



March 2025

NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

St. John Families,

Spring is in the air and with it comes the beginning of new life. When we experience this special time of year on a personal level, we celebrate nature's season of Spring and the Catholic Church's season of Easter as new life. Each day, as we continue along our Lenten journey, and the days grow longer and brighter, let us recall that our new life comes from knowing, belonging to and worshipping God.

"...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" - Corinthians 5:5-17.

The month of March is also dedicated to St. Joseph, the carpenter and husband of the Virgin Mary. It is at this time that we pay special attention to his life and example as he answered his vocational calling from God. Joseph was chosen for his special role as educator, guide and mentor to Jesus. He was a man of strong convictions who lived out his beliefs in actions. He had the quality of being sensitive to others and practiced self-control. Joseph's care doesn't end with the Holy Family; it extends to us. As a Catholic family, we live and practice the examples set forth to us by Joseph every day.

Within our school and on our playground, we continue to lead by example. Through our actions, we assist with all the needs presented to us both in our community and the world around us.

As we continue to **'Follow in the Footsteps of Christ'** and grow in His mission, the essence of family is specified by love and support. Our mission together then, is to guide, guard, reveal and communicate love as a living reflection of the real sharing of God's love for all of us. May we continue to work together to live out Christ's beliefs and actions in our daily lives by loving one another as He loves us.

God Bless!

Mr. D. Forte
Principal

MARCH - A MISSION OF SACRIFICE

"Teach us to give and not count the cost."

- St. Ignatius de Loyola

Throughout the season of Lent we reflect upon the great sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. When Jesus calls us to be his disciples, he is challenging us to live lives of compassion and action recognizing that it isn't easy to truly sacrifice and give of ourselves for one another. When we care about the people around us, we desire to reduce their suffering and hardships. May we take time this month to reflect upon what we can sacrifice to ease the suffering and hardship of others as we continue on our mission as disciples of Christ.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH FOR FAMILY

Gracious St. Joseph, protect my family and all other families from danger.

Pray for us, that we respect, love and care for each other in our family as you were with Mary and Jesus. Help us to be understanding and forgiving towards each other.

Most of all St. Joseph, bring us closer to Jesus.

St. Joseph, please pray for our family.
Amen

ONLINE REGISTRATION

Online registration is open through [edsempi](https://edsempi.com). If your child is presently attending St. John, there is no need to re-register.

When you register, please remember to submit your child's Baptismal Certificate, Birth Certificate, and Proof of Address (current utility bill) in order to complete the registration.

In addition, please check the [Transportation Eligibility](#) section of the Niagara Student Transportation Services website to ensure that St. John is your child's home school, based on your current home address.

SCHOOL DAY SCHEDULE

Supervision:	9:10 am
Entry Bell:	9:20 am
Recess/Nutrition Break:	10:50 pm - 11:30 am
Recess/Nutrition Break:	1:30 pm - 2:10 pm
Dismissal:	3:30 pm

Families are invited to visit the ['Bell Times' section of the St. John Google Website](#) to access a full breakdown of our bell times for this school year.

We are proud to be a part of the Blessed Trinity Family of Schools



CSC CORNER - HELLO FROM CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL!

Welcome back to CSC Corner - the best place to get a quick monthly update from your Catholic School Council.

Council seems quieter this month, but rest assured that lots of planning is happening behind the scenes for the months ahead. Stay tuned for communications coming soon on our Family Movie Night in the Spring and Family Fun Night in early June.

Our fundraiser with Niagara Fresh Market is live. Order today and use code STJOHNS to receive your produce, pantry staples, party platters, and so much more - delivered right to your door!



Please be advised that the next Catholic School Council Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at 6:00 pm** in the school's Library Information Centre. We look forward to seeing our Catholic School Council members there!

We value your input. Any ideas for the Catholic School Council? Please email Lynn Dudok at lynn.a.dudok@gmail.com or Breeann Staibano at breeann19@hotmail.com.

HAVE YOU MOVED OR ARE YOU MOVING?

To any families who have recently moved or will be moving in the near future, please confirm that St. John is your home school at portal.nsts.ca/eligibility. In keeping with Niagara Catholic's home school focus, we encourage all families to ensure that children are enrolled in their home school. This will allow students to establish and maintain meaningful relationships with other students who live in the heart of their community.

