



St. Alexander - Newsletter



26 Hwy 20 E,
Fonthill,
ON, L0S 1E0
905-892-3841

Principal: Mr. M. Venzon
Vice Principal: Mrs. C. Pozzobon
Superintendent: Ms. Kim Kinney
Parish Priest: Fr. Paul MacNeil

Called by Name

*St. Alexander Catholic Elementary is proud to be part
of the Notre Dame Catholic Family of Schools*

SEPTEMBER, 2024

September 3rd – First Day of School!!!

Hello Huskies!

On behalf of the staff at St. Alexander Catholic School, we would like to extend a warm welcome to all new students and families, and a welcome back to all of our returning Huskies! 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. Alexander Community. Please take a look at the information below to help out with some start up items for this school year.

We look forward to meeting and working with you during the upcoming school year!

Yours in Catholic Education,

Mr. M. Venzon (Principal)
Mrs. C. Pozzobon (Vice Principal)

BELL TIMES & NEW BALANCED DAY

St. Alexander Catholic Elementary will be moving to a Balanced Day Schedule for the 2024-25 school year.

The balanced day consists of 300 minutes of instruction, just like a regular school day. The difference is in how the 300 minutes are divided.

With the balanced/alternative school day, students have two (40 minute) breaks, each consisting of a nutrition portion and outdoor play.

Please see the schedule below that will give you more information about the balanced day, as well as the information attached that includes tips for packing your child's meals for the 2 eating periods.

Beginning in September 2024 we will have a change to the start and the end of the day (10 minute increase), with the bell times as follows:

Start of day 8:30am (previously 8:35am)
Dismissal - End of day 2:50pm (previously 2:45pm)

Please note that these bell time changes will impact bus pickup and drop-off times. This will be communicated by NSTS during the regular process for the 2024-2025 school year and will be made available on the NSTS Portal in mid-August. NSTS will communicate more specific timelines closer to the end of this school year.

Here are the times that correspond to our new daily schedule:

8:15-8:30 a.m. - Morning supervision will begin (when students can be dropped off)

8:30 a.m. – Entry Bell (**Start of day – new for September!!**)
8:30-8:40 a.m. – National Anthem / Prayers / Announcements

8:40 – 10:40 a.m. – Instructional block #1

10:40 – 11:20 a.m. AM Nutrition Break

- 10:40 – 11:00: K– Gr. 4 Outside (Recess), Gr. 5 – 8 Inside Eating
- 11:00 – 11:20: K- Gr. 4 Inside Eating; Gr. 5 – 8 Outside (Recess)

11:20 a.m. – 12:40 p.m. – Instructional block #2

12:40 – 1:20 p.m. PM Nutrition Break

- 12:40 – 1:00: K– Gr. 4 Outside (Recess), Gr. 5 – 8 Inside Eating
- 1:00 – 1:20: K- Gr. 4 Inside Eating; Gr. 5 – 8 Outside (Recess)

1:20 – 2:40 p.m. – Instructional block #3

2:40-2:50 p.m. Closing Exercises / Prayer

2:50 p.m. Dismissal Bell

PARENT PORTAL INFORMATION

The Niagara Catholic Parent Portal allows parents access to information regarding their child including report cards, alternative report cards and timetable and your child's classroom teacher for the following school year.

How do I login to the parent portal?

Please [click here](#) for instructions or [click here](#) for a video on how to access and navigate the portal. <https://connect.edsembli.com/ON/NCDSB/Stalx131/Portal/viewer/login/login.aspx?logintype=P>

<https://cdn.niagaracatholic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Niagara-Catholic-Maplewood-Parent-Portal-Instructions-Sept-2020.pdf>

ST. ALEXANDER SCHOOL SPIRITWEAR

We are pleased to once again let you know that you can order St. Alexander Catholic School Spiritwear anytime throughout the year through Big Bear Spiritwear. You can Google Big Bear Spiritwear and click on Schools / Fonthill / St. Alexander Huskies to choose items, or copy and paste the following link into a browser:

<https://www.bigbearspiritwear.com/saint-alexander-huskies/>

Your orders will arrive at St. Alexander School where we will send them home with your child(ren).

