

St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School



Phone: 905 734 4659

December 2024

"We are proud to be part of the Notre Dame Catholic Family of Schools"

Principal: Mr. Paul Moccia

Superintendent: Mrs. Kim Kinney

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

We are now entering the season of Advent in preparation for Christmas! While Advent is the season of preparing for the celebration of the birth of Jesus, it also coincides in the school year with the end of our first term. This is an ideal time to reflect on the progress to date at St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School.

We are very proud of our students and how they actively participate not only in the academic life of our school, but also the spiritual life. Each day virtually via our morning announcements we begin together in prayer and reflection. This communal activity is due to the commitment and energy of many of our intermediate students who are true leaders in our school.

As a staff, we are continuing to grow professionally. Each teacher spends many hours outside of class time reading professional journals, attending workshops virtually, and of course, working together with the staff here at St. Augustine. All of this is in addition to the many hours spent assessing student work, planning and preparing for daily lessons. The staff at St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School work very hard on behalf of your children. I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank the staff for all of their hard work they do for students at St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School.

As we patiently wait for the arrival of Christmas, it is our hope that the community of St. Augustine will continue to grow together. During this Christmas season, I hope that everyone takes some time to appreciate that not only are we partners in our children's education, but also, we each have the common thread of the birth of Jesus.

"Life is not measured by how many breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away."

Sincerely,
Mr. Moccia

ECO SCHOOLS UPDATE

Over the past couple of months, the Eco team, has been working hard to make our school more Eco friendly.

As the year goes on, we will be continuing with waste-less lunch Wednesday, and to also conduct garden maintenance in the spring. These initiatives will help the school by teaching the students the importance of reducing waste, putting waste into the proper bins and also keep our gardens healthy. The goal as a school, is to work together and accomplish many Eco goals.

Thanks goes out to Mrs. Berardocco and her Eco team for doing an amazing job.

ADVENT CELEBRATIONS

Students in each grade will participate in a weekly Advent Celebration and lighting of the Advent candles with prayers via our virtual morning announcements. Our desire is to guide your child on this very important journey towards Christmas. As well, our Advent Mass is scheduled for **Friday, December 6 at 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary's church followed by a lunch in the church basement.**



STREETPROOFING YOUR CHILDREN

When street proofing your children, the following safety tips should always be a part of the conversation.

1. Never approach a stranger.
2. Stay away from vehicles you do not know.
3. Be wary of strangers who are overly friendly or take an unusual interest in you.
4. You can go places and accept things from people you know, but first get your parents permission and tell them where you are going, who you are with, and when you will return home.

5. Avoid potentially dangerous places such as secluded areas in parks, school yards after school is finished, alleyways, lane ways, and empty parking lots.

6. Never get into a stranger's vehicle.

7. Never engage in conversation with a stranger who is walking or driving a vehicle. Always stay back a safe distance and continue walking while being aware of the stranger's actions.

8. If you are ever confronted by a stranger, do whatever it takes to break free, such as loud screams, biting, kicking, and rolling on the ground.

9. Never accept gifts, money, or candy from a stranger.

10. Always walk to and from school with brothers, sisters, or friends.

11. Whenever possible, if approached, try to remember the licence plate number, vehicle description, and the stranger's description.

12. Contact the police as soon as possible for assistance by calling 911.

BASIC RULE: SAY NO, GET AWAY, AND TELL SOMEONE YOU TRUST

STUDENT ABSENCES

SAFE ARRIVAL **ATTENDANCE** **REPORTING**

IF YOUR CHILD IS GOING TO BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL FOR ANY REASON THE ABSENCE MUST BE REPORTED BY CALLING 1 844 287 6287 OR VISIT

<https://go.schoolmessenger.ca>

You can no longer call the school to report absences!! We must account for every child. Please make every effort to remember to contact the school via one of the above methods when your child is absent. The phone line and web site are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week!

WINTER PLAYGROUND RULES

Parents should be advised that going out for recess during the Winter Season will be a rule rather than an exception. In extreme weather cases, children will remain indoors. Proper attire must be worn, i.e., boots, gloves, etc. With the number of students in our school, it is imperative that we all emphasize the dangers of snowball throwing.

Our outdoor play structures will be closed during winter due to safety concerns.

Please make sure your child(ren) are aware of the possible dangers of throwing snowballs at school. No one wants anyone seriously hurt. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated. The following playground rules are in effect for the Winter Season: No throwing of snowballs, no kicking, throwing snow or snowing other students. No breaking of others' forts.

Please be advised that students engaging in these types of behaviours will be dealt with immediately. If this behaviour continues, parents will be contacted and further consequences will come into effect.