LENTEN & EASTER FOOD DRIVE FOR THE GRIMSBY BENEVOLENT FUND (GBF)

We are collecting non-perishable food items to support the [Grimsby Benevolent Fund](#) throughout the entire Lenten season. We thank everyone for their consideration in contributing to this initiative. The food drive will run from **March 5 - April 11**.

MARCH BREAK

March Break across Niagara Catholic will take place from **March 11 - 15**. Students will return to school on **Monday, March 18**. Please know that students will be reminded to bring home all personal belongings, including all clothing, footwear, and learning materials. Parents are asked to please remind their child(ren) to ensure that all their items are brought home prior to dismissal on the last day before the March Break.

KIDS HELPING KIDS

Thank you to everyone for their participation in the Kids Helping Kids campaign and for their contributions to the fundraiser to support the Niagara Children's Centre and Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education. We had an overwhelming response! The generosity of our school community is most appreciated.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME

St. John Families, please be advised that daylight savings time begins on **Sunday, March 9**. Don't forget to move your clocks **ahead** on Saturday night before bed.

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

First Communion - Students in Grade 2 and other grades who are Roman Catholic will be receiving the Sacrament of First Holy Eucharist on **Saturday, April 26 at 11:00 am** at St. Joseph Catholic Parish.

Families are asked to please see our monthly calendar for information and details regarding daily Masses at St. Joseph Catholic Parish. In addition, further information regarding St. Joseph Parish, can be found by visiting the ['St. Joseph Catholic Parish Information Section' of our St. John Google Website](#).

The school also invites families to visit the [St. Joseph Catholic Parish Website](#) for additional information and details pertaining to the parish.

SAFE ARRIVAL SYSTEM

To report your child absent, please use any one of the methods listed below:

1. **SafeArrival Website:** Visit the website at <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca>. The first time you use the website, select **Sign Up** to create an account using your email address. After logging in, select the **Attendance** tab to report an absence.
2. **Personal Mobile Device:** Download and install the **SchoolMessenger app** from the Apple App Store, the Google Play Store, or from the links at <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca>. Use your new login information to access your account. Select **Attendance** to report an absence. If you would like to receive attendance notifications directly to your mobile device, please enable **Push Notifications** in the **Settings** section of the app. The document titled, [SchoolMessenger App Parent & Student User Guide](#) provides instructions for using the app.
3. **Standard Telephone:** The toll-free number **1-844-287-6287** will allow you to report your child absent without creating an account.

STUDENT ABSENCES & LATE ARRIVALS

It is essential that all student absences and late arrivals are called into the [Safe Arrival Program](#) by **8:30 am** via phone (1-844-287-6287), website or app. These are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You are also able to input future absences in advance if you are aware of an upcoming appointment or vacation. **Board and Ministry policy dictates that we must investigate any unreported absences. This can involve calls to places of employment, the emergency numbers provided to the school and, in some cases, the police.**



VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

School visitors continue to be restricted out of an abundance of care and consideration for the health, safety, and privacy of students and school staff. Essential items that must be dropped off are to be labelled clearly and can be placed on the cart to be retrieved by a designated staff member. On behalf of school staff, students, and families, thank you everyone for their ongoing cooperation with this very important matter.

INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC HEALTH

Families are encouraged to visit the '[Niagara Region Information](#)' section of the St. John Google Website for the most up-to-date information from Niagara Region Public Health.

STUDENTS DEMONSTRATING SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS

If a student becomes sick while at school, the identified emergency contact(s) on file will be called for immediate pick up. Parents and guardians of ill children are encouraged to contact Niagara Public Health and follow their advice. *Anyone who is sick should stay at home until their symptoms have resolved for 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms).* We thank everyone for their ongoing cooperation regarding this very important health and safety matter.

NUT ANAPHYLAXIS

The entire school community is working hard to prevent accidental exposure to products that trigger life-threatening reactions. As a result, we continue to maintain a **PEANUT & NUT SAFE environment**. We would appreciate your cooperation in helping us keep St. John Catholic School safe, by making sure your children do not bring foods to school that may contain any traces of **peanuts** or **nuts**.

**MILK ANAPHYLAXIS**

Due to a number of students in our care who have a severe anaphylactic allergy to milk, it is asked that parents kindly refrain from sending milk to school with their child out of an abundance of care and consideration for the health and safety of these individuals. Thank you to everyone for their understanding of this very important health and safety matter.

