VISUAL IDENTITY GUIDE

May 2025

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
District School Board

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Introduction

This guide is intended to support schools and central staff in knowing how to create print and digital documents that accurately and appropriately represent Niagara Catholic's brand identity.

It also addresses accessibility standards related to colours and fonts to ensure that anything we produce complies with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Use and history of logo

Niagara Catholic's logo was created to mark the amalgamation of the two English Catholic school boards in 1998.

The logo incorporates a cross and a plant, symbolizing our enriching Catholic environment where students grow in faith. It depicts the distinctiveness of Catholic education and the communities we serve. It is easily recognized and is highly regarded locally and beyond.

The Niagara Catholic corporate logo is a registered trademark and is the exclusive property of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. The board logo must not be used, reproduced, or displayed without the permission of board's Communications and Community Engagement Officer or designate. The logo will be provided by the Communications Department upon approval.

To ensure that the board logo is used in a manner that represents the mission, vision, and values of the board, Niagara Catholic must safeguard its use and appearance. The Niagara Catholic logo must prominent when displayed with a school logo and must be included on all school and board:

- Print and digital documents (e.g. advertising, annual reports, media releases, system memos, job postings, letterhead, business cards, promotional flyers, banners, and brochures, and presentations)
- Digital media (e.g. websites, social media, and signage),
- Vehicles
- Spirit wear, school uniforms, athletic uniforms, work uniforms, and specialty clothing (e.g. culinary jackets, aprons, shop garments)
- Promotional items

Logo with brandmark

The Niagara Catholic logo includes the brand mark (the full name of the board). To align with accessibility guidance (more on that under Fonts and Typefaces) we have updated the font used for our brand mark from Garamond to Arial. This must be updated on all letterhead and noted with suppliers to ensure we are using the current version of our logo with the brandmark. It should be used in all official communications.

Letterheads and Stationery:
The primary logo should be prominently featured at the top of letterheads and other stationery.

Website Header:
The primary logo should be displayed in the website header to reinforce our identity.

Academic Documents:
The primary logo should be displayed on all official academic documents, such as diplomas and transcripts.

Publications and Reports:
The primary logo should be placed on the cover of all publications and reports and at the bottom of pages along with our values. The stylized logo (described later) may also be incorporated into
the report but should never be used in place of the official logo.

Event Materials:
The primary logo should be placed on event programs, banners, and other event and promotional materials.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC
District School Board

Logo without brandmark

While the primary logo is reserved for official and formal communications, the secondary logo, the image without the brand mark, may be applied to more casual and digital contexts, such as:

- Social media profiles
- Digital presentations
- Merchandise
- Internal documents
- Online communities

Alternate logo

A stylized version of the leaves within the cross of the Board logo is acceptable for use as a design component but should not be used without the official logo. When this is used, it should be faded in digital and/or print media, at the discretion of the Communications Department. Examples are below:

NIAGARA CATHOLIC EDUCATION
AWARD OF DISTINCTION
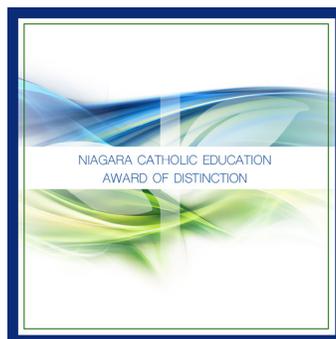
NIAGARA CATHOLIC
ATHLETICS

Full colour logo

The Niagara Catholic colours were carefully selected to represent the water and the fertile land in Niagara. They are key to our brand identity. It is important to reproduce colours consistently.

