



September 2024



NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD 

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear St. John Families,

WELCOME BACK! On behalf of school staff, we are very excited to begin our 2024-2025 year together. We hope and trust that you have enjoyed a relaxing and spiritual break with family and friends. A very warm welcome is extended to our new Kindergarten students and to all students and families new to our community.

As you are all aware, this promises to be yet another unique year filled with extraordinary opportunities and challenges, as we continue to strive to advance the mind, body, and spirit of all of our students. We embark on this journey together as we make a commitment to provide engaging, meaningful, and spiritual experiences certain to engage all Jaguars here at St. John Catholic Elementary School!

As we embark on a new school year, I would like to recognize and extend a special thanks to the caretakers and all staff for preparing our school for 2024-2025. This school year will focus on the health and safety of all, supporting and improving student achievement, and building our Catholic faith with the support of our families and the St. Joseph Catholic Parish Community.

I am looking forward to another positive and productive year together. Here at St. John Catholic, we highly value the triad connection between home, parish, and school. We value your parental support in your child's education, as your active participation is key to the success and continued growth and development of your child.

May God bless each of you as we begin the 2024-2025 school year. I am looking forward to working with each and every one of you as God guides our steps through the journey of another successful school year at St. John Catholic Elementary School.

Yours in Catholic Education,

Mr. D. Forte
Principal

PRAYER TO BEGIN A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

*God of Wisdom and might,
We praise You for the wonder of our being, for mind, body, and spirit. Be with our children as they begin a new school year. Bless them and their teachers and support staff. Give them strength and grace to their bodies as they grow; wisdom and knowledge to their minds as they search for understanding; and peace and zeal to their hearts as they learn to follow Your will. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*



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.

DIRECT ENTRY

In an effort to ensure a seamless and safe start to each school day here at St. John, we will continue with our direct entry arrival for students. This means that students will be directed straight to their classrooms as soon as they arrive on school property. As a result, please be advised that **the school yard will not be open in the morning and no supervision will be provided outside to start the day.** We thank everyone for their cooperation with this very important health and safety matter.

SAFE ARRIVAL SYSTEM

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

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.**



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



ST. JOHN JAGUAR NEWS

STAY INFORMED; STAY CONNECTED

Effective home and school communication is key to the growth and success of our entire St. John family. In order to continue to build upon communication between home and school, please **provide us with an existing email address**. Through email, you will conveniently receive newsletters, calendars, event announcements, and friendly reminders to keep you up to date and well informed!

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

We look forward to another wonderful, faith-filled school year under the spiritual guidance of Father Rico Passero at St. Joseph Catholic Parish in Grimsby.

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.

FIRE AND LOCKDOWN DRILLS

Fire drills will be conducted at a minimum of **six times** throughout the duration of the school year, all at various times of the day.

Lockdown drills will be conducted at a minimum of **two times** throughout the duration of the school year.

Thank you for your support and cooperation as we work to ensure the safety of all our students here at St. John.

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.

REUSABLE WATER BOTTLE

In an effort to promote and teach students about sustainability, we ask students to avoid bringing disposable plastic water bottles to school. Reusable water bottles can be filled at our hydration stations. Thank you for your cooperation and for your concern for the environment.

**NIAGARA STUDENT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES (NSTS)**

We invite all families who have children riding the bus to visit the [Niagara Student Transportation Services \(NSTS\) website](#) for the most recent updates on bussing. Parents are encouraged to log into the parent portal for specific information pertaining to run times and bus stop locations for their child(ren). Please be advised that NSTS has indicated that at times, school bus delays are possible and do happen, especially as routines are in the process of being established and when weather presents challenges. To receive notifications regarding delay alerts, families are invited to download the **BusPlanner Delay** app or subscribe for email alerts in the parent portal. Parents not wishing to receive notifications would be required to simply check in by visiting the '**Alert**' section of the NSTS website. On the website, parents can also access the [NSTS Back to School Transportation Information](#) for the current school year.

'SchoolCash' ONLINE

If they have not already done so, families are invited to click on the link below to create an account for '**SchoolCash**' Online. '**SchoolCash**' Online gives parents the ability to make quick and easy payments online for school-related purposes. When visiting the website below, parents will need to click on the '**Register**' icon to create their account. The site also provides additional information about '**SchoolCash**' Online and how it works. For those who have already setup an account during a previous school year, that account will carry over and work for the new school year.

