



2024-2025 Parent/Guardian Information

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Important Information for Parents/Guardians

Parent/Guardian Communication Guidelines:

Parents/guardians who have concerns or suggestions related to their child’s education or school experience are expected to follow the steps outlined below:

Step One – speak to the staff member with whom the matter is concerned.

Step Two – speak to the school Principal.

Step Three – speak to the Superintendent of Education.

It is expected that most matters will be resolved before they reach the Superintendent.

All concerns from parents/guardians must be addressed in a civil and respectful manner. Profane or aggressive language through any method of communication will not be tolerated and will result in the communication being terminated.

The Role of the Principal – The principal will involve the staff member in any discussions with the parent/guardian. The principal may request that concerns be put in writing and may involve others in the process who could be helpful in resolving the concern.

The Role of the School Council – The school council is not a forum to discuss parent/guardian-teacher-student issues. If these matters are brought to any school council member, or any school

council meeting, the concern is to be referred immediately to the principal, who will ensure the proper process is followed.

All other school-related concerns and suggestions, which do not involve a staff member, should be directed to the school principal. Concerns which arrive anonymously cannot be investigated sufficiently; therefore, anonymous complaints or concerns will not be addressed.

Effective use of these communication guidelines will result in the fair and timely resolution of concerns.

Transportation and School Closures:

Transportation services for the St. Clair Catholic District School Board are provided by Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services (CLASS). Under the CLASS policy, students are eligible to ride the bus if they live farther than 1.6 kilometers (elementary) and 3.2 kilometers (secondary) from their eligible school.

CLASS encourages parents/guardians and students to access the PARENT PORTAL for up-to-date transportation information, web tools such as courtesy seats, bus pass and shared custody applications, email notifications and much more. Parents should download the free MySBI app onto their mobile device to receive real time updates on school bus cancellations or delays. Bus cancellation information is also available through local radio stations and on the CLASS transportation website at <https://cklass.ca/services/student-transportation/>

For all other questions about student transportation, visit <https://cklass.ca/services/student-transportation/> or call 1-877-330-4287.

School Bus Cancellations Due to Fog

When dangerous fog conditions exist, morning buses will be cancelled. However, **in most situations 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 CLASS transportation department.

Bus Cancellations and School Closures Due to Snow or Inclement Weather

Safety of students is the primary consideration when the decision is made to cancel buses in situations of inclement weather and/or road conditions. 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 regularly scheduled dismissal time.**

On days when buses are cancelled for the day due to inclement weather, teachers will be available to support learning and supervise students who arrive at school. For those students who are unable to attend class on these days, teachers will provide asynchronous learning through their Learning Management System (e.g. Google Classroom). New curriculum will not be taught; however, learning will reinforce objectives previously taught in class. Teachers will also provide feedback to any student whose work has been submitted over the course of the inclement

weather day. **This is voluntary learning, available to students and families who wish to participate.**

If the school is closed for the day due to inclement weather, staff will work remotely from home and will provide asynchronous learning through the Learning Management System. New curriculum will not be taught; however, teachers will be available to provide feedback to any student who has submitted work throughout the day during school hours. **Again, this is voluntary learning, available to students and families who wish to participate.**

We believe these new strategies will make it possible for all students to continue in their studies from the comfort and safety of their homes when wintry weather makes travel dangerous.

Safety and Wellbeing:

Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality are important to ensure quality education for students. Students will attend school on scheduled school days and take holidays according to the school year calendar. If parents/guardians 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.

The school office must be notified whenever a student is to be absent using the SchoolMessenger – Safe Arrival student absence management system. Parents/guardians/adult students are required to report student absences through this system using one of the three reporting methods below:

- Download and use the SchoolMessenger app.
- Visit the SchoolMessenger portal at <https://home.schoolmessenger.ca/>
- Call the toll-free number 1-833-337-8070. We recommend saving this phone number as 'St. Clair Catholic Attendance' in your contacts.

The system provides faster notifications for unreported absences, making it easier to report reasons for absences. Same-day absences should be reported in a timely manner, and future absences can be reported anytime, 24/7.

If an absence is not reported, the system will try to contact the designated contacts via email or phone until a reason is provided. For more detailed instructions on setting up and using SchoolMessenger, please refer to the attached postcard or visit <https://sm.sccdsb.net>.

