

Health PEI



Dear Parents / Guardians,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year! This letter is to inform you that the School Therapy Occupational Therapy (OT) Program will be at Souris Regional School this school year. Occupational Therapists (OTs) are regulated 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. OTs support students in schools with participating in

- **Personal cares:** bathroom routines, putting on and removing outdoor clothing and footwear, clothing fasteners (e.g., snaps, zippers, buttons, shoelaces), opening and closing lunch containers, feeding self, etc.
- **Classroom and school routines:** transitioning between activities or spaces within the classroom or school, organizing and locating school materials, participating in classroom routines, participating in Phys Ed, library, music, recess, and playground activities, etc.
- **Learning-based activities:** using classroom tools (e.g., scissors, pencils, glue stick, learning manipulatives, etc.), expressing learning through cutting, colouring, drawing, printing, cursive writing and using technology, self-regulation with respect to focusing attention and starting work in a timely manner, etc.
- **Managing sensory demands of a school environment:** managing the sound of the bell and /or announcements, sounds and movement in busy corridors, echo in the gym, sounds during assemblies, lighting in the school, feel of learning materials, etc.
- **Managing the physical environment:** accessing spaces when using mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs, walkers, etc.), accessing appropriate classroom desk and chair heights, using flexible seating options and optimal learning spaces, using equipment for personal cares and technical access (e.g., change tables, lift systems, switches for environmental controls or communication devices), etc.

The OT will spend time in many areas of the school (i.e., classrooms, gym, music, playground, etc.) and will observe students participating in their school activities. The OT will guide school staff in understanding how they can use and adapt activities within the classroom to help children with their motor skills and their sensory environment. If the OT, together with your child's teacher, notice your child is having difficulty in the above-mentioned areas 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 in the above-mentioned areas, please feel free to contact the OT at Souris Regional School as well as your child's classroom teacher.

While at the school, the OT will be part of the school team and available to school staff as well as to parents/guardians. The primary focus will be on supporting students in their elementary school years (e.g., kindergarten to grade 6). However, the OT is available to consult with students in grades 7-12 if determined by the school, the OT, and yourself as parent/guardian, that an OT referral is needed.

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 both you as well as your child's school to start the referral process.

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 Souris Regional School or Yvonne Thompson, clinical lead of the School Therapy OT Program, to discuss the role of the school-based OT and private OT.

The OT with the School Therapy OT Program at Souris Regional School is Clare Murphy, OT Reg.(PEI). She will be at Souris Regional School on Day 5 of the 6 day school cycle. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the school or Clare Murphy at claremurphy@ihis.org or (902) 213- 4548.

Wishing your child a good school year,
Occupational Therapy Team - School Therapy OT Program