Link to 'SchoolCash Online website':
<https://ncdsb.schoolcashionline.com>

**NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION
ORANGE SHIRT DAY - SEPTEMBER 30TH**

September 30th has been declared the **National Day for Truth & Reconciliation (formerly 'Orange Shirt Day')** throughout Canada in recognition of the harm done to generations of children by the Indian Residential Schools. As an affirmation of Niagara Catholic's commitment to ensure that **every child matters** as we continue on our reconciliation journey, the Niagara Catholic District School Board is acknowledging Orange Shirt Day on **Monday, September 30**. The origin of Orange Shirt Day is based on a story shared by a survivor of the residential school system, Phyllis Webstad, during the Truth and Reconciliation meetings held in Williams Lake, BC in 2013. In response, staff, students, and community members at St. John Catholic School are encouraged to come to school on **September 30** wearing the colour orange as a visible symbol in support of the notion that **every child matters** and that we are all called to love, respect, and care for one another as children of God.

National Day
for Truth and
Reconciliation



RECESSES

As determined by the school's Joint Health & Safety Committee, St. John Catholic Elementary School will continue with its staggered recess structure due to limited space on the playground. Students will continue to have access to the field for unstructured play during recesses as much as possible. Please know that use of the field is determined based on its condition following wet weather. The school thanks everyone for their continued trust and support as we endeavour to maintain the health and safety of all.

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.

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**.

**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 approximately *3:20 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 approximately *3:20 pm*.

INDOOR & OUTDOOR FOOTWEAR

Parents are reminded to please consider sending their child to school with a pair of indoor shoes. This will help to maintain everyone's health and safety by reducing potential for slipping hazards in our school. In addition, having a pair of indoor shoes for students to change into allows for cleanliness to be maintained in our building and for caretaking staff to focus on sanitization of surfaces and touchpoints. We thank everyone for their cooperation with this health and safety matter.



ELEMENTARY STANDARDIZED DRESS CODE**Shirts:**

- Navy blue or white oxford-style long-sleeved or short-sleeved shirt.
- Navy blue or white polo-style long-sleeved or short-sleeved shirt.
- School-designed spirit wear including shirts, sweaters or hoodies.
- **All sweaters must be navy blue or white.**

Pants / Skirts:

- Navy blue sweat-pants for students in ELKP to Grade 3.
- Navy blue pants - Dress, Cargo, Denim, Kobe, Corduroy style.
- Navy blue skorts or dresses - length must be appropriate and modest.
- Navy blue walking shorts or capris or Grade 8 students have the option of wearing grey secondary uniform pants.

Shoes:

- We ask that parents/guardians please ensure that students come to school each day wearing appropriate and comfortable closed-toe footwear (i.e. running shoes with proper ankle support).
- Parents are asked to please send their child(ren) to school with a pair of indoor shoes and outdoor shoes. This will allow for cleanliness in our building and for caretaking staff to focus on sanitization of surfaces and touchpoints. Thank you to everyone for their cooperation with this very important health and safety matter.

**PARENTS, PLEASE CONSIDER INSURING YOUR CHILD**

Accidents can happen...stay prepared! Get the financial protection your family needs. If your child is involved in an accident, whether at school or during non-school hours, *Insure My Kids* protects your family from the resulting expenses, which are not normally covered under your government health and group insurance plans. Brochures and applications will be sent home with your child. You can also get more information on the website: <https://www.insuremykids.com/>

**UPDATED CONSENT FORM - NOTICE OF THE COLLECTION, USE AND DISCLOSURE OF STUDENT PERSONAL INFORMATION**

The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) requires school boards to obtain parent/guardian consent to release students' personal information to school volunteers, parishes, and the Niagara Region Public Health Unit. The Act also requires school boards to obtain consent to the disclosure of personal information, such as creative and academic accomplishments, images/videos/audio recordings, and/or accomplishments to be shared on school or Board websites, social media, or with the media. The updated form also addresses virtual learning in the 21st century.

Parents/guardians are asked to complete the most current ***Parent/Guardian Consent Form - Collection, Use and Disclosure of Student Personal Information*** (sent through **'SchoolMessenger'**) by **September 13**.

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEETS

Please be advised that each student in the school will be receiving a hard copy of their personalized ***Student Information Sheet*** to bring home for review in September. It is asked that parents and guardians kindly review the information on the sheet, make any necessary revisions directly on the sheet, and return it to their child's classroom teacher as soon as possible. Please know that it is essential that there are at least **two emergency contacts** on file so that someone can be reached, should parents or guardians be unavailable in the event of an emergency. If there are any changes to this information that take place throughout the school year, it is asked that parents kindly contact the school to provide the update(s). Ensuring that accurate, complete, and current information is on file in our school records is essential to providing prompt care to students, especially in the event of an emergency.