NEW FOR THIS SCHOOL YEAR

Understanding changes coming to your child's school

Earlier this spring, the Ministry of Education issued new requirements for school boards to follow to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of everyone in our schools.

The revised PPM 128 addresses issues including the use of cell phones and vaping. PPM 170 outlines the Ministry of Education's expectations for communication between home and school.

All Niagara Catholic schools will follow these Ministry of Education directives.

Cell phone use in schools

When the new school year begins in September, new rules will be in place regarding the use of personal cell phones in class.

Students who bring their cell phones to school must have the phone stored out of view and turned off or onto silent mode during the instructional day. They may only use it if their teacher permits it for learning, for health or medical purposes, or to support special education needs.

If a teacher sees a cell phone that is not stored out of view, students will be required to hand in their device in for the instructional day. The cell phone will be placed, by the student, in a secure storage area designated by the principal.

If a student refuses to hand in their personal mobile device, the Ministry requires that the student be sent to the principal's office. Consequences for failing to hand in their phone is at the principal's discretion.

School boards are now required to disable access to social media platforms on school networks and board devices. This is intended to limit the number of interruptions in class and to benefit the mental health and well-being of students. Niagara Catholic already blocks access to some social media sites. Now all will be unavailable to students on the board network during the school day.

Cigarettes, vaping, or nicotine, cannabis, or alcohol use at school

Another measure coming into effect in September to protect the health and well-being of students is the installation of sensors to detect vaping in schools.

The Smoke-Free Ontario Act bans the use of any tobacco, nicotine, or e-cigarette (vape) on school property. The changes to PPM 128 strengthen the enforcement of consequences for students who use or share cigarettes or other tobacco products, nicotine products, e-cigarettes (vapes) at school. Anyone under the age of 19 is prohibited from buying or possessing alcohol or cannabis. These substances, and any illegal drug, are prohibited on school property.

The new rules require school boards to develop a policy to handle any prohibited items that are surrendered, if one does not exist already. The policy must comply with federal and provincial regulations.

To ensure compliance with the provincial regulations Niagara Catholic's Facilities Services team will install equipment to detect the use of cigarettes or e-cigarettes in schools this year.

These expectations are outlined in the Board's [Electronic Communications Systems Administrative Operating Procedures](#) for students, and the Board's [Code of Conduct AOP](#).

We ask parents to please speak to your children about these new provincial rules and support your child's teacher(s) and principal in enforcing them.

Questions, concerns, or complaints: Understanding the process

Finally, the Ministry of Education has given school boards new requirements on how we communicate with parents who have questions, concerns, or complaints.

This new guidance builds upon our established practice for resolving issues, including giving parents a timeline for a response. This is outlined in the process below. This information will also be shared on the Parents section of the Board website and school websites in time for the start of the new school year.

[Niagara Catholic's Multi-Year Strategic Plan](#) prioritizes transparency in communication with families and stakeholders as a key priority. Our [Complaints Resolution Policy](#), first passed in April 1998, addresses the steps families must take to resolve an issue at their child's school. PPM 170 ensures commitments the provincial government made in [Your child's education: A parent guide to our school system](#) are fully addressed.

Parents/guardians should expect a response to a concern or complaint within two business days. If an inquiry needs more time, you will be given an estimated time for a detailed response at the end the second day.

If you have a question about a classroom-related matter, such as curriculum, homework, classroom behavior, or specific incidents, please contact your child's teacher.

If you cannot resolve the issue at the classroom level and/or have a question about school procedures, extracurricular activities, or safety concerns, please contact the school's vice-principal or principal.

For issues unresolved at the school level or issues related to Niagara Catholic policies, procedures, resource allocation, or other concerns, please contact the Superintendent of Education assigned to your child's school.

