



# PARENT HANDBOOK



810 WATERFORD AVENUE • WINNIPEG, MANITOBA • R3T 1G7

(204) 452-8945

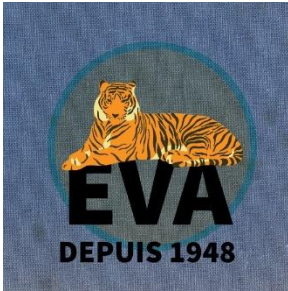
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## SCHOOL PROFILE

Located in North Fort Garry, École Viscount Alexander is a French Immersion Middle School serving students in Grades 5 to 8. Catchment areas include North Fort Garry, Waverley Heights, and Whyte Ridge as well as Fort Richmond, Waverley West, and Bridgewater Forest.



A dedicated, dynamic teaching staff provides a stimulating French milieu where students are exposed to all aspects of Global French culture. Students are challenged academically and participate in a wide range of curricular and extracurricular activities to enrich their middle school experience.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FRENCH IMMERSION

Children who speak both official languages have the best of both worlds. Today, the need for, and advantage of, speaking multiple languages is continuously expanding. French Immersion plays an important role in preparing our Canadian youth with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and flexibility needed to meet the challenges of living in a global community.

French is used in more than 55 countries in the world and is spoken by more than 250 million people, representing one quarter of the countries in the United Nations. It is widely spoken on every continent as a first language, language of instruction, language of government, business, and trade. It is among the principle languages of diplomacy and important international organizations including the G8, NATO, La Francophonie, the Commonwealth, the Olympic Movement, the EU, and UNESCO.

Knowing the French language gives greater opportunity to travel and study abroad while allowing students to experience literature, films, art, dance, and music in their original forms.

Learning an additional language is far more than an intellectual or cognitive challenge. It is a means of growing and maturing through the experience of other cultures, ultimately giving the learner a broader vision of life.

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Bell Times and schedules for the 2023-2024 school year are published on our school website.

During the cold winter months, should the temperature fall below  $-27^{\circ}$ , students are invited to enter the school at 15 minutes before the entry bell; throughout the rest of the year, students enter at the first bell. Students are supervised during breaks, lunch hour and after school until 15 minutes

after the bell at the end of the day. Students have 2 outdoor recesses in addition to the lunch hour. Students are invited to remain after school for *supervised* activities such as clubs, meetings, sporting events and practices, when scheduled. To allow school staff to prepare for the next day, students not involved in supervised activity are expected to exit the building by 4:10 pm.

## Strong Beginnings

Strong Beginnings is a divisional initiative held in the month of September to gain a better understanding of your child as a learner. There will be no regular classes during Thursday September 21 and Friday, September 22nd; however, students will come to school at scheduled appointment times to meet individually with their teacher(s). Parents will book an appointment online early in September. This time is set for teachers to receive initial information on the child's learning styles and assess each student's academic levels. Learning objectives may also be set to be used later at tri-conferences. The information gathered during Strong Beginnings will allow teachers to program for the class as a whole and individual student needs. It is important that students attend these sessions, as it is difficult for all teachers involved to complete these assessments during regular school hours.

## LUNCH

The Lunch Program at Ecole Viscount Alexander is a privilege extended to the community. Each student using the Lunch Program must complete a Lunch Program registration form. The Lunch Program at Viscount is a "user-pay program". A fee is required at the start of each year for students that stay at school during the lunch hour. These fees cover the cost of lunch supervisors and consistent with other schools in the Pembina Trails School Division.

Lunch hour supervisors are hired by Viscount Alexander's lunch coordinator and are employed by the Pembina Trails School Division. Students are supervised both inside and outside during the lunch period.

The lunch program form is sent home at the beginning of the school year and is also on our website.

In addition, parents who intend to utilize the program agree that their child will:

- follow the school Respect Agreements
- remain at their chosen activity for the duration of the recess period



- play safely
- respect the lunch-hour rules

Students in Grades 5-8 remain on **school property** for the lunch hour. During the winter months, all students have the opportunity to participate in a wide-range of activities including intramurals, jazz or choir practices, and various clubs. In order to ensure the safety of our students and a smooth transition from Middle Years to a High School setting, our grade 8 students remain on school property from September until March (please note that these dates may vary). After Spring Break, Grade 8 students are introduced to the concept of “Open Campus”. During Open Campus, grade 8 students may leave our school grounds, with a signed parental permission slip.

