



The Toronto New School

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Toronto New School Extra Curricular Activities

At Toronto New School we realize that a rich, full education expands beyond regular class time and must cultivate not just academic, but also social and emotional intelligence. We also know that a holistic approach to education allows students to learn from a variety of sources. Students should learn from each other in addition to their teachers. Students should also learn by teaching others. With this in mind, TNS fosters a number of extra-curricular programs which provide our students with unique peer-based learning opportunities. Below is a sample of some of our more successful extra-curricular activities.

PIE

Pride in Identity and Equality, better known as the PIE Club, is a discussion and social club organized by physics/math/social science teacher Anna Wills. PIE was established to recognize and celebrate the diverse student body at TNS. Meeting once a week over lunch, group members discuss current events, issues at school, social pressures, politics, socks with sandals, gender, racism, religion, sexual orientation, ageism, university applications, favourite toothpaste flavours, and anything else that might be on their minds. In this nonjudgmental and easy-going environment, students are comfortable voicing different points of view and challenging one another to support their positions. More than just a conversation club, students build conflict resolution skills, practice defending their opinions, and learn from each others' different perspectives and experiences.

Jam Club

Jam Club takes place every lunch hour. During this time students learn the nuances of playing music in a group setting. Heavily steeped in blues conventions, Jam Club teaches students how to communicate their musical ideas through improvisation. This focus on improvisation allows each student to develop his or her own musical style, while simultaneously cultivating an awareness of how each person's contribution adds to and benefits from the input of other musicians.

TNS has an assortment of musical instruments on site, including electric and acoustic guitars, an electric bass, keys, a drum kit, assorted percussion and a P.A. system for vocals. Students are also encouraged to bring in their own instruments. As a result, the

musical dynamic of the club is constantly evolving. Past jam sessions have included a mandolin, cello, violin, and saxophone.

This extra-curricular activity is organized by Music and Society teacher Ryan Burwell, and is open to students of all skill levels. In the past four years, he has been producing an annual CD with the club, which includes a variety of covers and original student compositions.

Private Music Lessons

Private guitar lessons taught by Ryan Burwell are available after regular school hours at TNS. Ryan also organizes a peer based music program in which qualified students earn community service hours by teaching music to beginners. These lessons not only spread the love of music, but also help refine leadership, cooperation, and communication skills.

Yoga

Philosophy teacher Mike MacConnell holds lunch time yoga classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The Tuesday class involves an energetic Ashtanga-style routine that invigorates students, helping them to find the vigor to tackle the rest of the week. Mike slows it down for the Thursday class, which focuses on a more meditative series of restorative poses.

Student Organized Sports

Our students have taken the initiative to supplement our existing physical education program. Collaboration between the student council and other interested students has led to a variety of sporting tournaments, ranging from basketball to ultimate frisbee to ping pong. We are excited at the opening of a new recreational facility down the street and look forward to using it to expand these student run events.

The involvement of students in the organization of sporting events provides them with an excellent opportunity to develop teamwork skills both on and off the field. Such direct input also allows the students to tailor the athletic program to suit their individual interests.