



September 2025



St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School

Proud member of the Dennis Morris Catholic High School Family of Schools

D. Smolders, Principal

L. Forsyth-Sells, Superintendent of Schools
33 Woodrow St., St. Catharines, ON, L2P 2A1



THE JOYS OF A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The staff of St. Christopher would like to extend to all our students and parents a warm and heartfelt welcome back. With the combined efforts of parents, students, and staff alike, together we can collectively make our 2025-2026 school year vibrant, nurturing and productive.

As we begin our first month of this new school year let us remember that we are one body, one family in Christ, supporting one another through prayer and action as we strive to love Him more deeply.

The basis of Catholic Education is the interrelationship of home, Church and school. By working together, we can provide the best Catholic education for our children. As a community of Christian believers, we ask God's blessings on our students, staff and families and all who touch our St. Christopher community. May our school always be primarily a place of Catholic faith, truth, wisdom and goodwill.

We will keep you updated on upcoming events through our monthly newsletters and calendars that will be sent via email and available on our school's website: <https://schools.niagaracatholic.ca/stchristopher/>

D. Smolders
Principal

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday - 5:00 pm
Sunday - 10:00 am

Pastor: Reverend Chad Grennan



If you are considering having your child baptized or would like them to make any other sacraments that they may have missed, please call the parish main office at: 905-687-6971

STAFF LIST

Ms. Major	Kindergarten
Ms. Lemick-Vankerkhoeven	Early Childhood Educator
Ms. Caughlin	Grade 1
Ms. Vaz	Grade 2/3
Ms. Seca	Grade 2/3
Ms. Barone	Grade 3/4
Mr. Wiens	Grade 4/5
Ms. Antonio	Grade 6/7
Mr. Marfisi	Grade 7/8
Mme Dy & Mr. Kinney	FSL
Ms. Buckley	PTM
Mr. Frantangelo	Education Resource Teacher
Ms. Schroeder	Educational Assistant
Mr. Gicante	Educational Assistant
Ms. Rouleau	Educational Assistant
Ms. Kaufman	Educational Assistant
Mr. DiSanto	Caretaker
Ms. MacDonald	Library Technician
Ms. Wilson	Secretary

BELL TIMES

The times below indicate start, end, and breaks throughout the year.

8:35: Start of School
10:45 - 11:05: Nutrition Break 1
11:05 - 11:25: Recess
1:25 - 1:45: Nutrition Break 2
1:45 - 2:05: Recess
2:55: End of Day

The beginning of each day is an important time for students to transition into the building and begin learning. **Please ensure that your child is at school for the starting bell at 8:35. Before school supervision will begin at 8:20am.** There will be no staff to



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supervise students prior to that time and we ask that students do not arrive before then.

ABSENT/LATE STUDENTS

The Safe arrival program is aimed at verifying the location and safety of each child in our school. Parents are asked to report their child's absences, lates, or early dismissals before the start of school. The system will call you repeatedly if your child is not present in school once the bell rings.

Absences and lates must be reported in one of three ways:

1. Through the School Messenger App available through the Android or iOS app store.
2. By calling the automated telephone system at 1-844- 287-6287 through which absences can be reported.
3. By logging into the website: go.schoolmessenger.ca



CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL

Our Catholic School Council has a tremendously positive impact on our school community, and assists in making St. Christopher the excellent school that it is. This year we are looking for at least 1 parent representative from each classroom. I have asked each teacher to recommend one parent to sit on the council. If you are interested please attend our first or any meeting throughout the school year. Your efforts are truly appreciated.

As per the Ministry Regulations concerning Catholic School Council Elections and Nominations, we conduct the elections of our Council Members in the fall of each year. St. Christopher Catholic School Council Elections will be held at our first meeting on **Tuesday, September 30, 2025 at 6:00pm**. If you are interested in running for the chair of this year's council, please complete the self-nomination form at the link [HERE](#) by **Friday, September 26, 2025**.