Custody

In cases where custody is an issue, the parent/guardian 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, a copy of the new order must be provided immediately.

Illness While at School

If your child becomes ill during school hours, the office or classroom teacher will call the parent/guardian or designated contacts recorded on the student's file in priority sequence provided. A student who becomes ill will not be permitted to go home alone. We recommend that a parent/guardian pick up the student at the school.

Medication

The Board recognizes that on occasion there may be the need for students to receive medication during the school day. For prescribed medication to be administered, parents/guardians must provide the necessary authorizations and school administrators must follow the guidelines as outlined in *Sec. C Policy – Health Support*. Board personnel will not administer non-prescription drugs.

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

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/guardians, priests and teachers prepare the children to receive the Sacraments.

All students are encouraged to take part in all aspects of religious instruction and celebrations. We also encourage students to attend Sunday Mass regularly with their parents/guardians, as the Mass is the very center 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.

Peanut Butter Substitutes

It is the practice of the St. Clair Catholic District School Board not to permit peanut butter substitutes in schools where students are known to have nut allergies. This is a position which has been reviewed with the Medical Officers of Health for Lambton County and Chatham-Kent, and which they support. The Board's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) also supports the Board's position.

Although the product itself is perfectly safe, it mimics another product which is deadly for students and staff who are anaphylactic to peanuts. The substitute looks, smells, spreads, and tastes like peanut butter. Once it's out of the jar, it is impossible to tell the real thing from the substitute, making it a continued danger for students and staff with nut allergies. In school communities where anaphylaxis to nut products is present, parents/guardians are advised that the substitutes are not acceptable food items. Parents are also advised that if the product is sent to school, the student will be provided with a healthy alternative or asked to eat in a location that will ensure there will be no contact with students or staff who are allergic.

Scent Awareness

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board, in collaboration with our Joint Health & Safety Committee, has developed a Scent Awareness Procedural Guideline, to guide staff, students and volunteers in this important area of wellbeing.

Fragrance can have a strong impact on the health and productivity of some individuals. Exposure to strong scents and fragrances in the environment can cause a range of effects, from mild discomfort to triggering an asthma attack, which directly impacts the health of those individuals. The purpose of the procedural guideline is to promote an environment which supports teaching and learning for all staff, students, volunteers, and visitors to our buildings. To that end, the guideline directs individuals to refrain from wearing or using scented products on Board premises and during Board-sanctioned activities.

Scented products include but are not limited to:

- Personal hygiene products (e.g., shampoo, conditioner, hairsprays, deodorants, colognes, after-shaves, fragrances, perfumes, lotions, soaps, cosmetics and creams).
- Industrial and household chemicals and cleaners.
- Air fresheners (e.g., deodorizers, potpourri, oils and candles).

The Board has worked with the public health units in the development of these procedural guidelines, which have become common in public spaces. Signage is posted in all St. Clair Catholic buildings.

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 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. For further information, please refer to *Sec. C Policy – Dress Code for Elementary and Secondary Students*.

Health Canada Advisory Regarding Drawstrings for Children's Upper Outerwear

Health Canada advises that some children's clothing products can pose a danger. The products listed as potential hazards for children include upper outerwear in sizes newborn to 12 years that have drawstrings in the hood and neck area.

"Children's upper outerwear" means upper body clothing, such as jackets and sweatshirts, generally intended to be worn over clothing. Drawstrings on these garments can become caught on playground equipment, fences or other objects and result in strangulation; or, in the case of a vehicle, a child being dragged. Parents/guardians should ensure that purchases of children's clothing have alternative closures to drawstrings, including elastics, buttons, Velcro or snaps.

Privacy:

Privacy Considerations

Our families and staff enjoy opportunities to share activities with parents/guardians and the school community through teams, clubs, school performances and special events. Many of these are memory making for families; and as such, photos and videos are often recorded. We ask that families exercise discretion when taking photos and videos at school events; and consider the privacy of other students, who may also appear in those pictures. We ask that families not upload to the internet (i.e., YouTube, Facebook, etc.) images of students other than their own children. The St. Clair Catholic District School Board privacy policy and procedures can be found on the Board website under Section B – Administration.

