



A Message from the Director of Education

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome back to school for another exciting year! I hope your summer was relaxing and fun – a time of great family experiences and good memories. I know that the school year ahead will be an exhilarating time of challenges and accomplishments, as our students experience the joy of learning and of growing in our Catholic faith.

You will notice that the pages of this planner are filled with facts and lessons about our faith. It is a wonderful guide, as we teach our students about the history of the Catholic Church, the liturgical calendar and the relevance of our faith in their lives.

After all, that is the mission of Catholic education – to provide our students with an education of the very highest standards; but, also to form them in the Christian values that give life true freedom, meaning and joy. These are virtues that bring us to love God and one another.

This student planner also contains several pages of important information both from your school and from the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, including policies and procedures that every family should be aware of. Please take a few minutes to read through them. If you have any questions, contact your principal.

Again, welcome back. I pray that you will be blessed with a truly magnificent year of growth in knowledge and faith!

Sincerely,

Paul Wubben
Director of Education

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Our Mission Statement

Walking together in Christ's light with parish and family, we are called to build an inclusive Catholic learning community, and to serve as partners in the formation of life long learners, by:

- Living our faith.
- Promoting educational achievement and innovation.
- Fostering stewardship, leadership and social justice.



Kids Help Phone

Since 1989, Kids Help Phone has been providing confidential, anonymous and professional counseling and information to young people five to 20 years old across Canada. No problem is too big or too small. Youth can call free anytime to speak to a counselor about an issue. Kids Help Phone does not subscribe to caller ID so that all contact is confidential. Young people can also access information or post a question to a counselor on-line at www.kidshelphone.ca

Kids Help Phone is a registered charity and receives no core government funding; however, it is supported by many individual contributors and corporate partners.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Transportation

According to the St. Clair Catholic District School Board's student transportation policy, elementary students are eligible to ride the bus if they live farther than 1.6 kilometers from their eligible school. (For secondary students, the eligibility distance is 3.2 kilometers.) Students who live closer than the minimum distance requirement may be granted courtesy seats by the transportation department in consultation with the school bus operator and school principal, subject to a number of conditions set out in the Board's *Policy 9.2 Student Transportation*.

Fog Days

When dangerous fog conditions exist, morning buses will be cancelled. However, students **will be bussed home after school**. The decision whether to cancel morning buses will be made by the bus operators in consultation with the transportation department. Parents should listen to their local radio station, or check the transportation web site at www.schoolbusinfo.com

Bus Cancellations and School Closings due to Winter Storms

Safety of students is the primary consideration when the decision is made to cancel buses because of drifting snow or icy roads. On occasions when dangerous travel results in school buildings being closed, students must not attend. However, when buses are cancelled but schools remain open, it is expected that parents will determine whether it is safe to send their children to school. It is also understood that, should they decide to bring their children to school, it is the responsibility of parents to deliver them and pick them up at the end of the day **at the scheduled dismissal time**.

Students who arrive at school on days when the buses have been cancelled will be met by teachers who are prepared to provide instruction. If a majority of the class is present, the teacher will proceed with the planned program. However, on low attendance days, activities will be rescheduled and students will be given an opportunity to review material, practice previously learned skills or participate in other meaningful educational activities.

For students who are unable to get to school when the buses are cancelled, work packages for home study are available on the Board's website at www.st-clair.net Go to Parent Resources, then click on Home Study Activities.

School Security – Locked Doors

Exterior doors at all elementary schools will be locked during school hours. Doors will be unlocked during recess time only, to permit students access from the yard. The only exception will be the front door of the school, which will remain unlocked to permit parents/guardians and visitors to enter and exit the building.

Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality are important to ensure quality education for the student. It is also an excellent life skill that should be developed at a young age. The school office must be notified whenever a student is to be absent. In cases of dental or medical appointments during school hours, a note should be sent to the teacher indicating the time the student will be picked up and whether or not the student will be returning to school.

Illness While at School

If your child becomes ill, the office or the classroom teacher will call you at home. If there is no one at home we will attempt to call you at work. If we are unsuccessful, we will then telephone the emergency contact person whom you have designated. A sick student will not be permitted to go home alone. We recommend that a parent/guardian pick up the student at the school.

Volunteers

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board believes that school volunteers are an important resource in supporting educational programs, and is committed to promoting and supporting the involvement of volunteers within our schools. The Board also recognizes the need to ensure the safety and well being of all students. All volunteers who have regular contact with students must complete a *Vulnerable Sector Criminal Background Check* before commencing their duties. Anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer should speak to the school principal.

Medication

The use of prescription medication is discouraged at school. However the Board recognizes that on occasion there may be the need for students to receive medication during the school day in order to enable education of the student to continue. In order for prescribed medication to be administered, parents/guardians must provide the necessary authorizations and school administrators must follow the guidelines as outlined in the Board's *Policy 3.5 Health Support*.

