



News Release: St. John Fisher Catholic School Reopens Following Weekend Cleanup Efforts After Minor Fire

Forest, ON — St. John Fisher Catholic School reopened to staff and students on Monday, January 12, following the successful completion of extensive cleanup and restoration work carried out over the weekend after a minor fire occurred in a kitchenette late Friday.

Approximately thirty-five restoration specialists, air quality experts, and environmental remediation crew members from WINMAR Property Restoration Specialists, Canadian Industrial Specialties, and Modern PurAir worked tirelessly in collaboration with school board staff from Friday evening through Sunday evening to ensure the school was safe, clean, and ready to welcome students and staff back. Their coordinated efforts focused on restoring affected areas and confirming that all safety systems were fully operational.

During the response to the fire, firefighters used a dry chemical powder to extinguish the flames by removing the fire's oxygen supply. While this material was dispersed throughout affected areas, classroom doors were closed at the time, resulting in only minimal entry into classroom spaces. However, due to the amount of smoke, all classrooms and contents in affected areas—including student backpacks, coats, footwear and other clothing—were thoroughly cleaned to remove smoke odours and any remaining residue.

The kitchenette, where the fire was contained, has been securely blocked off and will remain inaccessible until repairs are completed.

In addition to the completed cleaning and restoration work, all affected smoke detectors, fire suppression systems, and alerting equipment were reinstalled or replaced and fully re-verified to ensure the continued safety of the school community.

As repairs continue over the next couple of weeks, minimal impact to the school's daily operations are expected. Current estimates for damages and restoration costs are still being finalized but are anticipated to exceed \$80,000, with the majority of these costs expected to be covered by insurance.

"The safety and well-being of our students and staff is always our top priority," said Lisa Demers, Director of Education. "We are grateful for the swift response and professionalism of our school staff and emergency responders. Additionally, the amazing work performed by the restoration specialists and our facilities team was exceptional. Their collective efforts ensured the school was thoroughly cleaned, inspected, and ready to reopen. We also sincerely thank our families and staff for their patience and cooperation throughout this process."



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