## ATTENDANCE

Class attendance and participation are crucial to academic achievement and student success. Parents are expected to communicate with the school for any absence and/or tardiness ahead of time, ensuring the safety of our students by either entering the absence in Edsby, calling the school office at 204-452-8945 or emailing [vaattendance@peminatrails.ca](mailto:vaattendance@peminatrails.ca). If leaving a message, please state clearly your child’s full name, the reason for the absence and his/her homeroom teacher.

### Illness (Excused Absence)

If a student is ill and cannot attend school, we ask that the parent or guardian call or email the school office before 8:30 am.

In case of illness/injury during the day, students are to notify the classroom teacher and report immediately to the office. A staff member **MUST** speak with a parent or emergency contact for the student to have permission to leave. Students should not contact parents directly in the event of accidents/illness so that staff may be aware and provide support.

### Extended Leaves (Excused Absence)

Students taking extended leaves (medical, travel or other) must contact the homeroom teacher and the office, preferably a week or more in advance. Teachers shall not be expected to provide detailed classroom work and homework assignments for students who are away for extended periods of time as a result of family-initiated absences. For absences due to extended illness, please connect with your child’s teacher(s).



## **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences have logical, natural consequences as students are missing instructional time. Parents will receive a call at home or work in the case of unexcused absence as per divisional policy.

## **Tardiness**

From time to time, students may arrive late for school due to an appointment or unexpected event. Parents are asked to advise the school as indicated above prior to school entry. Tardiness may affect classroom work, a sense of belonging and being part of the routine. If tardiness becomes problematic, a conference with student and parent may be called to develop a specific plan of support.

Students arriving after morning announcements must report to the office for attendance.

## **Absences for School Activities**

Approved absences due to school activities (athletics, fine arts camp, ski trip, etc.) are included in the attendance totals. The school encourages and supports student participation on field trips that enhance and expand educational experiences and opportunities. School sponsored field trips are the part of the school programming.

## **Early Departure**

If students are leaving early, please communicate to the school by calling the office or providing a note and/or an email to the teacher **and** the office. Students are to come to the office and wait for their parents to come and pick them up. If someone other than a parent will be picking up a child, please notify the office.

## **STUDENT TELEPHONE**

A telephone is located in the office and is available during breaks and before or after school hours. Students must have permission to use the phone from their teacher and advise the office staff that they have permission to use it. To minimize telephone usage, arrangements should be made the night before to plan for after school activities, clubs, etc. To facilitate this, please consult the calendar on our website on a regular basis. Parents wanting to send a message to their child are encouraged to communicate through the office.

## LOCKERS

Each student is assigned a locker and lock at the beginning of the school year and is responsible for its cleanliness and upkeep. Students must keep their lockers locked at all times. Valuables are best kept at home. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen goods. Students must not share information about their combinations. Problems should be reported immediately to the homeroom teacher.

As per the Public Schools Act, student lockers are school property and school admin has the authority to conduct reasonable searches to protect the health & safety of students.

## LOST AND FOUND

Throughout the year there are numerous articles of clothing and personal belongings that are in our Lost and Found box in the main hall or the office. Small items such as jewelry, keys, glasses etc. are at the office. Please encourage your child to look in these areas when items are lost. At the end of every month, we will have a table display of all of the items so that parents and students can confirm if they have lost these items. All items that are not claimed, will be donated to a local shelter or charity.

## NOON HOUR ACTIVITIES

At noon, students select one of the following options and remain there for the duration of the period:

- Outdoor recess
- Intramurals (outside or in gym)
- A club organized and supervised by a staff member or supervisor
- Library (to read, study or do homework)



## WEATHER

With the arrival of snow and colder temperatures during the winter months, we remind students of the importance of dressing for the weather. Students remain indoors only when the wind chill reaches  $-27^{\circ}\text{C}$  at the Forks weather station, as per divisional policy.

When the windchill is  $-45$  degrees Celsius, the school buses will be cancelled **for the entire day**, but school will remain open. These announcements will be found on radio stations, our social media accounts, as well on the Pembina Trails School Division website.

In inclement weather, parents may decide to keep their children home if weather conditions are such that the children cannot travel safely to or from school. Unless instructed, custodial staff will open and maintain school buildings as a regular school day and staff will attempt to arrive to school. The Superintendent will have the responsibility to close schools and if the schools are not to be opened it will be communicated on the radio stations.