FRENCH IMMERSION ON-LINE OPEN PRE-REGISTRATION FOR SEPTEMBER 2025

The Niagara Catholic District School Board is proud to offer parents and students the opportunity to enroll in a French Immersion (FI) Program. This program is designed specifically for students whose first language is not French. French Immersion in the Niagara Catholic District School Board is an **optional** program.

All 5 French Immersion Catholic Elementary Schools will accept registrations for Grade 1 along with Kindergarten for September 2025.

Listed below are the designated elementary schools that provide the French Immersion Program:

-Notre Dame Catholic Elementary, Niagara Falls-Begins in Kindergarten

-Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary, Niagara Falls-Begins in Kindergarten

-Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Elementary, St. Catharines-Begins in Kindergarten

-Alexander Kuska Catholic Elementary, Welland-Begins in Kindergarten

-St. John Catholic Elementary, Beamsville-Begins in Kindergarten

TRANSPORTATION

All students enrolled in the French Immersion Program will be provided with transportation to their local Family of Schools designated French Immersion School site in accordance with the Board's Transportation of Student Policy #500.2.

Designated Family of Schools French Immersion schools can be located at the following link

www.niagaracatholic.ca

FRENCH IMMERSION ON-LINE OPEN PRE-REGISTRATION

- On-line open pre-registration window for students **new** to French Immersion in September 2024; **Monday, January 13th, 2025 at 7:30 a.m.** through to **Friday, January 31st, 2025 at 4:00 p.m.**
- Pre-registrations outside of this window will **not** be considered.
- There are a limited number of spots available for students wishing to enter the French Immersion Program.
- Pre-registrations are on a first come, first serve basis. Each pre-registration will receive a time-stamp.
- Please visit www.niagaracatholic.ca and click the first thumbnail-Registration. Then, click the Let's get you registered! Link at the bottom of the page.
- An account must be created first through edsembli CONNECT to access the registration forms. This account can be created ahead of time.

SELECTION PROCESS

In accordance with the Board's Admission of Elementary and Secondary Students Policy #301.1, there are a limited number of spots available for students entering the program. Eligible spots will be determined on a first come, first serve basis for each elementary French Immersion school site.

Applicants will receive notification by **Monday, March 3rd, 2025** to **inform** them if their children have been placed in the French Immersion program **OR** if their children have been placed on the school's waitlist. Applicants who have not received notification by **March 3rd, 2025** are to contact the elementary French Immersion school site directly.

10 WAYS TO HAVE A GREEN CHRISTMAS

Lights: Switching to LED's (light emitting diodes) is 90% more efficient than incandescent lighting. LED's don't get as hot as traditional lights. Lowering the risk of fire and if one bulb goes out, the rest of the string still works. They last longer, too.

Trees: Fake trees are reusable but are made for petroleum-derived sources and often shipped from abroad. Real trees, for the most part, are typically sprayed with lots of pesticides. Organic Christmas trees are hard to come by. If you choose a real tree, be sure to bring it to a local recycling center, where it can be chipped for mulch or used to stabilize wetlands. A better choice is to purchase a potted tree, which can be planted outside to stabilize wetlands. Evergreen varieties such as pine, spruce and fir work well in many regions.

Gifts: Giving experiences, like a subscription to the opera, tennis lessons, or dinner are excellent alternatives.

Celebrate Christmas at home: Avoid the extra emissions from traveling by car and plan your celebration at home this year. You will be helping to reduce global warming by reducing your pollution quotient.

Send out emailed Holiday Cards: Consider switching to emailed holiday cards to reduce your landfill waste. You can send photo and holiday e-cards using sites like Blue Mountain. You cannot recycle cards.

Use soy candle to decorate with: Decorate your living and dining space with soy candles. This is an eco-friendly option. You can find plenty of fragrant pillar candles, and floating candles that complement your look.

Pick out natural or organic Holiday decor: From bamboo placements to homemade napkins rings, make a commitment to go green by decorating with an eco-friendly touch. Making Christmas decorations at home is another way to get the whole family involved in a creative project.

Use reusable shopping bags: When out shopping pick up all your gifts and everything you need for Christmas, make sure you bring reusable shopping bags.

Give Backs: Donations to a favourite cause are always appreciated. Sometimes just being together with family is the best gift of all.

BULLY AWARENESS WEEK

During **Nov. 18th-22nd**, St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School acknowledged Bullying Awareness and Prevention Week. Students and staff were engaged in many discussions in regards to Bullying Prevention. We want students to care for others and we believe the most straightforward way to defuse a bullying situation is to befriend someone who is being picked on. Students are encouraged to speak to an adult whenever there is a bullying situation. **Remember, if we are not part of the solution, we are part of the problem.**

PLAY SAFE

Did you know that bullying stops in less than 10 seconds when peers intervene on behalf of the victim?