CMYK C:87 M:7 Y:96 K:0
RGB   R:0 G:166 B:81
HEX: 00A551

CMYK C:99 M:95 Y:6 K:1
RGB   R:47 G:53 B:143
HEX: 2F358F

CMYK C:0 M:0 Y:0 K:100
RGB   R:0 G:0 B:0
HEX: 000000

Niagara Catholic
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
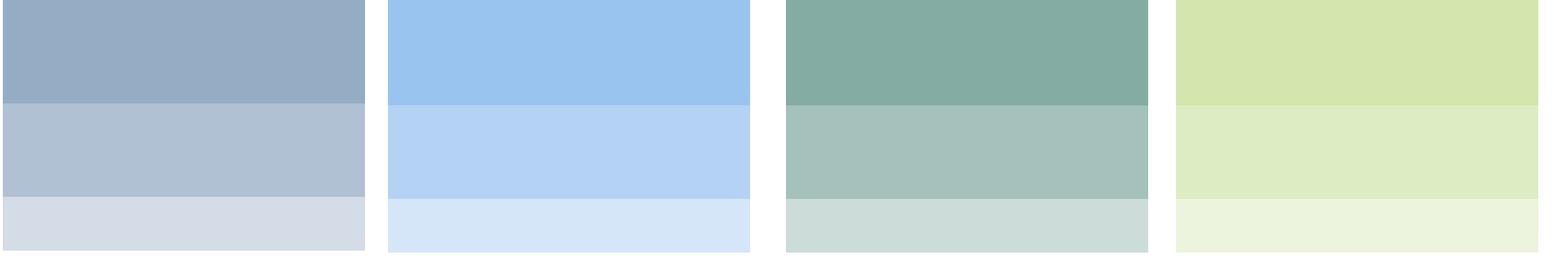
Alternate colours

The secondary colors for Niagara Catholic's brand are derived from the natural elements of the Niagara peninsula, enhancing the primary blue and green palette. These colors should be used to complement the primary logo.

CMYK C:69 M:37 Y:0 K:0	CMYK C:69 M:37 Y:0 K:0	CMYK C:86 M:39 Y:69 K:28	CMYK C:37 M:0 Y:79 K:0
RGB R:66 G:144 B:230	RGB R:66 G:144 B:230	RGB R:26 G:98 B:82	RGB R:179 G:209 B:101
HEX: 4290E6	HEX: 4290E6	HEX: 1A6252	HEX: ABD165

Limited colour printing

Single white and black logos are available, but should be used only when limited colour (e.g., one or two colour printing) printing is the only option.

Use of logo on solid colour backgrounds

The Niagara Catholic logo should be used on a backgrounds that allows for clear contrasts to the symbol, this includes solid colours as well as photographs. This means dark colours, with the wordmark in white, or light colors with the wordmark in grey. When using a dark background the logo must have a white outline.

Logo proportions and sizing

The stroke widths (x), the letter spacing (leading), and the size relationships of the various components
of the logo have been carefully developed and must not be altered or recreated.

The "x" measurements in this diagram are used to indicate equal spaces. The height of the green bar is equal to the space between the wordmark and the symbol. The words *Niagara Catholic* and *District School Board* are aligned with the center of the logo.

Minimum Size
Width .50"
Height .70"

Standard Size
Width .90"
Height 1.0"

White space around the logo

The grey area around the logo defines the minimum space that must be left between the logo and any other graphic elements such as text, illustrations, and borders. This is to ensure that the logo retains a strong
presence wherever it appears.

The "x" measurements in this diagram are used to indicate equal spaces. The width of the green bar is equal to the grey space around the wordmark. Always allow as much space as possible around the logo.
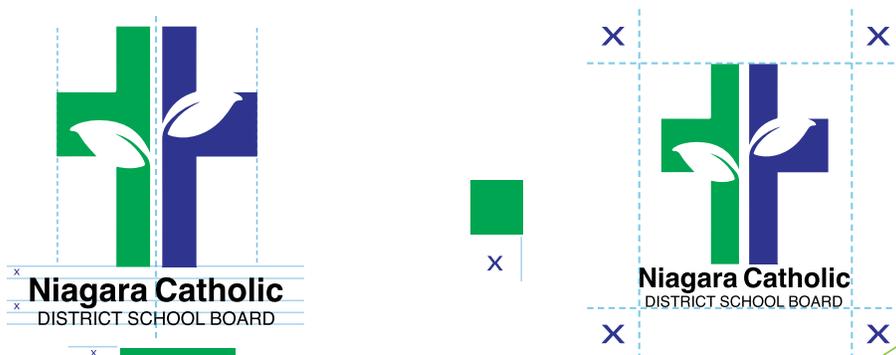
Unacceptable changes to the board logo

- Do not distort vertically.

