to make ice cream at home, now is your chance! This is a great activity for children of all ages and capacities. This science experiment creates a great opportunity to learn all about turning liquid into a solid. For younger children, they can explore different textures, scents and visuals, all while working on their fine motor skills and cause-and-effect science. For older students, you can focus on following multi-step directions, making hypotheses, problem solving and self-help skills. Using gross motor skills, you can even try turning and shaking the tin up. This can be turned into a fun engagement and shared attention game of *Hot Potato* or *Shake Your Sillies Out* (but with a can). You can even make a snow slide outside and let it roll down– have your child come up with new ideas on how to get it moving, too! While exploring science with your child, rather than focussing on the verbal interaction, utilize your facial expressions, gestures, body language and tone of voice to engage your child. Ingredients such as the cream and sugar can also be substituted using coconut milk and stevia to better suit specific dietary needs and allergies. Gloves are recommended for this activity, as the can will get quite cold – perfect for winter learning!

Ingredients & Materials*

- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- dash salt
- 1 box rock salt or ice cream salt
- Ice
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Measuring utensils
- Small coffee can (with lid)
- Large coffee can (with lid)

* <https://happyhooligans.ca/how-to-make-coffee-can-ice-cream/>

Instructions

1. In a mixing bowl, pour the heavy whipping cream, vanilla, sugar and salt and mix well.
2. Pour the ice cream mixture into the small coffee can and secure the lid tightly.
3. Place the small coffee can into the center of the large coffee can.
4. Surround the small coffee can with about one inch of ice and then sprinkle a heavy heaping of rock salt on top.
5. Add another layer of ice and then salt. Continue until the salt and ice reach the very top of the coffee can.
6. Secure the lid on the extra large coffee can.
7. Roll and shake the coffee cans back and forth. Vigorous rolling is needed for 15-30 minutes.
8. As you roll it, the ice will melt. Add more salt and more ice, draining some of the water as needed.
9. When you check on your ice cream to see if it's frozen, ensure that you don't let the salty ice water drip into your ingredients or your ice cream will taste too salty.
10. When the ice cream is frozen or has the consistency of soft serve, transfer the ice cream to a bowl or container and let it harden further in the freezer. Enjoy!

Sheet Pan Pancakes

by Ms. Dorthy

Here is a quick and yummy morning or after-school treat to enjoy with your child on a pancake-craving day. In order to create these fluffy delights, you will need the following ingredients and materials:

- 4 cups of pancake mix
- 2 cups of milk
- 4 eggs
- toppings of your choice (can be a variety of fresh berries)
- 8 tablespoons of butter (melted).
- Large spoon, Measuring utensils, Large bowl
- You will also need a greased pan and a pizza cutter!

Preheat your oven to 425 degrees and generously grease a sheet pan.

In a large bowl, whisk together the pancake mix, milk and eggs. You will be doubling the pancake recipe on the box.

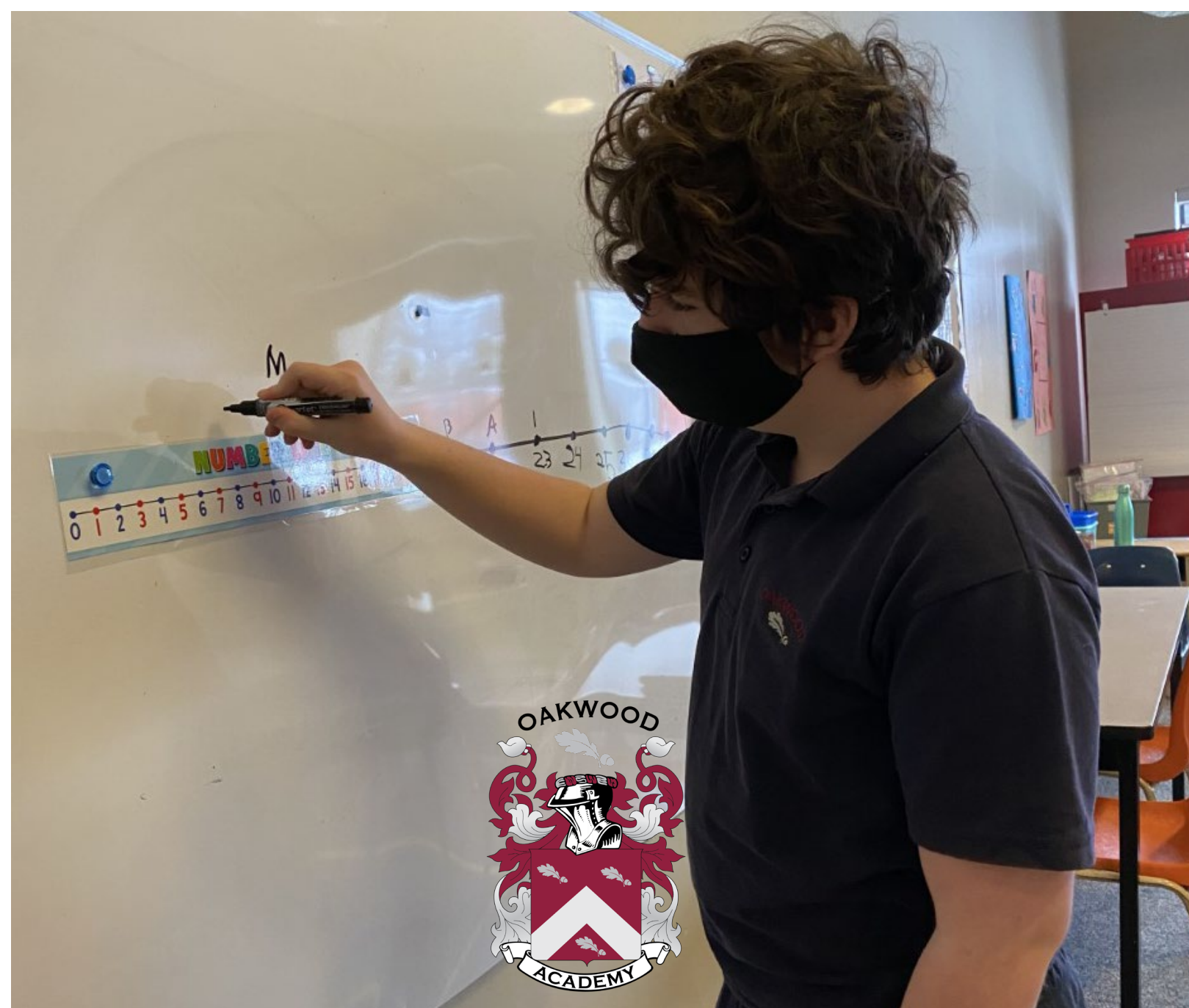
Pour the pancake batter onto your greased pan and top with the toppings of your child's choice. This can include chocolate chips, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, etc.

In the center rack, bake for about 15 minutes or until golden brown. Brush with melted butter. Use a pizza cutter or knife to cut the pancakes into square pieces before serving.

This morning breakfast or afternoon snack is a great way to engage your child in opening and closing circles of communication through mixing the ingredients together, as well as encourage them to choose their toppings to create this delicious snack! Engage and enhance your child's fine motor skills and self-help skills by providing physical support, or model the expectation by pouring the ingredients into a bowl, mixing the ingredients together and pouring it out together onto the sheet pan. Make the experience even more enjoyable by visually targeting and tossing the mixed berries or other toppings into the sheet pan with the batter!

Enjoy!





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