To make things easier for your busy schedule, this year's meetings will be held virtually using the link here: [Catholic School Council Meetings Link](#)

A LOOK AHEAD

- Sept. 2 - Return to School
4 - Fire Drill
8 - Grade 8 Journey Retreat
16 - Lockdown Practice
17 - BBQ & Curriculum Night
18 - Pizza Day

- 19 - PA Day
24 - Terry Fox Liturgy and Walk
26 - Out of Dress Code Day
30 - Orange Shirt Day
Catholic School Council Meeting #1

BBQ & CURRICULUM NIGHT

This year we will be hosting a Hot Dog BBQ on our curriculum night on **Wednesday, September 17, 2022**. Hot Dogs will be available from 5:30 - 6:00. At 6:00 we will all gather in the gymnasium for our opening prayer before heading to your children's classrooms. Staff will be in their classrooms from 6-7pm to welcome families and share with them their plans for the year. We look forward to seeing all of you then.

HOME TO SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

Ongoing communication is a vital part of student success. To support communication from school to home, classroom teachers will reach out to all families to let them know the best form of communication to use throughout the year. Please understand that teachers are not available throughout the day to take incoming phone calls unless they are scheduled in advance.

Similarly, if you would like to meet with Mr. Smolders, please call the school to schedule an appointment.

St. Christopher CES is rooted in Catholic and Christian values. Our goal is to create a safe, kind and loving environment for all who work, learn, and assist with our school community.

Aggressive or hostile behaviour or language toward staff, students or our community helpers will not be tolerated. While we welcome feedback, concerns and opinions it is the expectation that all staff, students, parents, guardians and community helpers communicate their needs and concerns with one another in a respectful and peaceful manner whether through email, on the phone or face-to-face.

Adherence to this expectation is vital in order to create a community which can solve problems and help one another achieve success.

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM

St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School can be found on Instagram **@st.christopherces**. Please follow us to see what fun and exciting things your children are getting up to while at school.

We take student safety and privacy very seriously and only images of students for whom parents have given consent will be used on our social media account.



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ANAPHYLAXIS

St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School promotes a healthy, NO NUT environment for the safety of our children. Parents are requested to not pack any foods that contain or may contain nut or peanut products in their children's lunch. Please give our children with anaphylaxis the same consideration that you would wish for your child's protection.

If you have a child with anaphylaxis to any allergens, please contact the office immediately so that we can work together to keep your child(ren) safe.

ASTHMA

If your child(ren) has asthma and requires an inhaler/puffer throughout the day, please let the school know immediately so that we can work together to keep your child(ren) safe.

MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL

Parents should be aware of the strict guidelines established by the Niagara Catholic District School Board for medication in schools.

1. The medication must be in the container prepared by the pharmacist and the label must include: the name of the doctor, student and the name and strength of the medication.
2. The school must have a written request from the physician indicating the frequency and dosage of the prescribed medication (this form is available at the school).
3. Deliver prescribed medication directly to the school office. Please do not send them with the child.

ORANGE SHIRT DAY/EVERY CHILD MATTERS

Orange Shirt Day is a legacy of the St. Joseph Mission (SJM) residential school commemoration event held in Williams Lake, BC, Canada, in the spring of 2013. It grew out of Phyllis' story of having her shiny new orange shirt taken away on her first day of school at the Mission, and it has become an opportunity to keep discussions on all aspects of residential schools happening annually.

Orange shirt day across Canada is held on September 30. It was chosen because it is the time of year in which children were taken from their homes to residential schools, and because it is an opportunity to set the stage for anti-racism and anti-bullying policies for the coming school year. It also gives teachers time to plan events that will include children, as we want to ensure that we are passing the story and learning on to the next generations.