- Do not distort horizontally.

- Do not change the typeface.

- Do not separate the wordmark.

- Do not place the wordmark above the logo.

- Do not place the wordmark over the logo.

- Do not flip colours.

- Do not use a gradient.

- Do not use in varying tints.

- Do not change the size beyond those recommended.

- Do not add a drop shadow.

- Do not blur.

- Do not box.

- Do not add texture.

- Do not make it 3D.

- Do not hand draw.

- Do not recreate.

Use of logo on photographs

Always place the full colour logo directly on photographs and colour backgrounds when possible. Choose photographs and colour backgrounds that have enough contrast to the logo colours to make sure the logo is visible. If there isn't enough contrast, put a white outline around the logo.

When it is not possible to place the logo directly on a photograph or color background, a colour band in a very light or dark color is acceptable to place the logo on, as shown in the following examples.

School logos

All Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary schools are expected to have two logos:

- One that represents the name of the school (faith-based)
- One that represents the sports moniker

All new logos must be created by the Communications Department, in consultation with the principal, family of schools' superintendent, and Board Chaplaincy Leader (or designate). Final approval of a school logo rests with the principal, family of schools' superintendent and Board Chaplaincy Leader.

Official school logos should be a crest, shield, or other design that represents the saint or community it is named for. It must contain the full name of the school, be in the established school colours. Logos designed to represent sports teams may pay homage to, but must not violate, an existing trademark (i.e. logos belonging to professional sports teams).

Fonts and typefaces

The fonts used in brand marks and in documents are as important as choosing clear, direct language to ensure readers can read and understand your message.

• Serif fonts
• Sans serif fonts

Fonts with serifs have decorative strokes, sometimes called tails or feet, at the end of each letter. Examples of serif fonts are

• **Times New Roman**
• Garamond
• **Baskerville**

Sans serif fonts do not have these tails. Examples of sans serif fonts are:

• **Arial**
• **Calibri**
• **Century Gothic**
• **Helvetica**
• Tahoma
• Verdana

You will note similarities in each of these fonts, particularly the sans serif ones. You will also notice that they vary in size. In each example, the font is 12-point typeface. Despite that, some are larger than others.

We recommend the following font sizes, which are represented in this document:

• Fonts should be minimum 12-point for body text.
• Fonts should be minimum 16-points for presentations and sub-heads
  (larger, if on a presentation, to show it's a header).
• Fonts should be minimum 24-point bold for headlines or headers.

According to accessibility guidelines, sans serif fonts are considered easier to read than ones with serifs. You can learn more about accessibility and fonts on these websites:

Employment and Social Development Canada – Accessible Canada guidance on fonts

Google's Readability and Accessibility Section

AccessibleLibraries.ca

VisionAustralia.org – tips for accessible typography
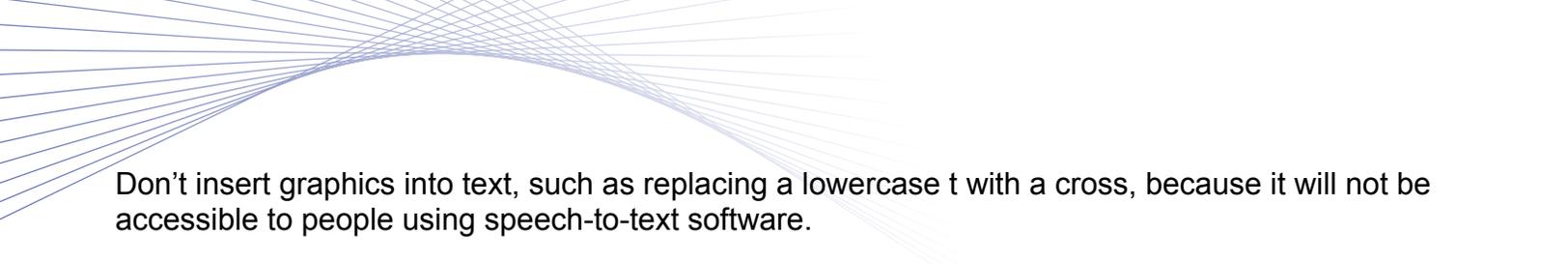
Don't insert graphics into text, such as replacing a lowercase t with a cross, because it will not be accessible to people using speech-to-text software.

