

Dr. Plaxton School Handbook

2023-2024



Kindergarten - Grade 5

Dr. Robert Plaxton Elementary School

4510 Fairmont Gate South, Lethbridge AB T1K 8J3

Phone: (825) 399-0620

Email: drplaxton@lethsd.ab.ca

Website: www.drp.lethsd.ab.ca

September 2023

Dear Dr. Plaxton Families,

Welcome to Dr. Plaxton Elementary School! We would like to extend a warm welcome to all new and returning families to our school community. The staff at Dr. Plaxton value our continued and growing relationships with families and want nothing but the best for student learning and well-being within the school. Our vision for our school is to nurture innovative thinking in bright, vibrant spaces through intentional opportunities for learning. Through **having** (optimal school conditions & learning), **being** (self – fulfillment), **loving** (relationships) and **health** (wellness), our school promotes a welcoming community that embraces and supports all learners.

This handbook has been prepared to share basic information regarding the procedures, routines and expectations of our school. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your child’s teacher, the office staff, or the administrative team. Information is also available and updated often on our website: <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/>

We are looking forward to a terrific year, and thank you for sending us your student(s) each day – we feel privileged to be learning with them!

Andy Tyslau – Acting Principal
Lois VanRoon – Acting Vice Principal



Andy Tyslau, Acting Principal



Lois van Roon, Acting Vice Principal

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Dr. Robert Plaxton Staff

Link to Dr. Plaxton staff directory: <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/staff-directory-school-location>

Administration

Acting Principal: Andy Tyslau

Acting Vice Principal: Lois VanRoon

Support Staff

Administrative Assistant: Angela Manderville

Learning Commons Facilitator: Libby Leusink

Student Support Worker: Mamta DiPalma

Educational Assistants: Crystal Bedard, Sarah Edward, Anita Fehr, Renee Haushildt, Heather Krogman, Rosa Murillo De Duran, Char Schow, Katie Speelman

Caretaking

Head Caretaker: Patrick Steed

Caretakers: Kevin Gordon, Fan Yang

Teaching Staff

Learning Support Teacher: Thomas Scott

Fine Arts Specialist: Sarah Harmon

Kindergarten Teachers

Tracy Baker

Cammie Mah

Grade One Teachers

Tara DeJong

Dana Pirie

Kristy Walker

Grade Two Teachers

Melissa Herbst

Karli Leavitt

Megan Norton (Tacy Thomson on Leave)

Grade Three Teachers

Jodie Goruk

Cali McCorriston (Michelle Kortt on Leave)

Grade 4 Teachers

Brooke Dykslag (Stephanie Murray on leave)

Kandis Lozano

Matt Vanden Dungen

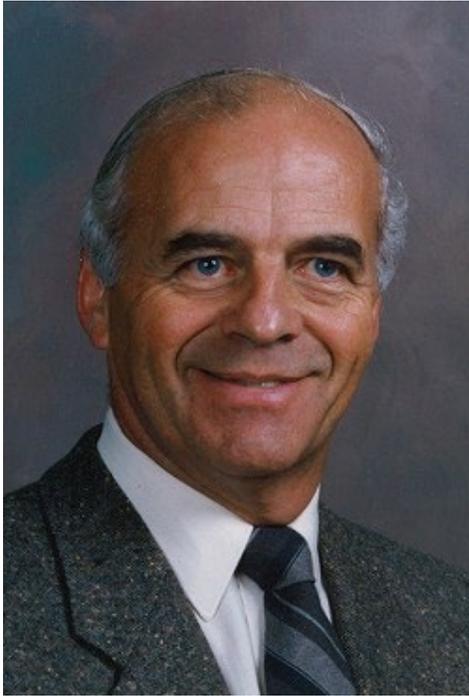
Grade 5 Teachers

Chris Firth

Caitlin McFarland

Brandon Morrison

History of Dr. Robert Plaxton



Dr. Plaxton Elementary honours the name of the Division's longest-serving superintendent. Robert Plaxton served as superintendent from 1973 to 1991. In addition to serving as superintendent for nearly 20 years, Plaxton helped open the first school on the westside, Nicholas Sheran, along with Park Meadows on the northside. After his retirement, Plaxton served as the executive director of the College of Alberta School Superintendents. He was passionate about ensuring each student in the province was given every opportunity to excel. He was described as a warm, kind man whose service to others inspired teachers across our province. Towards the end of his life, when people asked him about his long career, he would simply say, "I was a teacher."