## **STUDENT RECOGNITION**

At École Viscount Alexander, we value the participation, cooperation, and perseverance of all of our students as they set goals and work toward their own personal best. Throughout the year, we have many opportunities to recognize and celebrate their learning, growth and citizenship. In addition to tri-conferences, events may include:

- ★ Band Concerts
- ★ School Musical
- ★ Grade 8 Farewell
- ★ Festival du Voyageur
- ★ Art Shows
- ★ Community initiated
- ★ Concours d'art oratoire
- ★ Mathematics Contest projects
- ★ Monthly assemblies

## **COMMUNICATION**

Formal report cards are available online three times during the school year. Parents, students and teachers participate in tri-conferences twice per school year.

Teachers may be contacted by phone or email regarding student specific concerns or questions at any time during the school year. It is usually best to call the homeroom or subject area teachers first. Questions of a general nature may be directed to the school secretaries, the principal or the vice-principal.

The school calendar and website are regularly updated. We encourage all students and parents to subscribe to the calendar to receive updates. Regular emails will be sent to parents to keep you up to date on special events and other school information.

Follow us on Instagram (@ecole\_va) or Twitter (@ecoleVA) for regular visual communication.

## **ÉVA SCHOOL-WIDE TEACHING MODEL – RESTITUTION & RESPECT**

École Viscount Alexander is proud to promote a safe and caring learning environment. We follow the divisional Standard of Behaviour document.

Staff & students have also worked to create Respect Agreements to build a



culture of respect in our school community. Our school respect agreements are outlined on the back of this handbook. They are reinforced in classes, our monthly assemblies, and our collective work.

Using the respect agreements provides a foundation for our work with restitution practices.

## TEACHER DISCRETION

Students are under the supervision of many teachers during the day. Each will have his/her own requirements. Teachers will review specific classroom expectations, which reflect our Respect Agreements, with each group of students.

Teachers monitor behaviour carefully. If unacceptable behaviour becomes frequent or is more serious in nature, a referral to the principal is warranted. Office referrals may result in a conversation, reparation, or a logical consequence as per divisional Standard of Behaviour document.

## SAFE SCHOOLS

At École Viscount Alexander, classroom teachers collaborate with student support teachers to provide programming with emphasis on a safe and caring school culture, using the Pembina Trails School Division “Standard of Behaviour”. It is essential for a safe and caring school climate that we all have the confidence and skills necessary. Teaching and guided practice is provided in the following areas:

- School-wide Respect Agreements
- Empathy
- Positive stress-management strategies
- Conflict resolution and problem-solving: how to manage conflict and deal with difficult interpersonal situations
- Training in making a complaint or reporting situations in an assertive, non-aggressive manner
- Guidance to effectively resist peer pressure
- Restitution
- Respect Program



## Access to school

All visitors report to the office for signing in and out. Visitors are to wear a visitor badge to indicate that they are a safe adult and belong in the school. All entrances remain locked during school hours – a buzzer is located at the Point Road entrance by the office to allow us to greet visitors and control entry.

Parents that would like to volunteer during the school year, we encourage them to complete the Child Abuse Registry and Criminal Record Check early in the school year so that they can be placed on our volunteer list. As this process can take a lot of time, we request that this is done at the beginning of the year in order that volunteers are available at the time of the school outing.

Often students who have attended École Viscount Alexander in previous years may want to return to visit the staff or the school. We ask that students make prior arrangements with the administrators and teachers if they want to visit over the lunch hour so that the visit is not disruptive to the instructional time.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

### **Active Transportation**

We support multiple forms of active transport at École Viscount Alexander.

- Skateboards, inline skates & scooters are to be stored in the homerooms
- Bicycles must be locked outside due to safety. Helmets are an expectation for students cycling to school. Students are encouraged to use a U-lock and keep a serial number of their bikes.

### **School Bus**

All matters related to school bus transportation are managed through the Department of Transportation.

See the school division website for more information.

## **TECHNOLOGY ACCEPTABLE USE**

The use of cellular phones and other electronic communication devices is continuing to grow and expand. École Viscount Alexander recognizes the value of such electronic communication devices to students, families and schools.

It is the intent of this regulation to use these electronic devices responsibly in the school to enhance teaching and learning opportunities. For students to use divisional equipment, a Technology Acceptable Use Agreement must be signed for each school year.

This regulation applies to the school day. This includes school-sponsored events, e.g. intramurals, extracurricular activities, and field trips.