**PREVALENT MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

If your child has a prevalent medical condition that the school should be aware of and plan for, it is necessary to read the letter to families, and complete and/or update the applicable Plan of Care forms. All documents can be accessed in the '[Prevalent Medical Conditions](#)' section of the [St. John Google Website](#). Please click on the link to access the site and the necessary documents that pertain to your child's prevalent medical condition. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the school.

REMINDERS FOR ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Kiss n' Ride Drop-Off: In an effort to keep our students and staff members safe, families are reminded that when using the Kiss n' Ride drop-off, *drivers are asked to please remain in their vehicle* and have child(ren) exit the vehicle directly onto the sidewalk when it is safe to do so. Supervising staff will be present in the parking lot at 9:10 am. Parents are kindly asked to please drop their child(ren) off *between 9:10 and 9:20 am*. We thank you for your support as we strive to welcome our students onto school property in an efficient, yet safe manner.

Kiss n' Ride Pick-Up:

To reduce congestion in the Kiss n' Ride line and along King Street, Kiss n' Ride students will be dismissed from their classrooms at *3:25 pm*. Parents are asked to please be at the school in a timely manner so students can be dismissed efficiently and without causing disruption to the flow of traffic on King Street.

Park & Pick-Up/Drop-Off:

Families of children in car seats who need to park their vehicles and walk their children to the school sidewalk are asked to please be mindful of oncoming traffic, which includes busses and Kiss n' Ride vehicles. For their own safety, families are reminded of the importance of utilizing designated walkways to access the sidewalks. To avoid congestion in the parking lot and to prevent a back-up of vehicles onto King Street, Park & Pick-Up students will be dismissed from their classes at *3:25 pm*.

MARCH IS NUTRITION MONTH

Fruits and veggies are not only absolutely delicious but they are nature's fast food! Ready to eat and most come in their own "to-go" packages, produce makes the perfect snack for kids to grab and go. They need minimal to no preparation and buying ones in season means you can save some money and shop smarter.

Think you can't get much produce on a tight budget? Here are some tips to make shopping for produce more easy and affordable:

- Don't shop when you're hungry and try to carry a list. You'll be more likely to stick to your budget and nutritious food choices.
- Look for washed and bagged salads, baby carrots, celery hearts, broccoli and cauliflower crowns, cherry tomatoes, and shredded cabbage in your grocery store.
- Buy fresh produce, like peaches or bananas, in varying degrees of ripeness to allow for some ripening towards the end of the week.
- Canned and frozen vegetables can be convenient choices.
- Spend most of your time in the produce, bread, meat and dairy sections.
- Use store flyers to help you find specials.
- See more at:
<http://www.halfyourplate.ca/produce-is-affordable>

March is National Nutrition Month



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEAC)

The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) of the Niagara Catholic District School Board is made up of Association representatives and Trustees whose role is to support students with diverse needs and their families. The Committee makes recommendations to the Board with regards to matters relating to educational programs and services to be implemented in schools for our students who meet this criteria. All parents are welcome to attend the monthly meetings and learn about different programs and supports that are available in special education.

Meetings are held at the Catholic Education Centre, 427 Rice Road, Welland, at 7:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month. If you are unable to attend the meetings and you wish further information, please visit our website at www.niagaracatholic.ca under Special Education, Special Education Advisory Committee or contact your school Principal who will provide you with a list of representatives and their contact information.

SEAC continuously strives to ensure that the rights of students with diverse learning needs are being met both at the elementary and the secondary level as well as serving as a resource for parents of these children. For further information there are two links:

- The Special Education Advisory Committee website: www.seac-learning.ca; and
- the Ministry of Education Special Education website: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/speced.html.

SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services has developed the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) to support children and youth who have a diagnosis of ASD confirmed by a qualified professional.

Services available through the OAP include:

- ✓ *Funding to purchase approved goods and services;*
- ✓ *Access to supports and programs for children and their families.*

Children and youth receive services and supports until the age of 18.

For further information, please visit the following website:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-autism-program>

If you have any questions, please reach out to our Educational Resource Teacher. Members of the Applied Behaviour Analysis Team from the Student Support Services Department are available to provide additional information.

'SchoolCash' ONLINE

The school encourages online payment for all fees and activities for students. It is our goal to be cashless.

