

# THE STEPH LETHAM GUIDEBOOK

## ABOUT ME:

I live in Newmarket, with my sister and her two pups (Luka is 1.5 and Milo is 8.5) 🐶

I love to read fiction, I watch a lot of TV, play games, do puzzles, and I spend a lot of my free time at my dad's in the Kawartha Lakes on the water (with his pup Titan).

I typically arrive at work by 7:00 am in order to get some work done and make sure my day is ready before the kids come in for extra help.

I rarely stay late at work as I like to relax in the evenings. Sometimes I will bring work home, but not as often as I used to. (This was before COVID).

I also sometimes work on weekends, but this is my choice. Know that I do not expect you to work on weekends or evenings. I might email you, but it can always wait until you are back at work.

I am a planner, which has been an adjustment lately. I like to get things done in advance (sometimes quite far) to manage my stress and workload, and to allow others time to review and revise (when necessary).

## MY GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

**I believe that trust and openness** is a critical pillar for any strong department.

Throughout the year, I will be as transparent as I can when liaising between our department and the admin. I will share any new resources or learnings with you. I will welcome any new resources and ideas from you! And I will support you in your pursuit of teaching.

In that spirit, I invite you to share your ideas with me! I like things done a certain way, and can get set on my ideas. But I recognize that everyone has wonderful insights and ideas themselves – so tell me about them and please push me to try new things!

**I believe that feedback** is vital when building trust and respect in a department.

Feedback can often be misconstrued as a negative thing, but as teachers we know that it is an opportunity for us to become better versions of ourselves. Within our department, we all bring different perspectives, priorities, and strengths. By giving and receiving feedback that comes from a place of trust and respect, we can provide each other with the tools (if we choose to use them!) to expand our comfort zones and reach new potentials.

I will always provide opportunities for you to give me feedback, both as your department head, and as my co-teachers. I actually love to get feedback and respond best when approached in a positive manner. And tell me if I mess up. I am human, will sometimes make mistakes, and I might not notice. Please tell me so I don't do it again.

When necessary, I will provide you with feedback in a respectful way. If you would ever like additional feedback throughout the year, know that I will always be happy to give you my thoughts.

**I believe that collaboration** is another key pillar in a successful department. We have a team of incredible educators, each of us bringing something unique to the table.

Teaching is a profession that requires a lot of prep work and planning. It can be really daunting to think about sometimes, particularly with the changes coming this year. We might have 2 or 3 teachers (sometimes 4!) teaching a course. If we split the work up and collaborate, we can transform the big jobs into smaller, easier to manage tasks. This will hopefully help to lessen related stress and anxiety.

It is important when collaborating to ensure you are following through. If we work as a team, everyone pulling their weight and meeting their deadlines, we will all have more energy and time. If you drop the ball, so to speak, bear in mind that you are letting down your team. We all drop the ball sometimes! So, if you need help or guidance reach out! If someone repeatedly drops the ball, and I am not aware, please let me know and I can help follow up and keep everyone accountable.

**I believe that communication** is also key for things to run effectively and smoothly. None of us are mind readers (though that would be so cool!), so please communicate with your colleagues when you have new ideas, if something is bothering you, etc.

Give me reminders as I sometimes forget things, because life is busy. If I do, please don't hesitate to remind me. And if we discuss something verbally that requires action on my part, please send me an email to help me retain important talking points or tasks. Please don't hesitate to follow-up with me if I forget something.

Have questions? Need support? Need clarification? Want someone to bounce ideas off of? Whatever it is, I would love to chat with you!

Pop by my class before or after school, find me on prep, email me, text me (705-879-1749), book a Zoom! I will do my best to get back to you the same day.

**HAVE FUN!!** This is a department of amazing people, so let's celebrate each other and have fun throughout the year!