- At Viscount, student use of cell phones and other electronic communication devices is permitted in the school and on school property as directed by the teacher/school for educational purposes.
- The use of electronic communication devices resulting in an invasion of personal privacy or contributing to behavior that is injurious to another will be subject to the provisions of the divisional *Creating a Safe and Caring School Community: A Standard of Behavior*.
- Students who use electronic communication devices to access, upload, download or distribute material that the school has determined objectionable will be subject to the provisions of the divisional *Creating a Safe and Caring School Community: A Standard of Behavior*.
- Students who use an electronic communication device to send or receive personal messages, data or information that would contribute to or constitute academic dishonesty will be subject to consequences as determined by the school.
- School officials, including classroom teachers, teacher assistants and lunch hour supervisors may confiscate electronic communication devices from students if they are used for unauthorized purposes or at unauthorized times.
- Repeated unauthorized use may lead to further action as determined by the school.
- Viscount Alexander will assume no responsibility in any circumstance for the loss, destruction, damage or theft of any electronic communication device or for any communication bill associated with the unauthorized use of such devices. Students and families are responsible for locating such lost or stolen items.

Any item that interferes with the school respect agreements (accept, include, respect) will be confiscated.

## **FILMS & VIDEO**

From time to time, as part of the regular curriculum, students will view films or videos. In keeping with our beliefs, teachers make choices appropriate to the “ages and stages” of their students. Films and videos that are “G” or “PG” rated according to the Canadian system are allowed. Parent permission is required for “PG” viewing.

## **DRESS CODE**

École Viscount Alexander is a place of learning where we value individuality and cultural diversity. The expectation is that clothing choices and school-based events are representative of a diverse community of Grade 5-8 students; this helps maintain a safe and inclusive environment.

Appropriate clothing:

- Does not expose undergarments
- Has appropriate pictures/words
- Has tops and bottoms that meet without being pulled up or down
- Does not include words or graphics that are vulgar, racially inappropriate, and/or promote illegal products

A change of clothing is required for Physical Education Classes and will include footwear that is safe and acceptable for gym activities. All outside wear must be kept in lockers. The school administration reserves the right to require changes of any manner of dress that is deemed inappropriate for school. Students not following the specified guidelines (printed in Student Agenda and reviewed with students) will be referred to the office. They will be asked to change or may be provided with a T-shirt and/or a pair of shorts or sweats. Students may be sent home to change. A parent will be called prior to the student leaving the school.

## LIBRARY PROCEDURE

Library books are expected to be returned on time. The total cost of books that are not returned by the end of the school year will be expected to be paid by students and/or parents. We appreciate your cooperation.

## HOMWORK GUIDELINES

### What is homework?

Generally speaking, homework is schoolwork that has been started in class and is continued or finished at home. It may involve completing assignments, including project work, research or completing art journals. It may also assist the student in reinforcing learning, taking the form of reading, vocabulary study, math problems, practising an instrument or reviewing or studying for a test.

### The Teacher's Role

Teachers at École Viscount Alexander have made a commitment to communicate their approach to homework.

- Expectations, assessment, frequency, and policy regarding late assignments are clearly communicated.
- The material has been taught in class and directions have been clearly explained.
- Coordination with grade level colleagues about project



timelines will be considered.

- Homework is a shared responsibility. Teacher, student and parent all have a role to play.

### The Student's Role

Students are expected to:

- Bring home the necessary materials to complete assignments.
- Plan a regular homework time to complete long term assignments and projects.
- Ensure they understand what is expected of them—purpose, process and completion date.
- Select an appropriate workplace free from distractions and interruptions.
- Complete homework to the best of their ability and ask for help at any time.
- Arrange to catch up on any missed assignments, notes or tests.

### The Parent's Role

Parents who have chosen the French Immersion setting often worry that they will be unable to help their child with homework. Here are some tips that may help:

- Set aside a daily homework time. If your child does not have assigned homework on that day, he or she should be expected to work on upcoming projects, read in French, English and additional languages, watch or listen to a French program on the television or radio or review notes.
- Encourage your child to persevere and celebrate new learning together.
- Communicate with your child's teacher if he or she is struggling with homework or if you think they have too much.

Parental support is essential to establishing consistent expectations and routine regarding homework. Take time to speak with your child regarding your expectations. At any time if you have questions, please contact the classroom teacher for clarification.

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & SPECIAL EVENTS**

Our programs may vary each year, depending on staff & parent volunteers and what we are able to offer. École Viscount Alexander offers an exciting array of school activities. Leadership opportunities are organized in order to build community, leadership, and school spirit. Students and staff organize and participate in intramural sports, assemblies, spirit days, and other special events.

