



St. Clair Catholic
District School Board

St. Clair Catholic District School Board – Senior Administration

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Parent Communication Guidelines

When parents/guardians have a concern or suggestion, it is expected that they will speak directly to the person with whom the issue has arisen – for example, the staff member or principal. If the matter is not resolved, they should proceed to the next level in the supervisory chain of responsibility.

Step One – speak to the staff member; **Step Two** – speak to the 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 must be addressed in a civil and respectful manner. Profane or aggressive language, in phone calls, emails, texts or any other 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. The principal may request that concerns be put in writing and may involve others in the process, who may be helpful in resolving the concern.

The Role of the School Council – The school council is not a forum to discuss parent-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

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. For more details about student transportation please visit <https://ckclass.ca/services/student-transportation/>. 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. CLASS also offers an APP (MYSBI) that provides real-time service updates and notifications regarding inclement weather cancellations, available for free on Android and iPhones. For all other questions about student transportation, CLASS can be reached at 1-877-330-4287.

Fog Days

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. 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/>

Bus Cancellations and School Closings due to Winter Storms

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 end of the day **at the scheduled dismissal time.**

At the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, **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.**

These new measures will help to combat learning loss that can occur, especially during times when frequent snow and ice storms disrupt student transportation. 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.

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. Front doors of school buildings are equipped with cameras and a remote control locking and release mechanisms, to permit controlled access.

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. When a student is to be excused for an appointment during school hours, a note must be provided to the school office indicating the time the student will be picked up and whether or not the student will be returning to school.

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.

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.

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, as directed under *Sec. D Policy & Procedures – Volunteers*. Visit <https://www.st-clair.net/policies.aspx> and go to Section D – Volunteers. Anyone who is interested in becoming a volunteer should speak to the school principal.

Medication

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 *Sec. C Policy – 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.

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

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board Privacy policy and procedures can be found on the Board website at <http://www.st-clair.net/policies.aspx> Go to Section B – Administration.

The policy requires signed consent, 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.

Personal Student Information

The St. Clair Catholic District School Board and your 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/schools.aspx

Privacy Considerations

Our families and staff enjoy opportunities to share activities with parents 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. For more about *Sec. B Policy and Procedures – Privacy* visit the Board's website at the link below.

<http://www.st-clair.net/Data/Sites/1/media/public/Corporate/B-Administration/Privacy-Pol.pdf>

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.

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, 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 <http://www.st-clair.net/policies.aspx> and click on *Responsible Use of Technology* under Sec. B – Administration.

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 peanut butter 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.

The difficulty is this. Although the product itself is perfectly safe, it mimics another product which is deadly for students who are anaphylactic to peanuts. The substitute looks, smells, spreads and tastes like peanut butter. It's packaged like peanut butter; and, it's sold on grocery store shelves in the peanut butter aisle. Once it's out of the jar, you can't tell the real thing from the substitute and that's what makes it so dangerous for students with nut allergies.

Therefore, St. Clair Catholic will err on the side of caution. In school communities where anaphylaxis to peanut products is an issue, parents are advised that the substitutes are not acceptable food items and an alternative should be sought. Parents are also advised that if the product is sent to school, the child will be provided with a healthy alternative or asked to eat in a location that will ensure there will be no contact with students who are allergic.

In our Catholic school communities, it is the responsibility of each of us to safeguard the well-being of all of us. We look out for each other. A danger to even one child is a threat that we must all take seriously. Sometimes that means sacrificing what we may perceive as our right in order to meet the needs of another. In instances where a child's life may be at risk, the choice is simple.

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.

As always, thank you for your support and cooperation, as together we work to keep as a top priority the health and wellbeing of our staff, students and visitors to our buildings.

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 are encouraged to take part in all aspects of religious instruction and celebrations. 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.

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. 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 should ensure that purchases of children’s clothing have alternative closures to drawstrings, including elastics, buttons, Velcro or snaps.

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.

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

- engage in bullying behaviours;
- commit sexual assault;
- traffic weapons or illegal 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 illegal 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;
- 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:

- 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 *Sec. C Policy – Dress Code for Elementary and Secondary Students*.

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, inclusive 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.

Community Partners and the Police

Through outreach, partnerships already in place may be enhanced and new partnerships with community-based service providers and members of the community (e.g., Aboriginal Elders) may also be created. Community-based service providers are resources that the St. Clair Catholic District School Board may use to deliver prevention or intervention programs.

The police play an essential role in making our schools and communities safer. Police investigate incidents in accordance with a protocol developed with the Board. The protocol is based on a provincial model that was revised in 2011 by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services and the Ministry of Education.

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 [here](#).

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

A pupil in junior kindergarten, kindergarten, grade 1, 2, or 3 shall not be suspended as per *Education Act* section 306 subsection 306(1) and section 310 subsection 310(1). Activities listed in subsection 310(1) will still be subject to mandatory suspensions, pending the results of an investigation.

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, cannabis, illegal and/or restricted drugs;
3. Being under the influence of alcohol or cannabis;
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. Bullying behaviour can include physical, verbal, electronic (cyber bullying), written, or other means;
7. Any act that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any similar factor;
8. Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the moral tone of the school;
9. Any act considered by the principal to be injurious to the physical or mental well-being of any member of the school community; or
10. 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, legal, illegal and/or restricted drugs;
6. Committing robbery;
7. Any act that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any similar factor;
8. Cases in which the student has been previously suspended for bullying and the student's continuing presence in the school creates, in the opinion of the principal, an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person;
9. Giving alcohol or cannabis to a minor;
10. 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;
11. 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;
12. 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;
13. 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;
14. 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
15. 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 *Sec. C Policy – Student Discipline*.