If injection medication is required, arrangements for the injections must be made by the parent or guardians. School personnel can assume no responsibility for injections (i.e. juvenile diabetes requiring mid-day insulin).

Board personnel will not administer non-prescription drugs.

Acceptable Use of Computers

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board recognizes the important role of computer technology in helping students to learn and communicate effectively. In keeping with its mission, the Board requires that all computers be used in a morally responsible and legal manner. Students and parents must be aware that some internet sites may contain material which is inappropriate, offensive, illegal or inaccurate.

It is a privilege for students to access a school computer network and to receive an internet or email account. The person to whom the account is issued is responsible at all times for its use. All user accounts must be accessed solely to support the educational objectives of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board. Each year, all students in Grade 4 and beyond will be expected to sign a form expressing their commitment to follow the school's *Policy 6.2 Acceptable Use of Computers, Networks and the Internet for Students*.

Consent Form for Use of Students' Names, Photographs or Work

From time to time, the school and the Board receive requests from members of the media for permission to cover news stories about our school or our students. Under the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, we are not permitted to allow the names of students, their photographs or their work to appear in these stories, without the written permission of parents/guardians. These same rules extend to all publications produced by Board and our schools, including the school newsletter, the yearbook, the Board's system-wide newsletter and the Board and school websites.

The Board has developed a consent form, which asks parents/guardians of students under 16 years of age to either grant permission for the release of this type of information, or withhold consent. The form remains in effect through the student's entire career with the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, unless it is revoked in writing.

Parental Access to Ontario Student Records

Schools are charged with the legal responsibility for maintaining and holding Ontario Student Records (OSR). These documents must not leave the school office. Parents may have access to these records, however they are requested to speak with the principal to arrange a time when they can review the document together.

Custody

In cases where custody is an issue, the parent will provide a copy of the court's custodial order to be placed in the student's OSR folder. If at any time, the information contained in the custodial order is changed, the parent will provide a copy of the new order.

Sacramental and Religious Instruction

Religion is integrated within all aspects of the educational experience and that is one of the reasons we can say that Catholic schools are "schools with a difference." Parents, priests and teachers prepare the children to receive the Sacraments.

All children must take part in religious instruction and celebrations and will not be excused from participation. We also encourage the children to attend Sunday Mass regularly with their parents, as the Mass is the very centre of our worship.

Periodically, the teacher will send home information about the programs being used with ideas for parents/guardians to use with their child at home. We hope you will use these materials to make the spiritual development of your child a joint effort of Church, school and home.

Missed School Days

Students will attend school on scheduled school days and take holidays according to the school year calendar. In the event that parents choose to take their child out of school at times other than school holidays, the responsibility lies with the parent to provide opportunities for learning. Teachers cannot provide detailed daily homework assignments that replicate the missed school program. However, when students are away from school due to a prolonged illness or injury, arrangements will be made with the parents to provide support.

Dress Code

The values evident in all aspects of a Catholic school should reflect the faith and Christian commitment of the school community. Popular social trends may be in conflict with the values taught in school; consequently, clothing popular at a particular time may clash with the school's values and be unacceptable. All clothing worn must be clean, neat, free from slashes, comfortable and appropriate for the business of attending school. No clothing may be worn to school which has pictures, symbols or writing which may be interpreted as discriminatory, degrading, demeaning or disrespectful of Catholic educational values. (Policy 3.3 and Policy 3.4)

Police Protocol

Police services have the responsibility to:

- enforce the *Criminal Code of Canada*, the *Police Services Act and Regulations*, the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, and other federal, provincial and municipal laws and regulations;
- assist victims of crime;
- assist in the development of young people's understanding of good citizenship;
- promote and foster a reduction of crime, both against and committed by young people;
- divert young people away from crime and antisocial behaviour; and
- work in partnership with the school to support positive development.

SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT

Standards of Behaviour

The school standards of behaviour apply to all members of the school community, including students, parents and guardians, teachers or other school staff members, volunteers and visitors.

The standards of behaviour apply:

- on school property;
- while travelling on a school bus that is owned by the Board or that is under contract to the Board;
- in-school sports activities;
- in off-site school-sponsored activities; or
- in circumstances where engaging in an activity could have a negative impact on the school climate (e.g. on-line).

All members of the school community must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching; and/or

All members of the school community must **not**:

- engage in bullying behaviours;
- commit sexual assault;
- traffic weapons or restricted drugs;
- give alcohol to a minor;
- commit robbery;
- be in possession of any weapon, including firearms;
- use any object to threaten or intimidate another person;
- cause injury to any person with an object;
- be in possession of, or be under the influence of, or provide others with alcohol or restricted drugs;
- inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias; and/or
- commit an act of vandalism that causes damage to school property or to property located on the premises of the school;
- swear at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority.