INDIGENOUS EDUCATION - VOLUNTARY SELF IDENTIFICATION

Under Ontario's First Nations, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework, Niagara Catholic encourages all Indigenous students to self-identify as part of a VOLUNTARY AND CONFIDENTIAL process. Niagara Catholic uses information gathered from the self-identification process to support Indigenous students through:

- Accessing culturally relevant materials and programs in schools, allowing Indigenous students to see themselves reflected in the learning materials.
- Gathering academic information to support the unique learning needs of Indigenous students within our schools.
- Accessing cultural events offered to Indigenous students throughout the school year.
- Hosting special events at our schools, allowing our Indigenous students to share their unique cultural identity with non-Indigenous students.
- Sharing information about career and educational funding opportunities that are specific to Indigenous students.

If you would like to voluntarily identify your child(ren) as Indigenous to ensure that he/she is supported, please contact the school.

MOBILE DEVICES IN SCHOOLS

In an effort to cut down on distractions in the classroom, mobile devices such as cellphones will now be prohibited from the classroom unless specifically directed by the teacher for instructional purposes, as part of a Individual Education Plan or if it is being used in conjunction with a medical device (ie. to monitor glucose levels).

If a child from Kindergarten to grade 6 is using a mobile device, they will be directed to the principal's office to place the device in a secure location for the remainder of the instructional day. If a student in grade 7 & 8 is using for anything other than instructional purposes, they will be directed to place the device in a secure location directed by the teacher.

If you have any questions about the new Program/Policy Memorandum, please contact the principal.

STANDARDIZED DRESS CODE POLICY

The Niagara Catholic Elementary Standardized Dress Code Policy for all students from kindergarten to grade 8 has been revised. Please familiarize yourself with the revisions and also the dress code compliance. The policy and a description of the dress code items is easily accessed at www.niagaracatholic.ca and can be found below.

Compliance with the Niagara Catholic Elementary Standardized Dress Code Policy and Administrative Guidelines is a condition of registration and attendance in an elementary school within the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

The elementary standardized dress code requires that all students arrive



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at school daily and/or for special school related community events dressed in the required elementary standardized dress code.

Compliance by all elementary students registered with Niagara Catholic is expected as determined by the Principal. Students who do not comply with the elementary standardized dress code expectations will be consequence according to school and policy guidelines.

For a full list of acceptable clothing, please click [here](#).

If your child(ren) have outgrown any of their dress code clothing and you would like to donate to other families in the school community, you can send these clean, good condition items to the school. We will ensure that they go to other families who may need them. Once we have these items we will make them available in the office and will let families know that we have them.

PARKING LOT SAFETY

Please drive with caution in the parking lot and near the school. We have many students who are being dropped off and picked up at the same time. They are all at varying places on their learning journey and may not always remember to look both ways before stepping out into traffic. Please exercise extra caution when driving in the school parking lot.

We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that your child arrives at school on time each day and staff are on duty at 8:20 am.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes concussions as a serious injury which requires appropriate follow-up measures to reduce the risk of potential additional injury. Concussion awareness, prevention, identification and management are a priority for the Board. The implementation of the Board's Concussion Administrative Operational Procedures is another important step in creating healthier schools in the Niagara Catholic District School Board

If staff, in communication with the school principal, suspects head trauma or a concussion might be possible based on signs and symptoms reported by the student, they are required to complete the appropriate documentation, call home and send home a copy of the documentation.

Medical doctors and nurse practitioners are the only healthcare professionals in Canada with licensed training and expertise to diagnose a concussion; therefore, all students with suspected concussions should undergo evaluation by one of these professionals.

SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

St. Christopher continues to move forward using the School Cash Online System and we require all families to make online payments for their children when paying for things like pizza days, field trips, etc. If you

have not already done so, please register for an account at: <https://ncdsb.schoolcashonline.com/>

DONATIONS TO THE SCHOOL

Parents and guardians who would like to make a financial donation to support the many learning and extra curricular activities happening each day at St. Christopher Catholic elementary school are able to do so at any time through <https://ncdsb.schoolcashonline.com/>. Once logged in, you will see a button in the top menu that says Make a Donation. By clicking here, you are able to select the donation amount and the Destination (St. Christopher CES). Once submitted, you will be immediately sent an official receipt for tax purposes.



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