Throughout the school year, students may also participate in activities and clubs—Festival du Voyageur, Concours d’art oratoire, improvisation, musical production, GSA club, BIPOC club, Knitting Club, and Games Club just to name a few.

Interscholastic sports are alive and well at ÉVA. Cross-country, volleyball, basketball, badminton, water polo and track are offered at different points in the school year. Our “Tigres” play against other schools to hone their physical and social skills in scheduled games and tournaments. In keeping with the Middle Years philosophy, emphasis is placed on participation and teamwork.

Parent participation is often critical to the success of our extra-curricular activities. Level of experience is not an issue and the school depends highly on parents in order to field teams at all levels and in all sports. Teachers will send out a letter or call parents for assistance.

## **OPTION COURSES**

In Grades 7 and 8 students are required to choose between band and art as an option. Students are encouraged to choose an option that they will take for both years as both programs have a developmental progression in the programming.

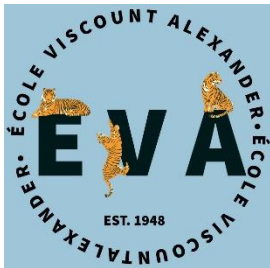
## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AT ÉCOLE VISCOUNT ALEXANDER**

École Viscount Alexander has an emergency plan to ensure the safety of all members of the school community. The plan outlines the expectations of staff, roles and responsibilities, internal and external communication plans, procedures, and responses/recovery. Annually, according to the divisional requirement, the school must have a minimum of:

- 10 fire drills
- 2 lockdown practices
- 2 tornado drills

In the event that there is an evacuation, our evacuation site is St. Paul’s Anglican Church, 830 North Drive. Should the school be evacuated for an extended period, parents will be contacted.

During the school year, it is very important you update your contact information (ie. phone #, email address, etc.) and any changes in your child’s medical conditions.



## ALLERGY AWARE SCHOOL

Many children have allergies. A few, however, are life-threatening. Some children, for example, are severely allergic to peanut products, including peanut butter. Even a small amount can be fatal within minutes. Nuts, shellfish, fish, eggs, and milk are also known to cause severe reactions.

We also have students who have fragrance sensitivities. To help accommodate people who have allergies to scents, we are asking students and staff to refrain from spraying cologne, perfume, body spray or other fragrances at school.

If you are the parent of a child with life-threatening allergies, please provide the school with current medical information and assistance in developing a plan to protect your child's health. It is imperative that you inform the school office of any changes to your child's medical needs. If your child requires an epi-pen, it should be always on his or her person.

We will also be asking for the cooperation of all staff and students in the school to help protect the allergic child from danger. Although the specific allergic child and his/her family will take responsibility to avoid nut exposure, we ask for your cooperation as follows:

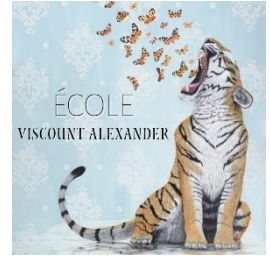
- Ensure that residue from nuts and nut products are cleaned from hands, face and belongings before entering the school.
- Avoid sending products containing peanuts/nuts to school.
- Never give food to any children other than your own without consulting a teacher first.
- If you send food to school for children other than your own (i.e. bake sale, party) ensure the food does not contain nuts, nut products or peanut oil.
- Teach your children that this is a very serious situation and encourage them to support their peers.

Staff has been in-serviced on anaphylaxis and the use of the "epi-pen".

We recognize that this may cause some inconvenience for you and we thank you in advance for your cooperation. Together we can make École Viscount Alexander a safe place for all students and staff.

## NUTRITIONAL POLICY

**Philosophy:** École Viscount Alexander recognizes that responsibility to work with parents to encourage healthy lifestyles and acknowledges the important role that nutrition plays in the total development and performance of an individual.



**Rationale:** Nutrition plays a significant role in growth and development, resistance to disease, and physical and mental health. It is important for children to have food that is nutritionally well balanced. Research demonstrates a relationship between nutrition, and children's physical, emotional and intellectual readiness to learn.