Link to Dr. Plaxton legacy: <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/dr-plaxton>

Dr. Plaxton Bell Times Grades K-5

Link to Dr. Plaxton Bell Times: <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/bells-calendar-newsletters>

Day of the Week	Start Time	End Time
Monday - Thursday	8:40 am	3:50 pm
Friday	8:40 am	11:30 am

Supervision

In accordance with Lethbridge School Division Policy, students will be supervised 10 minutes prior to the 8:40 start bell (8:30-8:40). A minimum supervision ratio of one supervisor per 120 students shall be maintained 10 minutes prior to start time and during all recesses. Orderly dismissal and supervision of students loading and unloading the school bus will also occur. [LETHBRIDGE SCHOOL DIVISION \(lethsd.ab.ca\)](http://LETHBRIDGE SCHOOL DIVISION (lethsd.ab.ca))

Dropping Children Off at School

Please use the road on the north side of the school, Fairmont Gate S, behind the bus lane for student drop-off. A map for drop off is at <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/download/397368>

Attendance Procedures

Link to reporting absences and lates: <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/programs-services>

If your child will be late or absent from school, please do the following:

- Call SafeArrival (**1-866-879-1041**) before **8:30 a.m.**
- If you miss the **8:30 a.m.** deadline do not call the school. Please wait until the SafeArrival system contacts you to excuse the absence or late
- Report half day absences as late arrivals

If a child arrives late, come to the front entrance of the school and ring the doorbell. An office staff member will assist the child.

Emergency Contact

Please ensure an emergency contact has been identified for your child in case of injury, illness or other emergencies. If your emergency contact changes, please inform office staff so it can be updated in our system.

Releasing Children During the School Day

Students are not permitted to leave school grounds without permission from the principal or office staff. Students will be released only to parents, guardians or emergency contacts listed on the registration form. In the unusual event that someone other than those listed on the contact list will be picking up your child, you will need to contact office staff and the individual picking up the child will need to provide identification prior to the child's release.

Student Illness

All children who are not feeling well should stay home from school. When a child becomes ill at school, the office will contact the parent/guardian to make arrangements for the child to be picked up.

Children that have communicable diseases must not attend school until there is no risk of spreading their illness. The school is required to report outbreaks of certain communicable diseases to the school's health nurse.

Student Medication

Lethbridge School Division Policy states that schools are not to administer medication to students unless absolutely necessary. Before administering any medication, including over the counter or prescription drugs, a form must be completed by the student's parent/guardian and physician that provides information on the administration of the medication. If you require a form for administration of medication, please contact front office staff for a paper copy or you can use the link below to access the digital form: <https://www.lethsd.ab.ca/download/196708>

Important Emergency Information

Sometimes it becomes necessary to close the school without prior notice. This may be due to loss of electricity or water, snow and icy conditions, or impending disaster. Schools will be closed only when there is no other viable option, and the safety of children is at risk. If it becomes necessary to close the school, your child will be sent home. Every attempt will be made to notify parents of such circumstances through mass media and individual calls. If parents / guardians are not usually home during school hours, it is their responsibility to make contingency plans for their children. [School Closure Guidelines](#)

School-Wide and Office Communication

Newsletter: The monthly newsletter is issued on the first day of every month. It covers the upcoming events at Dr. Plaxton and important information that needs to be shared school-wide. The newsletter will be emailed and will also be available on the school website (<https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/school-handbook>).