In keeping with the Board's commitment to accessibility, parents and guardians have a right to expect information will be delivered in clear, easy-to-understand language.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE and SAFE ARRIVAL

The Safe Arrival program reduces the time it takes to verify student attendance making it easier for you to report your child's absence and easier for staff to respond to unexplained student absences. The Safe Arrival program allows parents to report their child's absence quickly and conveniently in one of three ways:

1) Use the SafeArrival website, <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca>

The first time you use the website, select Sign Up to create your account using your email address. After logging in, select the Attendance tab to Report an Absence.

2) Using your mobile device, download and install the SchoolMessenger app (blue logo) from the Apple App Store or 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 on your mobile device please enable Push Notifications in the Settings area of the app. The document Using the SchoolMessenger app will give instructions for using the App.

3) The toll-free number 844-287-6287 will allow you to report your child absent without creating an account.

NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH & RECONCILIATION (ORANGE SHIRT DAY)

We will have Orange Shirt Day on Monday, Sept. 30th at St. Alexander

Background: Orange Shirt Day is the story of Phyllis Webstad, an Indigenous woman who shared her experience at an Indian Residential School through the children's book, The Orange Shirt Story. By participating in Orange Shirt Day, we recognize the harm done to generations of children by the Indian Residential School system in Canada. The first Orange Shirt Day occurred on September 30th, 2013 as Chief Fred Robbins saw Phyllis' story as a way of bringing together Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. Since that time, Orange Shirt Day has grown into a national awareness among schools, businesses, and communities. In June 2021, the Federal Government of Canada designated September 30th as the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation. While this addresses Call to Action #80 of the Truth and Reconciliations 94 Calls to Action, it coincides with an established day that was created by Survivors of Indian Residential Schools. As a Board we can acknowledge the Federal statutory day, but for school and student activities, for the present time, it remains "Orange Shirt Day" as a way of respecting the grass root Indigenous movement.

To order orange shirts through Pegasus School Images – Pegasus Order Form:

<https://teamandspiritwear.com/NCDSB-ORANGEDAY/shop/home>

Shirts are \$15 including tax. Families are encouraged to place their orders online through Pegasus School Images. A credit card is required. At the time of placing orders, parents/staff will be asked to select: 1) The Shirt Size 2) Quantity 3) Name of the School where the shirt is to be delivered. 4) All orders must be placed by midnight, Monday, September 16th, for all shirts to be delivered to schools on time.

A Prayer for Orange Shirt Day

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Loving God, our Creator, help us to be living signs of Your healing love. Open our hearts to welcome, to include and to stand up for the dignity of each other as we go forward together with our Indigenous sisters and brothers. Strengthen and guide us on our journey towards reconciliation; and help us to celebrate all Indigenous people of Turtle Island for the many gifts they share with us. May we go forward in hope, as the children of One Creator and loving members of the family of God. We ask this in the Name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

PHOTO DAY

Friday, September 27th, *Lifetouch* will be in to take student photos. Students will be required to be in regular school dress code for their pictures. Please feel free to contact the school if you have any questions.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL CORNER

Nominations are completed by submitting your name (or the name of someone you would like to nominate) to st.alexander@ncdsb.com

Please know that all parents are welcome to attend any of our Catholic School Council Meetings. There is no experience necessary - just a desire to make St. Alexander the best school that it can be. **Our first meeting will take place on September 24th at 5:30 p.m. at St. Alexander School.**

SCHOOL BUS RULES

Here are some Bus Safety tips to keep in mind as we begin the 2024-25 school year

At the Stop	Be 5 to 10 minutes early, and stand on the inside of the sidewalk/ shoulder away from the roadway.
When the Bus Arrives	Line up in a straight line, remember to keep your social distance, wait for the bus to come to a complete stop and the doors to open, and never touch the outside of the bus.
Getting on the Bus	Get on the bus one at a time, keeping social distance, go directly to your assigned seat and get settled.
Riding on the Bus	Sit with your back to the back of the seat and your bottom to the bottom of your seat with your school bag on your lap, and use your quiet speaking voice so that the bus driver can concentrate on driving.
Getting off the Bus	Stay in your seat until the bus comes to a complete stop, only get off the bus at your school or at your bus stop, look for your parent/ guardian before you get off the bus if that is your routine, and always tell the bus driver if you do not see your parent/ guardian at the bus stop waiting for you if that is your routine or if you missed the stop.

