



Dear Parents / Guardians,

This letter is to inform you that Vernon River Consolidated will be involved with the School Therapy Occupational Therapy (OT) Program for this school year. Occupational Therapists (OTs) are licensed health professionals who work with children in many different settings and know a lot about: motor development, sensory processing as well as environmental set up, adaptations and accessibility.

- **Fine and visual motor skills** are important for school activities such as: drawing, colouring, printing, writing, keyboarding, using a computer, cutting with scissors, opening lunch containers, completing fasteners on clothing, tying shoelaces, using a lock, etc.
- **Gross motor skills** are important in school for: moving safely in the classroom and throughout the school, participating in gym activities as well as playing on the playground and playground equipment, etc.
- **Sensory processing** in school is important for things like: being comfortable with sounds and lighting within the school, being able to tolerate getting ready for outdoors in crowded hallways, being able to sit or stand at a desk or on the floor to complete work or listen to instructions.
- **Environmental set up** in school includes things like: making sure desk and chair heights are the “right fit” for students, identifying the best location for desk placement or quiet work/learning areas, exploring alternative seating options (i.e., chair, movement cushion, stool, stand-up desks) for students and ensuring accessible space for wheelchairs, etc.

The School Therapy OT will be part of the school team and accessible to all school staff as well as to parents/guardians. While at the school, the School Therapy OT will spend time in many areas of the school (i.e., classrooms, gym, music, playground, etc.) and will observe students engaged in their school activities. The OT will guide school staff in understanding how they can use activities within the classroom to help children with their motor and sensory skills. If the OT, together with your child’s teacher, notice that your child is having difficulty with the motor or sensory demands in the classroom or school, the teacher will contact you to discuss making an individual referral to the School Therapy OT Program. If you have questions or concerns about your child’s motor or sensory development please feel free to contact the School Therapy OT as well as your child’s classroom teacher.

If a family doctor, pediatrician or other health agency would like your child to be seen by the School Therapy OT program, the referral request must be communicated to the school-based Student Services Team or classroom teacher for a referral to be initiated.

If your child is currently being seen by private OT and you and your child’s school team would like to refer your child to the School Therapy OT Program please feel free to contact the OT at your child’s school to discuss the transition from private OT to the School Therapy OT Program.

The School Therapy OT for this school year is Colleen MacPherson, OT Reg. PE. She will be at Vernon River Consolidated on day 5 of the school cycle. If you have any questions please feel free to contact the school or Colleen MacPherson at cgmacthompson@ihis.org. Thank you!