RYAN'S LAW: ENSURING ASTHMA FRIENDLY SCHOOLS

Ryan's Law (Ensuring Asthma Friendly Schools) is an important step to support the health and well-being of students diagnosed with asthma in Ontario schools. During this school year, the Niagara Catholic District School Board has created an Asthma Policy. If your son/daughter has been diagnosed with asthma, please contact the office at your school to provide information about your son/daughter's asthma medication. You will be required to complete and submit the Niagara Catholic Student Asthma Management Plan for your student. Any student under the age of 16 years will be permitted to carry and administer his/her asthma medication at school with your consent. A student 16 years or older is not required to have his or her parent's or guardian's permission to carry his or her asthma medication. The [Ministry of Education website](#) has resources on asthma, as well as other prevalent medical conditions. Families are encouraged to take time to read the content shared on the site. It can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlink above.

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.](#)

GOVERNANCE POLICY 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 [Governance Policies, By-Laws, Administrative Operational Procedures, Protocols And Procedures](#) 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 & STUDENTS

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.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC 2022-2026 THEOLOGICAL THEME

We are pleased to share Niagara Catholic's current theological theme for 2022-2026, ***Called by Name***. Our four-year theological theme will guide students, staff, and community members through daily prayer, faith formation, school and system faith-centered events, the Journey Retreat program for Grade 8 students, retreats and class visits, and opportunities for staff and student engagement and reflection. Below is the ***Called by Name*** logo that will be used for the four-year duration of the theological theme.



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.

PURCHASE OF ADDITIONAL TECHNOLOGY

Families are advised that the school has used a portion of its School Generated Funds to purchase **15 additional Chromebooks** for the 2024-2025 school year. The devices arrived over the summer months and have been inventoried and distributed to classrooms to support student learning and engagement. The school continues to work toward a goal of one device for every one student in grades 1 through 8.

In addition, the school has purchased **two 65 inch interactive SMART TVs**. The SMART TVs have been installed in Rooms 131 and 132, which are occupied by our Kindergarten classes. The school will continue to work toward replacing non-functional Smartboards and LCD projectors with interactive TVs as we continue to move forward.

A sincere thank you is extended to our families for supporting our school fundraisers and lunch days here at St. John!

CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS FOR 2024-2025

Please be advised that the name of your child's classroom teacher for the current school year can be found by logging into in the [Niagara Catholic Parent Portal](#). A *SchoolMessenger* notification regarding this has been sent to families.

2024-2025 GRADE 8 GRAD HOODIES

Parents of students who will be in Grade 8 this September are asked to please visit the [Maddalena Uniforms website](#) if they would like to purchase a Grad Hoodie for their child for the 2024-2025 school year. Orders are to be placed directly online through the website.

ST. JOHN SPIRITWEAR

Due to high demand, the online store for St. John spiritwear through Maddalena Uniforms will remain live and orders will be fulfilled as they are submitted. Families are invited to follow the links provided below to access the online store and submit their order(s) and payment for St. John spiritwear. Please be advised that **all orders are final and cannot be returned**.

Orders will be delivered to the school and distributed to students to bring home with them. When placing the online order, families are reminded to **please click on the 'Add a note for the seller...' option when viewing their shopping cart and include the name and grade of the student who will be taking the order home**. This will allow for efficiency in distributing the packages upon arrival.

In addition, when prompted to select a shipping method, parents are asked to please select the **'Pick-Up at Store'** option. Once all orders are received after the established due date, the school will make arrangements to have the hoodies picked up and distributed to students here at the school at no additional cost to families .

Parents are encouraged to refer to the sizing video on the homepage of the [Maddalena Uniforms website](#) for information on and assistance with sizing.

Please note the addition of a Blessed Trinity Spiritwear Sweater. Please be reminded that *Blessed Trinity spiritwear can be worn on any given day of the school year by Grades 7 & 8 students only, as part of the Niagara Catholic Elementary Standardized Dress Code*.

We look forward to seeing everyone in their St. John swag!

Link to order spiritwear:

<https://www.maddalena-uniforms.com/collections/st-john-catholic-school>

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.

Thank you for your continued support of our ECO initiatives!

St. John Catholic School ECO Team

**BLESSED TRINITY CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Mr. Whittard, Principal of Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School, welcomes everyone back to school and is wishing everyone a successful year. He is also excited to start transition activities with Grade 8 students in the Blessed Trinity Family of Schools soon! St. John families are invited to visit the ['Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School' section of the St. John Google Website](#) for information pertaining to Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School; and to check this section on each of our monthly newsletters for updated information from Blessed Trinity. We look forward to working with Blessed Trinity staff to help facilitate a seamless transition for yet another St. John graduating class! **#ThunderPride**