To help, LISTEN and SPEAK UP against bullying!

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL UPDATE

The hustle and bustle of December is here. Let me first start with THANK YOU to all of you for your support. Your support, the dedication of so many volunteers and the great council members make it possible to bring so much into the school for our children. THANKS!!

Our next scheduled Catholic School Council meeting is scheduled for **Tues, January 21, 2025 at 3:30 p.m. in the library. ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND.**

So from our families to yours, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy December, a very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy Holiday.

UPCOMING POPCORN DAY

Our next popcorn day has been scheduled for **Thursday, December 12.** Purchases for this may be made via School cash on line.

A special thank you goes out to our Catholic School Council members who support us on these days.

Thank you!

KUDOS FOR CARING

A Special Thanks to the school community for the following:

*To parents who call in absences, drop off/pickup children in the designated area, park in the appropriate places, and wait for their children outdoors.

*To Ms. Infantino for all of her hard work through the office administration and organization, and for ensuring that our students are safe and accounted for through our Board's Safe Arrival Program.

*To the teachers, Educational Assistants, ECE, library technician, and Youth and Child Care Worker who work diligently to ensure our students receive the best Catholic Education possible.

*To Mrs. Nenadovich and Mr. Guglielmi who keep our school clean and safe.

*To Father Raymond Gonzi for his spiritual guidance and assistance in our sacramental preparations.

*To our entire Catholic School Council and volunteers who work diligently for our students.

*To our volunteers, parents and students alike, who help in so many capacities, we really appreciate you!

CHRISTMAS COOKIE DECORATING EVENING

On **Wednesday, December 18 from 5-8 pm**, students and parents are invited to the school to decorate gingerbread cookies. Orders must be placed via School cash on line for these cookie kits.

We look most forward to seeing all of you!

25 HEALTHY SNACKS FOR KIDS

When a snack attack strikes, refuel with these nutrition-packed snacks.

Easy, Tasty (and Healthy) Snacks

You may need an adult to help with some of these snacks.

1. Peel a banana and dip it in yogurt. Roll in crushed cereal and freeze.
2. Spread celery sticks with low-fat cream cheese. Top with raisins. Enjoy your "ants on a log."
3. Stuff a whole-grain pita pocket with ricotta cheese and Granny Smith apple slices. Add a dash of cinnamon.
4. Mix together ready-to-eat cereal, dried fruit in a sandwich bag for an on-the-go snack.
5. Smear a scoop of frozen yogurt on two graham crackers and add a sliced banana to make a yummy sandwich.
6. Top low-fat vanilla yogurt with crunchy granola and sprinkle with blueberries.
7. Microwave a small baked potato. Top with reduced-fat cheddar cheese and salsa.
8. Make snack kabobs. Put cubes of low-fat cheese and grapes on pretzel sticks.
9. Toast a whole grain waffle and top with low-fat yogurt and sliced peaches.
10. Spread low-fat cheese on apple slices.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

In the event of severe weather conditions, announcements to close the schools or to cancel buses will be made on all local radio stations by 6:00 a.m. and on the NCDSB website at www.niagaracatholic.ca. and social media During bad weather, when the school remains open, parents must decide whether or not their children will attend. It is very important that we have your emergency contact telephone numbers on file, as well as any update or change in information since your last Student Information Form was submitted to us. If your child remains at home, you **STILL** must call the absence into the Safe Arrival System.

DRESS FOR THE WEATHER AND INDOOR SHOES

With the arrival of cold weather, families are reminded to provide their child(ren) with indoor shoes for health and safety reasons. Thank you to all parents who provide indoor shoes!!! As well, it might be a good idea to send in a spare change of clothes. Many students need reminders to wear a coat, hat and gloves. Please ensure your child brings a coat to wear for outdoor recess breaks.

SPIRIT ASSEMBLY

Our next Spirit Assembly will take place on **Friday, December 20 at 2:30 p.m. All are welcome to attend.**

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION WITH CHILDREN

A Canadian study commissioned by Microsoft in May 2015 reported the average human attention span in 2000 was 12 seconds. In 2013 this dropped to 8 seconds. Current research on mindfulness practices shows an increase in attention span for students along with a number of benefits in student behavior and achievement.

Dr. Shanda Nataraja in her book, *The Blissful Brain: Neuroscience and proof of the power of meditation*, reveals the scientific evidence that proves meditative practices benefit our health. More research is emerging on the positive impact meditation has on well-being.