Crossing in Front of the Bus Watch and wait for the bus driver to signal to you to cross the road once it is safe to do so.

TERRY FOX WALK/RUN

On Thursday, September 19th all students at St. Alexander Catholic Elementary School will be participating in The Terry Fox School Event. On-line donations through school cash online will be accepted throughout the month of September.

Please let us know if you would not like your child to participate in this walk for some reason.

ALLERGY ALERT

At the beginning of every school year, we remind all students and parents/guardians of our Board's Anaphylaxis Policy. At St. Alexander Catholic Elementary School we have Emergency Guidelines which clearly state what medical procedures must occur for those students who have various life-threatening medical conditions. We are reminding all students and parents/guardians that we have students in our school who are known to have a potentially life-threatening allergy called Anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe life threatening form of allergic reaction. It may begin with severe itching of the eyes or face; a sense of constriction in the throat, then other symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea and difficulty with breathing may develop. This may lead to coma and death. Foods such as peanuts, other nuts, fish, shellfish, eggs, milk, sesame and wheat as well as insect stings from bees and wasps, latex products and medication, are the most common allergens that produce anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis requires immediate first aid response and immediate medical intervention. If your child requires a special plan to ensure their safety, please alert your child's teacher so we can ensure that we are doing all we can to keep your child, and all children, safe.

We discourage the sharing of foods at lunchtime and do not allow outside treats to be brought into the school to share with other students for special occasions. We also follow Healthy Schools guidelines which promotes healthy eating and lifestyles.

Food treats are not allowed to be brought in and shared with the class for birthdays. We appreciate your cooperation with this aspect of helping us be a safe and accepting school.

SCHOOL LOCKDOWN PRACTICE

As part of our Emergency Response Preparedness Plan, St. Alexander Catholic School will be conducting a practice Lockdown on Wednesday, September 18th, 2024. The practice will take approximately five (5) minutes and at no time will students or staff be in any potential threat or danger.

Lockdown procedures are in place and practiced in all Niagara Catholic schools throughout this school year. Similar to fire drills, classroom teachers will review the procedures that students must follow during a Lockdown.

The simulation lockdown practice drill gives students and staff the opportunity to implement our School and Board Emergency Response Plan.

If you require any additional information, please contact us at the school.

ELEMENTARY STANDARDIZED DRESS CODE

As you are aware, Niagara Catholic has an Elementary Dress Code for students. Details regarding the Dress Code can be found on the Board's website.

Highlights include the following:

At a minimum, every student is required to wear one (1) of the following items:

- Navy Blue sweat pants for students in Early Learning Kindergarten to Grade 3 or;
- Navy Blue Pants (Dress, Cargo, Denim, Kobe, Corduroy style permitted) or;
- Navy Blue Skorts or Dresses or
- Navy Blue Walking Shorts or Capris or;
- Grade 8 students have the option to wear grey secondary uniform pants. At a minimum, every student is required to wear one (1) of the following items;
- Navy Blue or White Oxford shirt (short or long sleeve) or;
- Navy Blue or White Polo shirt (short or long sleeve) or;
- School designed spirit wear polo shirt.

Running shoes are the recommended footwear and socks must be worn. We ask for your patience and understanding as we work through the implementation of this new policy together. Please remember that shirts are to be logo free.

PAYING FOR ALL SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

School Cash Online is an online parent portal that offers the safest, fastest and most convenient way to pay for activities at school. It is a safe and easy way to pay for things like school trips, pizza days and milk. On-line payment will be the only way to pay for school activities this year. You can register @ <https://ncdsb.schoolcshonline.com>. If you have questions or concerns, you are asked to please give us a call at the school.