### Policy:

- ✓ Staff, students and school volunteers have the responsibility to teach, model and encourage healthy food choices.
- ✓ Staff, students and school volunteers who are planning activities, events and programs will make decisions that are in accordance with the nutrition policy and guidelines.
- ✓ Nutrition messages throughout the school will be consistent with and reinforce the policy.
- ✓ Our school is a nut aware school. Students bring snacks without peanuts/nuts. Other allergies will be identified in classroom information.
- ✓ Groups/ agencies housed in or utilizing school premises are informed of and are requested to respect the school's policy.
- ✓ Fundraising will reflect the overarching belief of the nutrition policy.
- ✓ Students will receive nutrition education that teaches knowledge, skills and attitudes that promote healthy eating habits for a lifetime.
- ✓ Decisions about the choices that are provided at school will coincide with the nutritional guidelines (foods served most/sometimes/rarely) outlined in the Healthy Manitoba Quick Guide for Food Available in K-12 schools in Manitoba.



## **Food/Beverages in classrooms/hallways**

Students are encouraged to bring water into the classrooms, but other food/beverages are to remain in student lockers. Snacks may be eaten at snack break, lunch break and locker breaks. Students are reminded to place all waste items in the garbage cans or recycling bins in order to maintain a clean learning environment for everyone.

## **MEDICATION**

Students who require medication (URIS identification) to be used in emergency situations (Epi-pens, Inhalers, Insulin, etc.) are required to have that medication on their person during the school day. URIS forms will have been filled out, signed and placed in a file at the school office. If a student's class is going on a field trip, the student must have his/her medication with him/her prior to leaving the school.

## **DIVISIONAL POLICIES**

All Divisional policies are available online. Please find below some policies related to safety protocols.

### **Standard of Behaviour**

[Standard of Behaviour Brochure.pdf \(pembinatrails.ca\)](#)

### **Threat Assessment**

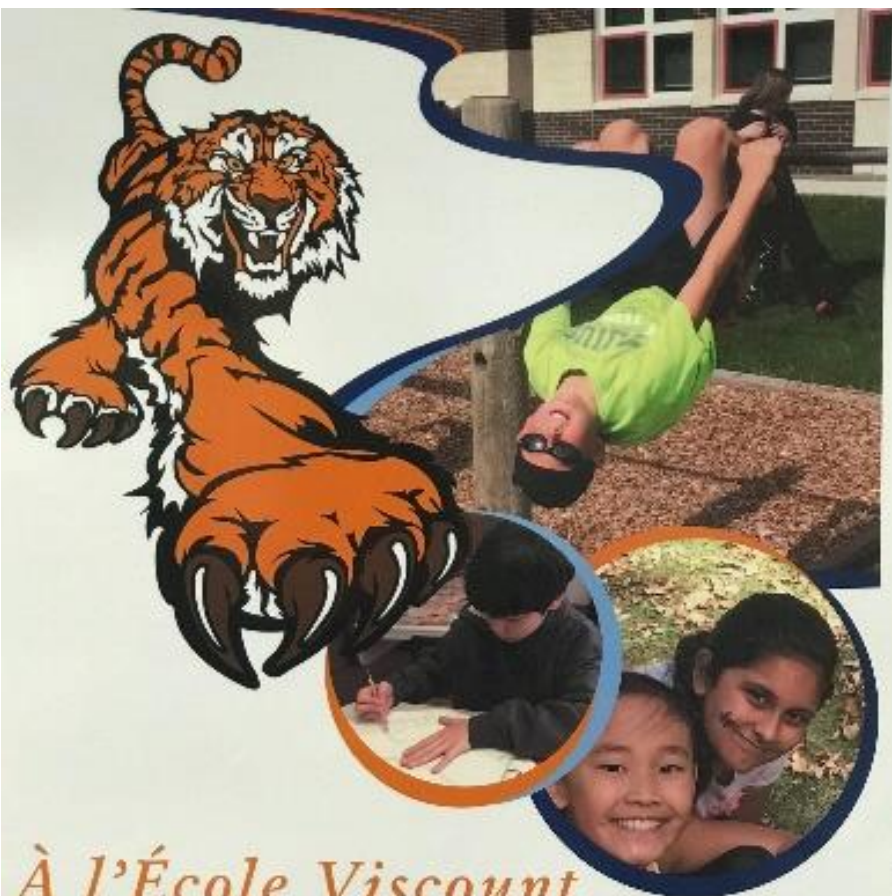
<https://www.pembinatrails.ca/Documents/Threat%20Assessment%20Brochure.pdf>

### **Attendance**

[JE Student Attendance.pdf \(pembinatrails.ca\)](#)

### **Technology Acceptable Use**

[IJNDC-R Technology Acceptable Use Regulation for Students.pdf \(pembinatrails.ca\)](#)



*À l'École Viscount  
Alexander nous :*

- **A**ceptons
- **I**ncluons
- **R**espectons