Other font errors to avoid include:

• Using fonts that are too thin, such as Agency FB.

• Using fonts that are too thick, such as Bernard MT (with serif) and Bauhaus 93 (sans serif).

• Using fonts that are very thin, such as Papyrus.

• Using fonts that use all-caps, such as Copperplate.

• Using fonts designed to look like script or handwriting, such as Brush Script MT and Bradley Hand.

• Using fonts that have design elements built in, such as ALGERIAN and Curlz MT.

• Using italics.

• Using colour in text (see contrast section below).

• Using ultra-light and extra thick versions of fonts.

A few final notes on fonts and typeface:

Times New Roman is the preferred font for official correspondence. Sans-serif fonts are preferred for everything else.

• Use a single space after a period.

• Use a single space between lines.

• Use a double space between paragraphs.

• Do not indent paragraphs.

• Left-justify text – centered and fully justified text are hard to read.
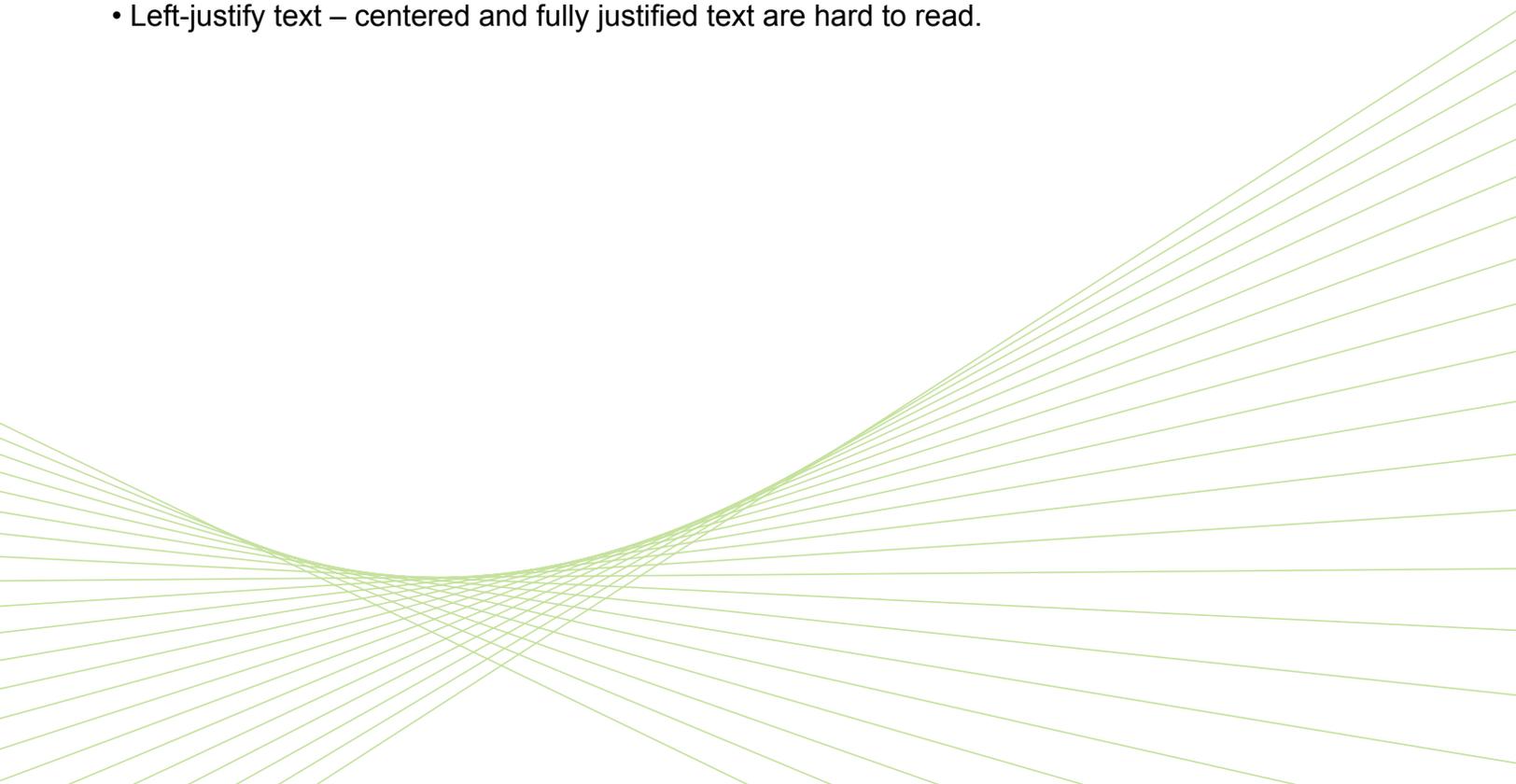
Colour and contrast

