



## SACRED HEART CATHOLIC SCHOOL

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Director of Education: Dan Parr  
Superintendent: Laura Callaghan

Board Chair: John Van Heck  
Trustee: Michelle Parks



## Week at a Glance for Families

*January 23, 2017*

### Monday, January 23

- Senior Girls BB practice at lunch hour
- Senior Girls BB have a BYE this week
- Mrs. Knoll's Grade 8 class at Health and Wellness Fair in the AM at Lambton College

### Tuesday, January 24

- Senior Boys BB practice after school to 4:10pm
- Lion King Rehearsal 3:05 – 5:00pm (Music Room)

### Wednesday, January 25

- School Mass at 9:00am at the Church
- Senior Boys BB practice at lunch hour
- Senior Boys BB AWAY game @ St. Joseph School Corunna @ 3:30pm

### Thursday, January 26

- Senior Boys BB practice at lunch hour
- Senior Girls BB practice after school to 4:10pm
- Sacred Heart Safe / Wellness School Team meeting 3-4pm

### Friday, January 27

- Senior Girls BB practice at lunch hour



***Sarnia Sting Anthem Program***  
On **Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup>**, Sacred Heart Catholic School is hosting a special day at the Sarnia Sting game which is available for all staff, parents, students, friends, and family.

This day will include the students in Mrs. Brown / Miss Mina's class singing the National Anthem.

**ATTACHMENT: Combating Anxiety: Equipping Today's Kids with Coping Skills**

View the latest school news at our School News website: [HTTP://WWW.ST-CLAIR.NET/SHS/NEWS.ASPX](http://www.st-clair.net/shs/news.aspx)

**Have a great weekend, everyone!**



## Combating Anxiety: Equipping Today's Kids with Coping Skills

What is the number one mental health problem facing Canadian children today? Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)? Substance abuse? Behavioural problems? The answer may surprise you. It is **ANXIETY**.

"Anxiety is a real and serious health problem, and right now it's not being taken as seriously as it could be," says Catherine Austin, a social worker and educator. "Anxiety leads to a lot of personal suffering – physical, emotional and mental, and interferes with kids reaching their full potential," Current statistics indicate 6.5% of Canadian children and youth suffer from anxiety. In fact, many mental health agencies warn childhood anxiety is on the rise.

"A major reason for childhood anxiety – apart from the increasing stress on parents – is the relative loss of close connections of children to nurturing adults," says Dr. Gabor Maté, a physician and author. In decades past, children had a whole "village" of adults to connect with, such as neighbours, extended family members, and spent most of their time in the company of adults, he says. But today's children spend much of their time with one another, he says.

"Immature creatures cannot, except superficially, make one another feel secure," he says. "So adults need to spend as much time as possible in relationship-building and relationship-maintenance."

The term 'anxiety' can be grouped into common types: Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD); separation disorder; social disorder and performance anxiety. In schools, performance anxiety is common among children who are often asked to speak in front of their teachers and peers and this can cause mild or extreme anxiety. "...Performance anxiety can turn a child who knows a lot about a subject into a child who is not able to function during test-taking time," says Sara Dimerman, author and child and family therapist. To combat this distress, Dimerman says, "Sometimes these children are given special consideration and are able to share with the teacher what they know in a less traditional way..."

Though alternative solutions may be helpful to some students (and their parents), avoiding fearful situations is not the way to go, she says. "I think it's important to note that with any anxiety the more you avoid, the bigger it becomes," says Dimerman. "I talk to kids about the 'fear monster' ...there's no magical solution to dealing with fear...it's best to just confront it."

Social worker Catherine Austin agrees. "Often the tendency is to take over or do it for our children. While this might help them feel better at the time, it gives the message that we don't believe they can do it and this can negatively affect confidence and self-esteem."

What parents can do to help anxious kids:

- Model positive self-talk and coping strategies in front of kids i.e. "Oh, it's really slippery on the road today but I know we will get there safely if I drive carefully and concentrate."
- Support and acknowledge children when they speak of stressful or anxious situations.
- Reward 'brave' behaviour and limit attention to anxious behaviour.

In some countries and throughout the province of B.C., in-class programs using coping and relaxation skills have been successfully implemented. The [FRIENDS for Life program](#), for instance, teaches children (as well as parents and teachers) how to successfully deal with anxiety. Developed in Australia, the program has been recognized by the World Health Organization as the best practice for the prevention and treatment of childhood and adolescent anxiety and depression.

Identifying and treating anxiety in the classroom and community can empower children to manage their own feelings and actions and can help with [the issue of bullying](#), experts say. "FRIENDS helps children learn how to be more assertive and confident – making eye contact, speaking in a loud, brave voice, using coping self-talk...This increases self-esteem," says Austin, who trains teachers to deliver the anti-anxiety program FRIENDS in schools.

Some parents and others may feel that anxiety is a normal part of life and not something that requires attention in the classroom. So, are programs like these necessary? "Children with anxiety disorders have been shown to have lower academic achievement, higher rates of absenteeism and lower rates of participation in classroom," Austin says.

Maté says parents must take responsibility for children and not put the onus on kids to deal with anxiety purely on their own. "It's not up to children to 'help themselves,'" he says. "The ideal way for a child to help himself/herself is to have mature and caring adult to turn to –whether in the home, in the school, or the community."