As part of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, we are committed to providing a safe and efficient online environment in order to reduce the amount of cash and cheques coming into our school. Online payment users benefit from knowing students are not carrying cash to school which can be easily forgotten, misplaced or not handed in on time for important school activities and events. 'SchoolCash' Online is a secure and safe payment portal and is PCI compliant. Please join the many parents who have already registered and are enjoying the convenience of paying online. It takes less than five minutes to register. Please follow the online step-by-step instructions at <https://ncdsb.schoolcashionline.com> to begin receiving email notifications for events involving your child(ren).

Some of the added benefits enjoyed by using School Cash Online include:

- Having online access to digital receipts and a complete list of paid and unpaid items;
- The ability to pay by credit cards, including Visa, Mastercard, Visa Debit, and Mastercard Debit;
- The ability to preload funds into the School Cash Online wallet for future use;
- Receiving reminder emails, so payment due dates are not missed;
- One-time registration - students will automatically be moved between schools within our Board;
- Use of Google Translate in over 100 languages;
- Make an online donation and receive your tax receipt by email for donations \$20 or more;
- Parent Help Desk Support is available 24/7.

HAND WASHING GUIDELINES

1. Clean your hands to prevent the spread of germs and reduce your risk of getting sick. Wash your hands after:
 - coughing or sneezing
 - blowing your nose
 - using the washroom
 - playing with pets
 - playing outdoors
 - before preparing meals and eating
2. Use warm water and soap; lather and scrub for at least 20 seconds. Have children sing the ABC song, so they scrub for long enough. Alcohol-based sanitizers are safe for children and can be used when no dirt is present on their hands.



VETTING AND TRACKING

In keeping with Niagara Catholic's commitment to openness and transparency, the Board has established an extensive vetting process for its Governance Policies.

As part of the vetting process, Niagara Catholic students, parents, guardians, staff, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC), Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee (NCPIC), Diocese of St. Catharines, and members of the Niagara Catholic community are invited to submit their feedback.

Please visit the [Policies, Administrative Operational Procedures, Protocols, and Bylaws section of the Niagara Catholic website](#) for specific information on how to submit feedback for policies that are currently being vetted.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

Parents and students requiring technical assistance are encouraged to access the following support portal: <https://help.niagaracatholic.ca>. Niagara Catholic launched this platform for students and parents in an effort to provide technical support for issues relating to the Niagara Catholic Virtual Learning Environment (NCVLE), Niagara Catholic Parent Portal, Safe Arrival System, and more.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC RESPECTFUL INTERACTION FRAMEWORK

St. John 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 cohesive and cooperative community that helps one another achieve success.

ST. JOHN GOOGLE WEBSITE

Families are invited to visit the St. John Google Website for daily information items. Please know that the school will send out a SchoolMessenger notification any time there are pertinent updates made to the site. Monthly newsletters and calendars will be embedded into the website as well, once finalized. The links will be shared in the SchoolMessenger notification that goes out to inform families.

Link to St. John Google site:

[St. John Catholic School Google Website.](#)



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

March 8 is International Women's Day. At St. John, members of the Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Club, with the support of classroom teachers, will organize and lead students through activities centring on the importance of this day as we work to **#AccelerateAction**.



WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

All schools across Niagara Catholic have been invited to participate in a "Rock Your Socks" event on **Friday, March 21** in recognition of [World Down Syndrome Day](#). The purpose of this event is to help raise awareness of what Down Syndrome is, what it means to have Down Syndrome, and how people with Down Syndrome play a vital role in our lives and our communities. Families are advised that St. John Catholic School will be participating in this event and students and staff are encouraged to rock their most colourful socks on **March 21**. In addition, classroom teachers will be exploring with our students the significant impact that people with Down Syndrome have on all our lives. We look forward to celebrating World Down Syndrome Day as a school community!



WEAR PURPLE FOR EPILEPSY AWARENESS

Celebrated annually, Epilepsy Awareness Day, or Purple Day, was created to increase the public's understanding of this brain disorder and to eliminate the fear and stigma surrounding it. With over 50 million people diagnosed with epilepsy worldwide, it is likely you know someone living with the day-to-day challenges epilepsy brings. The good news is epilepsy can be easily managed if diagnosed and treated correctly, so awareness and research are important. At St. John Catholic School, we join the grassroots campaigns to raise awareness in our community by encouraging all students and staff to wear the colour purple on **Wednesday, March 26**.