Personal Student Information

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board and your child's school use the personal information you provide in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA). MFIPPA sets out guidelines which schools and district school boards must follow when collecting, using, and/or disclosing students' personal information. Under this Act, personal information refers to recorded information about an identifiable individual.

The Education Act sets out duties and powers of the Board and authorizes school boards to collect personal information for the purpose of planning and delivering educational programs and services, which best meet students' needs and for reporting to the Minister of Education, as required. For a detailed explanation of how the Board uses this personal information, please refer to the Board website, or your school's website, at www.st-clair.net.

Parent/Guardian 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/guardians 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.

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

The policy requires a signed form, either granting or withholding consent, for release of student photographs, videos, classroom work, etc. for various publications, including Board websites or social media sites, school yearbooks, newspapers, television and radio newscasts. The form remains in effect for the student's entire school career; however, consent can be either withdrawn or granted at any time by contacting the school office and completing a new form.

School Safety & 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. Front doors of school buildings are equipped with cameras and a remote control locking mechanism, to allow for controlled access.

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. To ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students and schools, all volunteers who have regular contact with students must complete a *Vulnerable Sector Criminal Background Check* before commencing their duties, as directed under *Sec. D Policy & Procedures – Volunteers*. Anyone who is interested in should speak directly to the school principal.

Responsible Use of Technology

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board's policy addressing expectations for the acceptable use of technology applies to all trustees, administrators, academic and support staff, students, parents/guardians, volunteers, visitors and other persons in relation to Board computer equipment, networks as well as personal devices while on Board property or in relation to Board business or Board-related activities. To review the policy and procedures document go to *Responsible Use of Technology* under Sec. B – Administration.

Cell Phones/Devices/Tablets

To ensure a focused learning environment, students from kindergarten to grade 8 are required to keep personal mobile devices on silent and out of sight for the duration of the instructional day, from the time of arrival at school until the time of departure from the school, except when their use is strictly permitted under the following circumstances:

- for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
- for health and medical purposes
- to support education needs

Secondary students will store personal mobile devices out of view and powered off or set to silent mode during instructional time, except when their use is strictly permitted by the educator under the following circumstances:

- for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
- for health and medical purposes
- to support education needs

These measures, as indicated in the Ministry of Education's Code of Conduct for Schools, is aimed at supporting student well-being and minimizing disruptions to the learning process. If there is a need for you to reach your child during school hours, you will continue to be able to do so by calling the main office of your child's school. Should your child need to contact you during the school day, they will have access to the school phones.

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: Respect, Civility, and Responsible Citizenship

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

Members of the school community shall:

- a) respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws;
- b) comply with all Ministry of Education, school board and school policies;
- c) demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- d) respect differences in people, their ideas, and their opinions;
- e) treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, and especially when there is disagreement, both in person and on-line;
- f) respect and treat others fairly, regardless of, for example, race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, gender identity, gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability;
- g) respect the rights of others;
- h) show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others;
- i) take appropriate measures to help those in need;
- j) seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;
- k) refrain from using abusive language or swearing at another person;
- l) respect all members of the school community, especially persons in positions of authority; and
- m) respect the need of others to work in an environment that is conducive to learning and teaching.

Members of the school community shall **not**:

- a) engage in bullying behaviours, including cyberbullying;
- b) commit sexual assault;
- c) traffic weapons or restricted drugs;
- d) give alcohol to a minor;
- e) commit robbery or theft;
- f) be in possession of any weapon, including firearms;
- g) threaten or intimidate another person;
- h) cause injury to any person with an object;
- i) be in possession of, or be under the influence of, or provide others with alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, electronic cigarettes, cannabis and related products or illegal and/or restricted drugs;
 - i. for students, this would also include being in possession of electronic cigarettes, illegal drugs, or related products
- j) inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person;
- k) engage in hate propaganda and other forms of behaviour motivated by hate or bias;

- l) commit an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to Board or school property or to property located on the premises of the school;
- m) swear at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority; and/or
- n) record, take, or share non-consensual recordings or photos of members of the school community

Roles and Responsibilities

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board 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:

- a) comes to school prepared, on time, and ready to learn;
- b) shows respect for themselves, for others, and for those in authority;
- c) refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others;
- d) follows the established rules and takes responsibility for their own actions;
- e) elementary students will be required to keep personal mobile devices on silent and out of sight for the duration of the instructional day, from the time of arrival at school until the time of departure from the school, except under the following circumstances:
 - i. for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
 - ii. for health and medical purposes
 - iii. to support education needs

*elementary students must hand in and store their device, as designated by the principal, should the educator see a personal device that is not stored out of view during instructional period;
- f) secondary students will store personal mobile devices out of view and powered off or set to silent mode during instructional time, except when their use is strictly permitted by the educator under the following circumstances:
 - i. for educational purposes, as directed by an educator
 - ii. for health and medical purposes
 - iii. to support education needs

*secondary students must hand and store their device, as designated by the educator, should the educator see a personal device that is not stored out of view during instructional period. Students who refuse to do so will be sent to the principal's office.
- g) if directed by the school principal or the vice-principal, to display the contents of clothing, backpacks, etc. that are worn or carried on school property. Desks and lockers are school property, and a search is permissible by school administration; and
- h) be dressed in a neat and well-groomed manner, according to the St. Clair Catholic District School Board's Dress Code for Students.

Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians 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 Christ-centred learning environment for all students. Parents/guardians fulfill their role when they:

- a) show an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- b) communicate regularly with the school;
- c) help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- d) ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- e) promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;
- f) show that they are familiar with the School's Code of Conduct and school rules;
- g) encourage and assist their child in following the rules of behaviour; and
- h) 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:

- a) exemplify the principles of the Catholic faith with a demonstrated commitment to Catholic education, which fosters and guides the spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, physical and social development of students in their formation as contributing, responsible Catholic citizens;
- b) help students work to their full potential and develop their sense of self-worth;
- c) empower students to be positive leaders in their classroom, school, and community;
- d) communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents/guardians;
- e) maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- f) demonstrate respect for all students, staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, and the members of the school community and relate to them in a Christian manner;
- g) prepare students for the full responsibility of citizenship, in particular of respectful communication, both in person and online;
- h) model the standards of respect, civility and responsible citizenship. This includes modeling appropriate use of personal mobile devices. Educators are not to use personal mobile devices during instructional time, unless explicitly for work related purposes; and
- i) inspire students to be active in the church and community.

Community Partners and the Police

Police and community members are essential partners in making our schools and communities safer. Community-based service providers are resources that the Board uses to deliver prevention or intervention programs. Protocols are effective ways of establishing linkages between the Board and community-based service providers and of formalizing the relationship between them. Community partners need to support and respect the rules of their local schools. Police will investigate and respond to incidents in accordance with the Police/School Board Protocol.

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/guardians 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/guardian, 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 [here](#).

Progressive Discipline

In order to promote positive pupil behaviours that contribute to safe learning environments, St. Clair Catholic District School Board 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:

1. Contact with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s)
2. Oral reminders & Review of expectations
3. Written work assignment with a learning component
4. Volunteer services to the school community
5. Referral to counselling
6. Conflict mediation and resolution
7. Consultation

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

1. Meeting with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s), pupil and principal, teachers, school and related personnel
2. Referral to a community agency for anger management or substance abuse counselling /intervention
3. Detentions
4. Withdrawal of privileges
5. Withdrawal from class
6. Restitution for damages
7. Restorative practices
8. Transfer to another class within the school
9. Transfer to another school within the board
10. Suspension or Expulsion

Suspensions

A principal shall consider whether to suspend a pupil if the principal believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, at a school-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate:

- a) uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
- b) possessing alcohol, illegal drugs or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis;
- c) being under the influence of alcohol or, unless the pupil is a medical cannabis user, cannabis;
- d) swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority;
- e) 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;
- f) bullying; and/or
- g) any other activity that is an activity for which a principal may suspend a pupil under a policy of the Board.

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:

- a) possessing a weapon, including possessing a firearm;
- b) using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
- c) committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
- d) committing sexual assault;
- e) trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs;
- f) committing robbery;
- g) giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor;
- h) bullying, if:
 - i. The pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and
 - ii. The pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
- i) any activity listed that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor; and/or
- j) any other activity that, under a policy of the Board, is an activity for which a principal must suspend a pupil and, therefore in accordance with this section, conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the Board that the pupil be expelled.

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