Roles and Responsibilities

The School Code of Conduct recognizes that all members of the school community, including principals, teachers and other staff members, students and parents have an obligation to comply with the standards of behaviour outlined in this policy. Each member of the school community has the following roles and responsibilities:

Students

Students must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others, and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour. Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- comes to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;
- shows respect for himself or herself, for others, and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; and
- follows the established rules and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

Students are also expected to:

- ensure that all personal communication/media devices are powered off and stored out of view during an instructional class and other areas of the school, unless authorized by the principal.
- display the contents of clothing, backpacks, etc. that are worn or carried on school property if directed by the school principal or the vice-principal. Desks and lockers are school property and a search is permissible by school administration.
- be dressed in a neat and well-groomed manner, according to the St. Clair Catholic District School Board's Dress Code for Students (Policy 3.3 and Policy 3.4)

Parents

Parents play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfill their role when they:

- show an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- communicate regularly with the school;
- help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- show that they are familiar with the Provincial Code of Conduct, the Board's Code of Conduct and school rules;
- encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour; and
- assist school staff in dealing with disciplinary issues involving their child.

Teachers and Other School Staff Members

Under the leadership of their principals, teachers and other school staff members maintain order in the school and are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, teachers and school staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;

- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents, volunteers, and the members of the school community;
- prepare students for the full responsibility of citizenship.

Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Bullying and Harassment

All students have the right to a caring, respectful and safe school environment, which is free from all forms of bullying and harassment. All school staff will take steps to prevent bullying and harassment and to assist and support students, who are being bullied.

Students or parents should report issues of bullying to any school staff member or administrator as soon as possible. A bullying incident report form will be completed by the parent, student or school staff member. The form will be retained by the administrator as needed for possible progressive discipline. Forms will be available in the school office or on-line at www.st-clair.net

Progressive Discipline

In order to promote positive pupil behaviours that contribute to safe learning environments, the school supports the use of positive practices for prevention and behaviour management. Progressive discipline is a non-punitive, whole school approach that uses a continuum of corrective and supportive interventions, supports and consequences to address inappropriate behaviour. When addressing inappropriate behaviour, school staff will consider the particular pupil and circumstances, including mitigating and other factors.

Early and ongoing intervention strategies may include:

- Contact with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Oral reminders
- Review of expectations
- Written work assignment with a learning component
- Volunteer services to the school community
- Referral to counselling
- Conflict mediation and resolution
- Consultation

When inappropriate behaviour has occurred, progressive discipline may also include a range of interventions, supports and consequences such as:

- Meeting with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s), pupil and principal, teachers, school and related personnel;
- Referral to a community agency for anger management or substance abuse counselling/intervention
- Detentions
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Withdrawal from class
- Restitution for damages
- Restorative practices
- Transfer to another class within the school
- Transfer to another school within the board
- Suspension or Expulsion

Suspensions

The infractions for which a suspension may be considered by the principal include:

1. Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;

2. Possessing alcohol, illegal and/or restricted drugs;
3. Being under the influence of alcohol;
4. Swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority;
5. Committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school;
6. Bullying (a form of repeated, persistent and aggressive behaviour that is directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance)
7. Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the moral tone of the school;
8. Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the physical or mental well-being of any member of the school community; or
9. Any act considered by the principal to be contrary to the Board or School Code of Conduct.

A pupil may be suspended only once for any one incidence of an infraction and may be suspended for a minimum of one (1) school day and a maximum of twenty (20) school days.

Expulsions

The infractions for which a principal may consider recommending to the Board that a pupil be expelled from the pupil's school or from all schools of the Board include:

1. Possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm;
2. Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
3. Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
4. Committing sexual assault;
5. Trafficking in weapons, illegal and/or restricted drugs;
6. Committing robbery;
7. Giving alcohol to a minor;
8. An act considered by the principal to be significantly injurious to the moral tone of the school and/or to the physical or mental well-being of others;
9. A pattern of behaviour that is so inappropriate that the pupil's continued presence is injurious to the effective learning and/or working environment of others;
10. Activities engaged in by the pupil on or off school property that cause the pupil's continuing presence in the school to create an unacceptable risk to the physical or mental well-being of other person(s) in the school or Board;
11. Activities engaged in by the pupil on or off school property that have caused extensive damage to the property of the Board or to goods that are/were on Board property;
12. The pupil has demonstrated through a pattern of behaviour that s/he has not prospered by the instruction available to him or her and that s/he is persistently resistant to making changes in behaviour which would enable him or her to prosper; or
13. Any act considered by the principal to be a serious violation of the Board or School Code of Conduct.

Further details, including the appeal process for suspensions and expulsions are outlined in the St. Clair Catholic District School Board's Policy 3.17, Student Discipline.