Webpage: All information pertaining to the school can be found on the Dr. Plaxton website. You will find information about school philosophy, calendars and bell times, staff directory, School Council and current updates: <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/>

If you need to contact office staff or school administration, please call or email:

Phone: (825) 399-0620

Email:

Angela Manderville (Administrative Assistant): angela.manderville@lethsd.ab.ca

Andy Tyslau (Acting Principal): andy.tyslau@lethsd.ab.ca

Lois Van Roon (Acting Vice Principal): lois.vanroon@lethsd.ab.ca

Teacher Communication

Remind 101: Some teachers will communicate with parents/guardians by sending regular reminders and messages through Remind 101. Information from your child's teacher will be provided in the fall.

School Email or School Phone: If you need to connect with your child's teacher to discuss an issue or to inform the teacher of something, please use the teacher's school email or school phone number (825) 399-0620. Messages will be checked when teachers are not instructing. If there is an emergency, or immediate communication needs to occur, please contact the office at (825) 399-0620.

School Fees

Email notifications will be sent from the office in relation to school fees. Fees can be paid through School Cash Online, which can be found in the "quick links" tab or through this link: <https://lethbridge.schoolcashonline.com/>

Visitors to the School

Parents and other visitors to the school are asked to check in at the office when entering the school building.

As a security precaution, all exterior doors are locked during school hours. A bell is located at the front entrance, so please ring the bell and office staff will be available to assist with your needs.

Parent Volunteers

Parent volunteers are an important component of the educational program at our school. We appreciate all the assistance that is provided by parents. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact the school and we will send you a volunteer form link.

School Council & Society

The Dr. Plaxton School Council is a formal group of parents, staff, and the Principal who work to enhance the learning experience of all our students. Meetings are held at the school on the third Wednesday of every month to plan activities and discuss important items concerning the school. While the School Council is an elected group of parents, all parents are welcome to attend the meetings and provide their ideas and support for the improvement of our school. Please see our website for meeting agendas, minutes and our School Council Operating Procedures: <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/school-council>

Instructional Program

Our academic program is based on the Alberta Program of Studies, provincial curriculum. Students receive a planned instructional program in English Language Arts and Literature (ELAL), Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education & Wellness, and Fine Arts. Parents/guardians can find our teaching and learning philosophy through this link: <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/about>. For more specific information on each curricula, please visit Alberta Education's website at <https://curriculum.learnalberta.ca>.

Technology

At Dr. Plaxton Elementary, students will have access to a variety of devices to support learning that includes laptop carts, classroom iPads, 3D printers, sound/video production equipment, and virtual reality headsets and more. These items are used to integrate Information and Communication Technology (ICT) outcomes into a variety of curricular areas. Each classroom is also equipped with a computer, multi-media projection unit, document camera and a BriteLink board. Students will have access to a variety of information and resources they may require when engaging in research and inquiry.

Human Sexuality and *Kids in the Know*

The Human Sexuality Health Program is offered to grade 4 and 5 students. These lessons deal with basic life cycle and physical changes that occur as children enter adolescence. Materials used in the classes are available for parents to view prior to presentation of these classes. Notices will be sent out letting parents know when the lessons will be taught so follow-up discussions may occur at home. *Kids in the Know* is a personal safety program, written and sponsored by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. The lessons in these units are directly linked to the Alberta Education Health and Life Skills Curriculum General and Specific Outcomes.

Parent Teacher Conferences and Report Cards

In each school year there are two opportunities for Parent Teacher Conferences with your child's teacher. The first is in the fall with more formal interview times and dates and the second in the spring as part of our Celebration of Learning. The Celebration of Learning approach allows our students to showcase and share their learning thus far in the school year and encourages them to be the leaders of their learning. Additional conferences may be scheduled at any time during the year. Please check our school calendar and website for the most up-to-date information and booking information at <https://drp.lethsd.ab.ca/bells-calendar-newsletters>.

Report cards are completed three times each year in November, March and June. All report cards are posted online via PowerSchool. Please login and create an account at <https://ps.lethsd.ab.ca/public/>. If you require any assistance with accessing report cards or parent teacher conferences, please contact our office at (825)399-0620.

