



January 2025



NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD 

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Happy New Year 2025! A New Year is not only about a new beginning, but it is also about making new friends, filling our lives with new hopes, and starting the year with new enthusiasm. It is also about greeting and wishing good intentions on everyone we meet. New Years is a time to be thankful and grateful to everyone in our lives. It is the time to move ahead with a clear heart and mind as we continue to nurture God's gift to us and strive to become living witnesses of Christ.

Thank you to the St. John parent community for the "heart" shown during the Christmas season. The Grimsby Benevolent Fund and Niagara Regional Native Centre received an outpouring of kindness from the students, families, and staff of St. John in the form of countless personal and non-perishable food items. On behalf of the staff at St. John Catholic School, thank you for your generous donations, not only at Christmas, but all year.

As a new year begins and we think of new beginnings, let us ponder this inspirational quote:

"The more we let God take us over, the more truly ourselves we become - because He made us. He invented us. He invented all the different people that you and I were intended to be. . . It is when I turn to Christ, when I give up myself to His personality, that I first begin to have a real personality of my own." - C.S. Lewis

Let us also take time to give thanks to God for making all things new. To say thank you for all that He has allowed into our lives this past year, the good along with the hardships, which have reminded us how much we need Him and rely on His presence filling us each and every day.

May the joy and blessing of this very special time of year be with you all throughout 2025!

Mr. D. Forte



It is not enough to say we are Christians. We must live the faith, not only with our words, but with our actions.

— Pope Francis —

JANUARY - A MISSION OF COURAGE

"God's love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to abandon ourselves unreservedly, so that we might be molded by God's grace, even as we cannot see where that path may lead us." - St. Ignatius Loyola

With the new year comes New Year's resolutions. Many of us made new year's resolutions earlier this month, and we make these resolutions with the intent to change something in our lives for the better. Throughout the month of January we focus on what it means to be courageous as Christians on a mission for Christ. Christian courage is the willingness to say and do the right thing regardless of the cost. In this new year may we be resolved to stand up against that which contradicts our faith and find comfort in the support and unity of the Body of Christ, the Church.

FAREWELL & GOD BLESS!

We wish a very fond farewell to **Mrs. Caleb**, who will be leaving St. John to begin a new chapter in her Catholic educational journey in the New Year. Thank you for your faithful service to the St. John Catholic School Community. We wish you all of God's blessings in all your future endeavours! We look forward to welcoming a new school secretary in the New Year.

A NEW YEAR PRAYER

*Remember us, O God.
From age to age be our comforter.
You have given us the wonder of time,
blessings in days and nights, seasons and years.*

*Bless your children at the turning of the year
and fill the months ahead with the bright hope
that is ours in the coming of Christ.*

*You are our God, living and reigning, for ever
and ever.*

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.

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



ST. JOHN JAGUAR NEWS

FOOD & STOCKING STUFFER DRIVES

A heartfelt thank you to the St. John Catholic School Community for all the kindness shown in support of our Advent food drive to benefit the Grimsby Benevolent Fund, as well as the Stocking Stuffer Drive for the Niagara Regional Native Centre. On behalf of the staff at St. John, we appreciate your ongoing generosity to support these initiatives as we strive to be the hands and feet of Christ in our Community. God Bless!



**Niagara Regional
Native Centre**

ST. JOHN CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

Please be advised that the next Catholic School Council Meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 25**, at **6:00 pm** in the school's Library Information Centre. We look forward to seeing our Catholic School Council members there!

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURE

Throughout the winter months, please be advised of the procedures in the event of inclement weather:

- 1) If bus transportation is cancelled in the morning, it means that the children will not be picked up at the end of the day. If you drive your child to school on the day transportation is cancelled, it is then your responsibility to pick your child up at the end of the day.

When transportation services are cancelled, only the school remains open, and it is the responsibility of the parent to determine whether or not it is safe for their child to attend school.

If your child is not coming to school, please report the absence using [Safe Arrival System](#).

- 2) **Procedures Relating to Inclement Weather AFTER the School Day Starts:**

In this case either *transportation is cancelled and school is kept open* or *transportation is cancelled and the school is closed*.

The safety of our children is our primary concern; the school will attempt to contact you by phone should an emergency closing be necessary after children have arrived at school. This will be done solely for the purpose of informing you that classes have been cancelled. The option you, as a parent, have chosen on the Emergency School Form will apply to all emergency dismissals. If this form has yet to be completed, please be sure to do so and send it to your child's teacher.

For the most up-to-date announcements on inclement weather, please tune in to local radio stations (105.7 FM, 610 AM, or 1220 AM) or simply check the Niagara Catholic District School Board website at www.niagaracatholic.ca.

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.

ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC CHURCH

Confirmation - Students in Grade 8 who are Roman Catholic will be receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation on **Thursday, February 27 at 7:00 pm** at St. Joseph Catholic Parish.

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.**

**PA DAY**

A reminder to all families that **Friday, January 17** is a **PA day**, therefore, there will be no school for students. Classes resume on **Monday, January 20**.

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*.

COLD WEATHER

Cold weather is on its way. Please ensure that your child comes to school prepared to participate in all activities, especially outdoor recesses. All children should have hats, scarves, gloves, warm coats and boots, all labeled with their names.

On extremely cold days, we limit the amount of time that students spend outdoors. We obtain our weather information from the Environment Canada Weather Information Line and follow Board and Niagara Public Health guidelines. With the exception of these occasions, it is our expectation that all children will go out for recess.