The use of colour and contrast on the page is as important for accessibility as readability (found in the *Niagara Catholic Style Guide*), and your size and choice of fonts are. Approximately 2.6 million Canadians are colour blind (Humber Polytechnic), which means they see a fraction of colours and hues. Since 80 per cent of people of information is visual, using many colours in a document is challenging for colour blind or colour-deficient reader.

There are three types of colour blindness. Depending on the type, a person might:

• Confuse black with shades of red
• Confuse some blues with reds, purples, or dark pinks
• Confuse mid-greens with some shades of orange
• Confuse mid-reds with mid-greens
• Confuse blues/greens with greys and mid-pinks
• Confuse bright green with yellow
• Confuse light blues with greys
• Confuse dark purples with black
• Confuse mid-greens with blues
• Confuse oranges with reds

Contrast between the background of a document or presentation and the text on it also impacts accessibility.

If your background is dark, white text is best. If your background is light, dark blue or black text is best. A list of all colour hex codes is available here. This ensures that you use the same colour in your documents and aren't using similar colours.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is a baseline to follow for all document contrasts. WCAG Level AAA requires a contrast of 7:1 for normal text (10-12 pt), and 4.5:1 for large text (14-point or larger). This is beyond current requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) compliance. We recommend following this guideline to ensure you meet accessibility standards. If you're unsure about the contrast of the text and your background, check it online here.

Day-to-day communications (offline)

Calibri is the recommended typeface for the body text of most internal and external communications.

Human Resources Services uses Century Gothic for communications.

Colours, as per Visual Identity Guide specs.

Type Specifications:
Address: Helvetica Neue Light 8pt
Numbers: Helvetica Neue Light 7.5pt
Body Text: Calibri 11 pt.