Additional Programs and Services

In addition to our regular programs, Dr. Plaxton Elementary offers the following programs and services to help meet the needs of students and parents:

- Sensory room access for students with individualized needs
- Public Health Nurse
- Student Support Worker
- Teacher Counsellor
- School Psychologist
- Speech / Language Assistant
- Occupational and Physical Therapists

Extra-Curricular Activities

The staff at Dr. Plaxton Elementary strive to offer a wide variety of extracurricular activities for students before school starts, at lunch time and after school. Some of these activities include lunchtime chess clubs, art clubs, leadership clubs and 3D printing clubs. After school activities have included volleyball, basketball and running clubs.

Field Trips and Community Resources

The staff at Dr. Plaxton look for opportunities to intentionally plan to extend and enrich educational experiences for students by going out into the community or inviting community resource people into the school. Each grade level and teacher plans different learning opportunities throughout the school year. Teachers will communicate these opportunities to families through emails and newsletters.

Staff Professional Learning Days

The staff of Dr. Plaxton Elementary use professional learning days to engage in presentations, workshops and collaboration that increase teaching skills and support quality instruction. Each year we develop a plan for the coming school year which identifies the learning that we will be focused on during our school's staff learning days. Please see the three-year plan that highlights our areas of focus: [Philosophy | Dr. Robert Plaxton Elementary School \(lethsd.ab.ca\)](#)

Proactive Positive Behaviour

At Dr. Plaxton, we believe in teaching students how to conduct themselves in calm and reasonable ways. We teach social problem solving where students learn to match the size of a reaction with the size of a problem and how to share space, flexibly interact, and regulate emotions. Students learn to survey a social situation, understand group behaviour, consider others' perspectives, think flexibly, negotiate roles and self-regulate to keep emotions and behaviours under control when problems arise. They are taught strategies to help manage and diffuse conflict on their own and when to seek support from an adult if needed.

In the event a conflict arises that students are not able to manage, staff at Dr. Plaxton will support students with conflict management and engage students in restorative practices where repairing the harm done to people and relationships occur.

For students who have challenges with social and emotional regulation, the school will work with families and other professionals to develop tailored plans to support the needs and build capacity of the child to optimize regulation.

School Discipline Guidelines

Section 31 of the Alberta School Act states the following in relation to the responsibilities of students:

A student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to

- (a) attend school regularly and punctually,
- (b) be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue the student's education,
- (c) ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
- (d) respect the rights of others in the school,
- (e) refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means,
- (f) comply with the rules of the school and the policies of the board,
- (g) co-operate with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services,
- (h) be accountable to the student's teachers and other school staff for the student's conduct, and
- (i) positively contribute to the student's school and community.

Acts of Aggression or Dangerous Behaviours

On-going or extremely disruptive classroom behaviour, acts of aggression, vandalism, and other dangerous behaviours will be dealt with at the administrative level and may involve suspension or expulsion according to Section 36 of the Alberta School Act:

36 (1) A teacher or a principal may suspend a student in accordance with subsection (2) or (3) if in the opinion of the teacher or principal

- (a) the student has failed to comply with section 31,
- (b) the student has failed to comply with the code of conduct established under section 33(2),
- (c) the student's conduct, whether or not the conduct occurs within the school building or during the school day, is injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school, or
- (d) the student has distributed an intimate image of another person in the circumstances described in section 1(1.1).

(2) A teacher may suspend a student from one class period.

(3) A principal may suspend a student

- (a) from school,
- (b) from one or more class periods or courses,
- (c) from transportation provided under section 59, or
- (d) from any school-related activity.

(4) When a student is suspended under subsection (3), the principal shall

- (a) immediately inform the student's parent of the suspension,
- (b) report in writing to the student's parent all the circumstances respecting the suspension, and
- (c) provide an opportunity to meet with the student's parent, and the student if the student is 16 years of age or older, to discuss the suspension.

(5) A suspension may not exceed 5 school days, except in accordance with a recommendation for expulsion made by the principal under section 37.