ST. JOHN CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL (CSC) CORNER

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

The Stocking Stuffer Drive for the Niagara Regional Native Centre was a success! In Acts 20:35, it says: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." As a school community, we did just that in donating 30 very filled stockings. Thank you to all families that supported this drive to bring cheer to teens in the Niagara area this holiday season.

The Advent Family Mass held on December 17 was a great reminder to us all that Jesus is the reason for the season. Thank you to Father Rico and the students from Kindergarten to Grade 3 for a lovely evening during Advent.



The CSC would like to give a special thank you to Ryan's No Frills Beamsville, Food Basics Grimsby, Real Canadian Superstore Grimsby, and Ridgeview Fruit and Market Garden for their generous donations that contributed to the nice reception held following the mass.

From all of us at Catholic School Council, we wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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.

YMCA DAY CARE PICK-UP

Parents are reminded to ***please use a designated parking space*** when picking up students from the YMCA Day Care doors. Please be advised that the front lane is a fire lane and there is a sizable fine should a bylaw officer be present and issue a ticket.

HANDICAP PARKING SPACES

Parents are kindly reminded to only park in the handicap parking spaces if they have a ***valid permit displayed in the front window*** of their vehicle. We thank everyone for respecting this expectation and for their ongoing cooperation.

TERM 1 REPORT CARDS

Report Cards for Term 1 will be made available in the [Niagara Catholic Parent Portal](#) during the week beginning on **Monday, February 10**. Please be advised that parent-teacher conferences for this term will be at the request of the teacher and/or parent(s). Teachers will be making a request to the parents of students for whom they feel an interview would be necessary. After the Report Cards are made available, parents may also request a conference by contacting the teacher to arrange a convenient date and time.

'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.



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 [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.](#)



FRENCH IMMERSION: ONLINE PRE-REGISTRATION

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

The open online pre-registration window for students **new** to French Immersion in September is **Monday, January 13 at 7:30 am** through to **Friday, January 31, at 4:00 pm**.

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. Pre-registrations outside of this window will **not** be considered.

An account must be created first through **Edsembli** to access the pre-registration forms.

Please visit the [Niagara Catholic French Immersion Registration Webpage](#) for information about the program and to register your child.

Additional pre-registration details will be posted on this site as they become available. Please check the site daily before the pre-registration window opens.

KINDERGARTEN OPEN HOUSE & REGISTRATION

Families with a student who is of age to be registered to start in our Kindergarten program in September for the 2025-2026 school year are invited to participate in our **Kindergarten Open House & Registration Night**. The open house will be led by our Kindergarten teaching staff on **Wednesday, February 5, 2025 from 9:30 am - 2:30 pm and 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm**. Please note that if your child is presently attending Kindergarten Year 1 at St. John, there is no need to re-register. **When registering a child, please remember to bring your child's Baptismal Certificate, Birth Certificate, and Proof of Address (i.e. current utility bill) in order to complete the registration.** We look forward to meeting families of our future Kindergarten students!

BELL LET'S TALK DAY - WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24

The Niagara Catholic District School Board encourages all its schools to join in the **Bell Let's Talk Campaign**. Schools and classrooms are an optimal place to have conversations about mental health to help decrease the stigma. Here at St. John, students and staff will be recognizing and participating actively in Bell Let's Talk Day on **Wednesday, January 22** to let all those who are suffering know that they are not alone! In recognition of this day, students will be participating in teacher-led activities centering on mental health and well-being.



Bell
Let's Talk

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.

International Day of Education:

Education is a human right, a public good, and a public responsibility. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed January 24 as [International Day of Education](#), in celebration of the role of education for peace and development. Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving gender equality and breaking the cycle of poverty that is leaving millions of children, youth, and adults behind. The International Day of Education will be celebrated on **Friday, January 24, 2025**, under the theme **"to invest in people, prioritize education"**. Education must be prioritized to accelerate progress towards all the Sustainable Development Goals against the backdrop of a global recession, growing inequalities, and the climate crisis. We look forward to celebrating the importance of education here at St. John on January 24 and always through teacher-led activities and discussions!

Cozy Sweater Day:

Cozy Sweater Day is a great way to learn about the importance of saving energy. Did you know that heating accounts for 80% of residential energy use in Canada and that if all Canadians lowered their thermostat by two degrees in the winter, it would reduce greenhouse gas emissions by four megatons? Students are encouraged to wear warm cozy sweaters on **Thursday, January 30** as an opportunity to raise awareness about climate change and energy conservation. St. John can be a part of the solution. Students and families are asked to reflect on their personal carbon footprint and make personal commitments in their own lives to help keep climate change in check! We look forward to seeing everyone in their cozy sweaters!

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

We, the staff at Blessed Trinity hope that all of our Family of Schools had a very enjoyable and restful Christmas break.

At Blessed Trinity, January marks the last 2 weeks of our Semester 1 and final exams for our students. The focus for January will be wrapping up the semester and preparing for those exams.

For the grade 8's, at our Family of Schools, it will mean getting to actually choose the courses they will taking next year in Grade 9 at Blessed Trinity. The process began back in December with an information presentation to all grade 8 students on the compulsory and elective courses they will be choosing from. **On January 16th**, that process will continue with our **Grade 8 Open House at Blessed Trinity starting at 6:30 pm**. All grade 8 students and parents are welcome and encouraged to attend and experience what BT Thunder is all about!

The last step in the process will have a representative from Blessed Trinity visit Grade 8 classrooms to help students actually choose and submit their courses through MyBlueprint throughout January and February.

The deadline for selecting courses, submitting registration form and payment of Grade 9 Registration Fee of \$55 is **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH**.

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.