Calibri Regular
Calibri Medium
Calibri Bold

Helvetica Regular
Helvetica Medium
Helvetica Bold

Century Regular
Century Medium
Century Bold
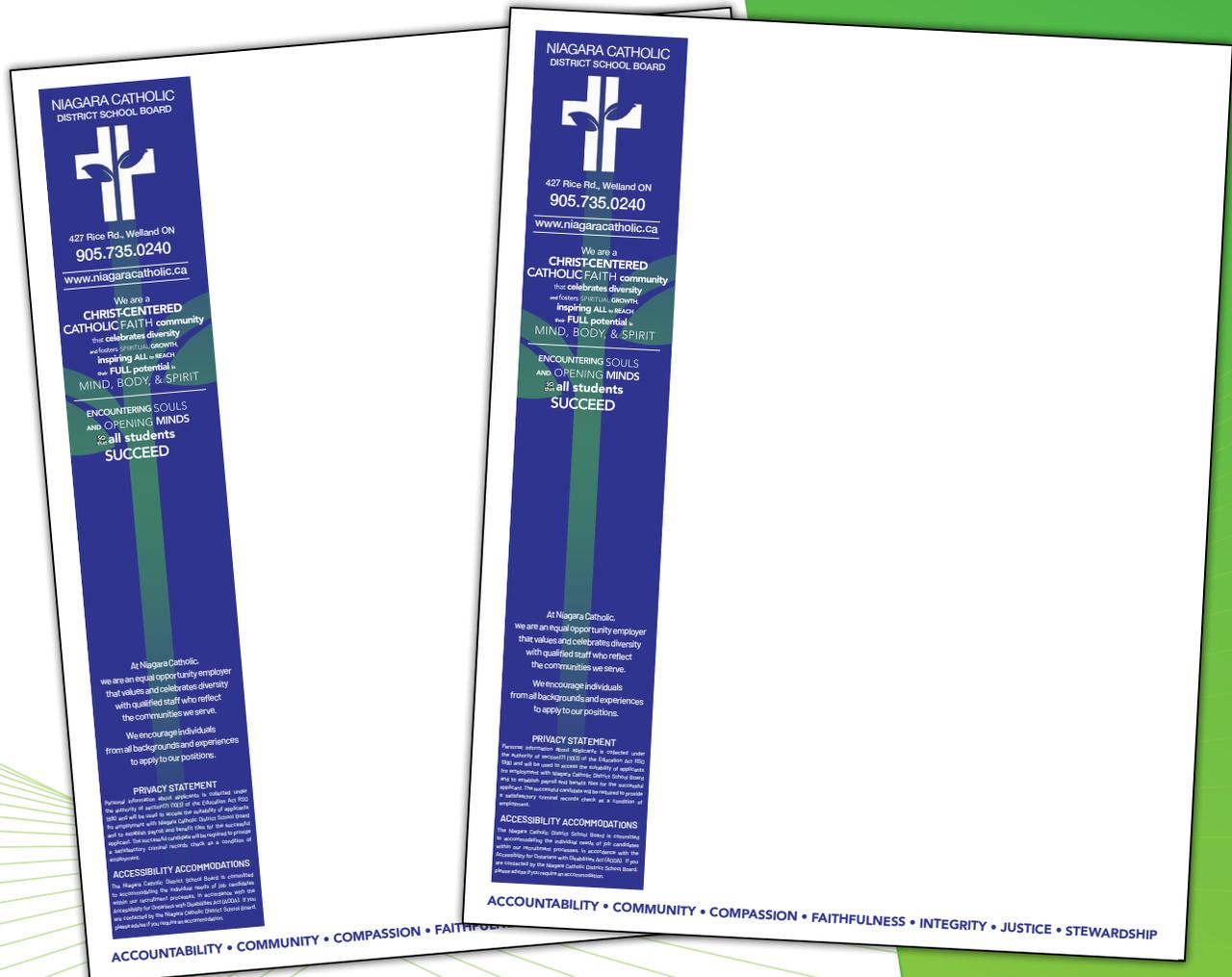
Business cards

Niagara Catholic has had a long-standing commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability. As part of this process, we no longer provide paper business cards in most cases. Near Field Communication (NFC) business cards are an innovative and greener alternative to traditional business cards. These digital cards reduce paper waste and also demonstrate our commitment to ecological footprint.

Individuals who would typically receive a box of print cards will now receive a single, plastic card that contains their contact information inside it. That information is shared with colleagues by holding their card close to a person's mobile phone. The information automatically populates to a person's contact list on both Android and iPhones.

Brand in merchandise guidelines

Niagara Catholic often provides branded merchandise at events such as job fairs and conferences. We also purchase branded clothing for staff. Because printing and reproduction techniques can vary among vendors, and because these items have a high degree of exposure to our key audiences, take extra care to ensure good branding practices are followed for these applications.

The following guidelines will help translate our brand identity to these applications:

• When using a vendor for the first time, stress the requirement to follow the brand standards.

• Use horizontal and vertical artwork formats as required.

• Select items that promote clean and clear logo reproduction.

• Always review reproduction proofs to check compliance with brand standards prior to full production.