After a suspension, the student, parents, and sometimes other professionals will engage in a processing and restorative session with school administration. This will include exploring underlying issues and developing a plan for the future that includes short- and long-term expectations. Restoration for any harm done will be discussed. Individuals such as the School Counsellor, Psychologist or Learning Support Teacher may attend these meetings.

Appeal Procedures

If a parent/guardian disagrees with a school-based decision, the proper appeal procedure is the following:

- 1) Parent contacts the teacher or staff member the concern originated with
- 2) Parent contacts the school principal or vice principal
- 3) Parent contacts the associate or superintendent of schools
- 4) Parent contacts the school board

Fair Notice of Threat/Risk Assessment

Our School District believes in creating safe and caring environments for students and staff. Any incident where a student engages in behaviour which threatens or appears to threaten the safety of others will be investigated. Administrators can implement a Risk Assessment for behaviours that are worrisome including writing or drawings with violent themes; references to or involvement in violent activity at school; or an increased interest in activities that are deemed as dangerous to the safety of others. A Threat Assessment is implemented when a student threatens to kill or injure others, brings a weapon to school, or makes direct verbal, or written violent threats to others. The Threat/Risk Assessment regulations are outlined in Policy 504.9 available in the School District Policy Handbook available at www.lethsd.ab.ca.

Search and Seizure of School or Student Property

As per policy 502.11, Lethbridge School District No. 51 Board believes that enforcement of the Board and/or school rules may, from time to time, require that school administration conduct a search of property and/or the seizure of prohibited or missing items.

The Board authorizes school Principals, in connection with the enforcement of district or school rules, to carry out searches of student desks, lockers, clothing and personal property such as knapsacks, book bags or purses.

The physical search of a student is prohibited. Searches of personal property shall be in accordance with the following:

- Searches shall be conducted in the presence of an adult witness;
- Students may be requested to remove outerwear: hats, jackets, footwear;
- Students may be requested to empty their pockets and contents of any object which may be used to transport, carry or conceal materials.

The Principal shall provide police access to the property of a student (see Policy 504.8 Involvement with Authorized Agencies) or personal information regarding the student without informing the parent in the following circumstances:

- When the police officer is in pursuit after the commission of an offence;
- When the police officer is in possession of a search warrant or subpoena;
- When the police officer possesses blanket powers of search as defined by legislation;
- The Principal is authorized to seize prohibited items.

Practice Lockdowns and Fire Drills

School Lockdowns are practiced with Lethbridge City Police two times/school year. During this time, students practice appropriate lockdown response. Parents/guardians will be notified when practice drills occur. School Fire Drills occur six times/year. One of the drills is held with the Lethbridge Fire Department. Parents/guardians will be notified when practice drills occur.

Bussing

For students to have a safe and pleasant ride on the bus, students must follow the rules of conduct. The bus is an extension of the classroom and school officials will deal with any misconduct. It is the primary responsibility of the driver to transport students safely to and from school. The driver's attention must be on the road and traffic conditions and not on student behaviour. Buses may be equipped with video cameras and may be used for discipline and safety purposes only. Students may be suspended or expelled from riding the bus if they do not follow the rules of conduct:

Rules of Conduct and Students' Responsibilities

- Follow the directions of the driver
- Students are to remain seated while the bus is in motion and are not to extend any part of their body out the windows
- Standees are not permitted on yellow school buses
- Students may be assigned to specific seats
- No eating on the bus (including candy, drinks, and gum)
- Students who vandalize a bus will be held responsible for the cost of repairs and may lose their riding privileges.
- Inappropriate use of mobile technology is strictly prohibited
- Scuffling, fighting, harassment of other students, smoking, use of obscene language and throwing objects in and out of the bus are prohibited
- Conveyance, using or under the influence of alcohol or controlled substances, prohibited
- The possession, use or conveyance of potentially dangerous items prohibited

Consequences Administered by School Officials

1. 1st infraction - Written infraction sent to school - Parents Notified
2. 2nd infraction - 1-day suspension
3. 3rd infraction - 3-day suspension
4. 4th infraction - 5-day suspension
5. 5th infraction - suspension of riding privileges (may be appealed to the school board)