SPARKLE DAY: FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION

Tuesday, March 25 is the **Feast of the Annunciation**. This is when the Angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and asked her to be the mother of Jesus. It marks 9 months to Christ's birth or Christmas Day as we know it. The Feast of the Annunciation also marks the beginning of our salvation. To celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation we will be having **Sparkle Day** here at St. John. We encourage all students and staff to come to school wearing sparkly clothing/accessories and/or their favourite white shirt or sweater. We look forward to celebrating together!



ST. JOHN 'EcoSchools' INITIATIVE

At St. John Catholic School, we continue to remain active in our efforts to continue to fulfill our goals to serve as "Stewards of God's Earth". We continue to maintain our environmental efforts, nurture our students as both current and future environmental leaders, and reduce the ecological impact of our school. In the ['EcoSchools Information' section of the St. John Google Website](#), families will find any and all information pertaining to our 'EcoSchools' initiative, including monthly newsletters to promote ecological awareness in our school, homes, and community.

Families are advised of the following 'EcoSchools' events recognized throughout this month...

Waste-Free Lunch Wednesdays:

To continue with our ECO initiatives, we will promote Waste-Free Wednesday lunches. A waste-free lunch is one that contains reusable containers to pack your child's lunch and snacks. Although participation is optional, when we pack a waste-free lunch, we are helping the earth by reducing the use of plastic bags, wrappers and minimizing the amount of garbage.

World Wildlife Day:

On **Monday, March 3**, St. John will be participating in [World Wildlife Day](#). Each class will learn about the many threats facing wildlife, and the conservation of endangered species and their ecosystems.

Global Recycling Day:

[Global Recycling Day](#) was created to help recognize and celebrate the importance that recycling plays in preserving our precious primary resources and securing the future of our planet. Global Recycling Day takes place on **March 18**. At St. John, we will recognize and celebrate this day by having students and staff take part in various recycling activities throughout the school day.

World Water Day:

At St. John, we will be celebrating [World Water Day](#) on **March 21**. Throughout this day, students will participate in activities that highlight the importance of having clean, available water and how we must focus on conserving and protecting this most precious resource.

Earth Hour:

At St. John, we will show our support for actions that address climate change and biodiversity loss by switching off the lights for 60 minutes on **Monday, March 24**. St. John families are also encouraged to join the Earth Hour movement by doing the same on **Saturday, March 22 at 8:30 pm**. To learn more about this initiative, please visit: <https://wwf.ca/earth-hour/>.

Thank you for your continued support of our ECO initiatives!

St. John Catholic School ECO Team

**CLASS ORGANIZATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2025**

Parents are asked to please trust the professional judgment of our staff to make good pedagogically sound decisions regarding your child's class placement for September 2025. Talk positively and hopefully to your child about next school year. If your child is with a different group of students, discuss the value of new friendships and fresh starts. We are looking forward to another wonderful school year with your support.

Please know that careful thought is always given to student placement in the various classes. Guidelines that we consider may be one, some, or all of the following:

- ✓ Learning style
- ✓ Social needs
- ✓ Work habits
- ✓ Special program needs
- ✓ Behaviour
- ✓ Gender balance

In all class situations, present and receiving teachers (if possible) meet with the Principal and Education Resource Teacher to make the final decision. Parent preference cannot be a determining factor, but if any parents have a pressing concern regarding class placement, they are asked to **please put the request and reasons in writing (no emails) to the attention of Mr. Forte - Principal and hand it to Main Office staff for consideration by Thursday, March 20, 2025**

BLESSED TRINITY CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

Blessed Trinity has reached the halfway point of the year with our students' completing exams and getting ready for the beginning of Semester 2. We also welcome back our new Principal, Mrs. Moscato, who was previously Vice-Principal a few years back.

February also saw the end of some of our Winter sports seasons. Our Junior Boys Basketball team had a very successful season falling just short of an NCAA championship with a close loss to Denis Morris. Other teams like our wrestling team are continuing with play-offs with hopes of qualifying for SOSSA or even OFSAA championships.

Our BT students also began the course selection process for next year as our Grade 8's were completing the process. By now all grade 8 students attending BT next year will have submitted their course selections and paid their registration fee. Some one from our Student Services Department will be back in the next few weeks with Verification forms so students can confirm their course selections or make any changes.

Please contact Blessed Trinity – Mr. John Cino – 905-945-6706 Ext. 2330 or Mrs. Rose Bianco Ext. 2312, if any Grade 8 parent has any questions.