• If you are uncertain about what you are ordering, obtain guidance from the Communications Department.
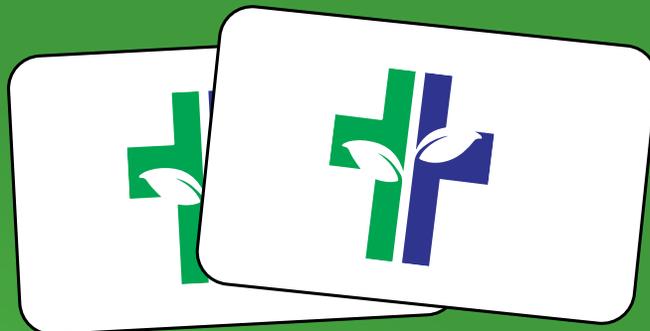
Email signatures and profiles

Consistency in our email signatures ensures a professional identity throughout the board. It reinforces our mission, vision, and values and helps build our brand. This is a best practice among businesses, government agencies, and organizations. Staff may use their own photo or an avatar on their emails. If used, avatars must reflect the school community.

Email signatures

Less is more: E-mail signatures should be no longer than 10 lines. Go wider rather than longer and use pipes (|) to separate components. Use two spaces between content and pipes.

Images and logos: Don't use unapproved trademarked images or logos in your signatures. Links to school or board social media using the logos are preferred.

Fonts: Use a simple 10 or 12-point standard font (preferred) from the Outlook default list. Use the guidance above for choices of font.

Rich text formatting: Plain text ensures the signature is compatible with all e-mail clients on all devices. Avoid colours, special fonts, bold, italics, and graphics. Never use Comic Sans in an email or any presentation or document.

vCards: vCards are a convenient way to share contact information. However, they add bytes and appear as attachments. Use a vCard for an initial correspondence. Sending one every time is necessary.

Example of a clear electronic email signature
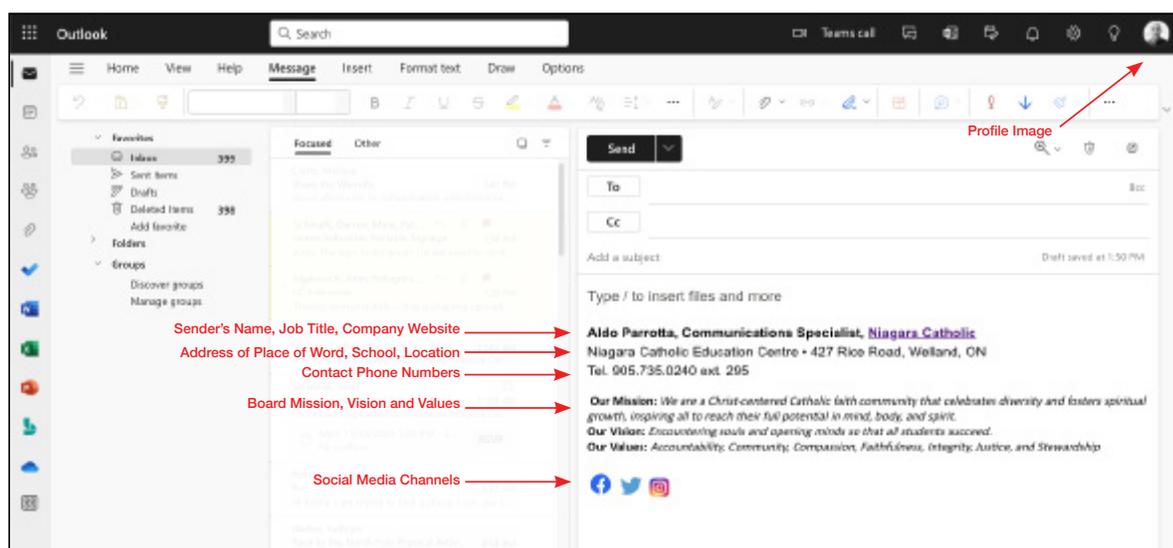
OUR MISSION

We are a
CHRIST-CENTERED
CATHOLIC FAITH **community**
that **celebrates diversity**
and fosters SPIRITUAL **GROWTH,**
inspiring ALL to **REACH**
their **FULL potential** in
MIND, BODY, & SPIRIT

OUR VISION

ENCOUNTERING SOULS
AND
OPENING MINDS
SO that **all students**
SUCCEED

OUR VALUES

ACCOUNTABILITY • COMMUNITY • COMPASSION
FAITHFULNESS • INTEGRITY • JUSTICE • STEWARDSHIP

Niagara Catholic District School Board Communications Department