Steps listed above may be omitted depending on the severity of the infraction

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices at School

It is now common for students to carry cell phones, tablets and other electronic devices to school. We recognize that for some families a phone is important for communication between students and parents/caregivers before and after school. Cell phones, however, can be a disruption in the classroom, a safety concern at the playground and a cause for social difficulties. While students can carry cell phones to school, we ask that parents support our efforts for appropriate use by adhering to the following guidelines:

- We ask that students keep cell phones at home unless it is necessary for before and after school student/parent communication.
- Cell phones must be turned off and kept in zipped backpacks. Students may not use cell phones in classrooms, hallways or on the playground during the school day. Cell phones can only be used outside of our building outside of school hours, unless given permission by your child's classroom teacher that intentionally supports learning objectives.
- The school office phone and classroom phone is available during the day if it is necessary for students to call out. Incoming calls will go to the office and be directed from there.
- Cell phones are often equipped with cameras. Students may not take pictures at school. To satisfy legal requirements around the protection of privacy, photography at school is allowed only for school purposes and with the permission of a staff member. Permitted photos can only be used with parental consent.
- The school takes no responsibility for loss or damage personal electronic devices. Parents/guardians send devices to school at their own risk.

Student Dress

Students are encouraged to establish good health practices by dressing accordingly for the weather conditions. Our students are encouraged to go outside in all types of weather, and so it is important to ensure students arrive with proper footwear and outdoor clothing.

All students take physical education and should have appropriate gym footwear available. Footwear which is soiled or wet due to inclement weather is not to be worn in the school for safety reasons. Students are asked to have a pair of indoor shoes suitable for the gym to be left at the school to ensure students always have something available to participate in.

Lost and Found

Lost and found articles will be placed by the office. We make every attempt to have these articles returned to their owners. However, children are not always sure of their things, particularly when many children have similar articles (boots, mitts, jackets). You can help your children and us by **labeling everything** your child brings to school. Each summer, the items that have not been claimed are sent to local charities.

Wheeled Recreational Devices

Wheeled recreational devices include bikes, scooters, rollerblades, skateboards, electric scooters/bikes and Heelys™. All students are eligible to these devices to school providing they practice safety habits. The guidelines below are designed to ensure the safety of our students.

- We strongly encourage students to be wearing helmets during use of all these recreational devices.
- We ask that all devices are not to be ridden on the school grounds, near the playground or on the sidewalk directly in front of the school.
- Bikes and scooters should be parked in the bike and scooter racks and locked with student locks/chains.
- All wheeled recreational devices are brought to school at his/her own risk.
- For Heelys™ and rollerblades, students are to remove the wheels or the rollerblades in a safe location before they enter the school.

It's a BLAST Before & After School Care

www.itsablastprogram.com

Phone: 320-3988

The Lethbridge Community Out of School Association—IT'S A BLAST program, established in 1992, is a non-profit organization licensed to provide out of school care for children 6 to 12 years old. They offer various before, after School, and holiday programs in several schools throughout the city. IT'S A BLAST is a partner of Lethbridge School Division and Dr. Plaxton Elementary and has its own guidelines and procedures. It is run independently of the division.

Program Philosophy

- **CHILDREN** are entitled to environments and opportunities that foster positive emotional, social, cognitive and physical development that value inclusion, multiculturalism, interdependence and dignity.
- **FAMILIES** are entitled to be involved in a meaningful way in their childcare experience and deserve assurance of quality childcare for their children while parents are involved in work or educational commitments, personal fulfillment or while childcare is part of a care plan for a family.
- Our **STAFF** is entitled to a working environment which recognizes and respects staff training, skills and commitment to childcare and which demonstrates this through respectful communication and personnel policies.
- The **ASSOCIATION** enhances the lives of children, families and the community by providing a caring, supportive, vital and affordable community service.
- **IT'S A BLAST** strives to provide a fun, safe place for children with stimulating programs, caring staff and a high level of health and safety standards. Our activities are based on the needs, interests, ages and abilities of the children.