

St. Martin Catholic Elementary

February 2024



School Information

Mr. J. Tornabuono - Principal

Mr. Y. Leheta - Vice Principal

Website: <https://schools.niagaracatholic.ca/stmartin/>

Location: 18 Streamside Drive Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Phone: 905-957-3032

Follow us on Twitter [@MustangsMartin](https://twitter.com/MustangsMartin)

Principal's Message

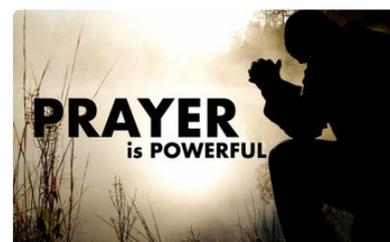
As we begin the month of February, we continue to refer to the Catholic Graduate Expectations and Virtues as reference points in strengthening our relationship with Christ. This month, staff and students will be emphasizing the importance of being a collaborative member of a Catholic school community. We will be encouraging our students to co-operate with others in achieving common goals and in contributing towards the common good of our community. This month, staff and students will also be emphasizing the importance of extending compassion to others. We call upon our students to consider ways in which they can show compassion through their actions and words. Showing our care and consideration for all members of our Catholic school community is integral in answering Christ's call of service and discipleship.

J. Tornabuono

February Prayer

Father,

Thank you for your great love and blessing over our lives. Thank you that your favour has no end, but it lasts for our entire lifetime. Forgive us for sometimes forgetting that you are intimately acquainted with all of our ways, that you know what concerns us, and you cover us as with a shield. We ask that we would walk in



your blessing and goodness today. That your face would shine on us. That you would open the right doors for our lives and for our loved ones. Establish the work of our hands and bring to fulfillment all that you have given us to do in these days. We pray that you would make our way purposeful and our footsteps firm out of your goodness and love. Give us a heart of wisdom to hear your voice, and make us strong by your huge favor and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen



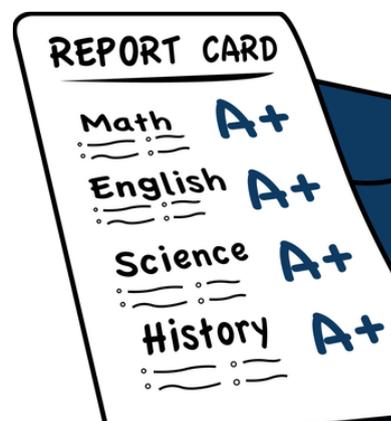
Important Dates

Please note the following dates:

- Black History Month - February 01-28
- Kindergarten Open House - Wed., February 5th - 9:00 am - 6:00 pm
- BHM Presentation - Niagara's Freedom Trail - Rochelle Bush
- Kids Helping Kids - February 10-21
- Report Cards - Tuesday, February 11th
- IEPs and Alternative Reports - Sent home - Tuesday February 11th
- P. A. Day (no school for students) - Friday, February 14th
- Family Day (no school) - Monday, February 17th
- Junior Basketball at St. Martin - Feb. 19 & 20
- Grade 8 Graduation Photos - Feb. 20
- Indigenous Singer - Natasha Fisher - Feb. 25
- Pink Shirt Day - Wednesday, February 26th
- BHM Presentation - Saidat - Virtual Presentation - Feb. 26

Term I Report Cards

Your child will be receiving their first term provincial report card on Feb. 11, 2025. Student report cards will be posted on the parent portal and will be available in hard copy. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher. If you would like to discuss your child's strengths and next steps, please contact the teacher and set up a mutually convenient time.



February marks the end of Term One for staff and students. This is an ideal time for students to pause and reflect on their effort and achievement. While looking back, students can celebrate successes and consider ways to build upon them....going from good to great and then excellent to extraordinary. Some reflective questions for students to ponder when looking back on the past term are: "Have I put forth my full effort when attempting to learn or do new things?" "Have I reached out for help when I was confused or found something difficult to do?" "When the learning became difficult, did I stick to it or did I quit?" The last question speaks to resilience. The development of resilience in all students is more important than ever, especially when we consider this ever changing world around us. Resilience is the ability to adapt and respond to adversity, challenge and stress in a healthy, productive way. It is for this reason that much attention is given to the concept of self-regulation at our school, aligning well with the school board's focus on mental health and wellness for all.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)

IEPs are sent home at each reporting period. If your child has an Individual Education Plan, you can expect the Term 2 IEP to be sent home with goals and expectations for Term 2. The Term 2 IEP is currently in the development stages. You are welcome to arrange a time to speak with your child's teacher to discuss your child's goals and learning expectations for the upcoming term. IEP development is a collaborative process. Educational priorities that families feel are important to their child's learning experience are integral to the Individual Education Plan.



Kindergarten Open House

Our Kindergarten Open House will be held on Wednesday **February 5th, 2025 from 9:00 am – 6:00 pm.** Regardless if you have already completed a registration, you are welcome and encouraged to attend our Open House. If you have a child born in

2020 they are eligible for Year I Kindergarten here at St. Martin Catholic School for the 2024-2025 school year. Registrations can be completed online at

<https://niagaracatholic.ca/registration/>

This will help us better prepare for September 2025.

Parents are asked to scan and submit the following documents electronically:

- Copy of child's Birth Certificate or Birth Registration Form
 - Copy of Baptismal Certificate (Parent's Certificate is acceptable)
 - Proof of full address if you live in bounds (e.g. bank statement, utility bill, or similar documentation)
 - Any relevant custody order documents

Starting Kindergarten is an exciting time for everyone.

We look forward to welcoming you and your child to St. Martin. In addition, we will also have an in-person orientation in May or beginning of June.

Black History Month

Recognizing Black History Month in Canada

In 1978, the Ontario Black History Society (OBHS) was established.

Its founders, including Dr. Daniel G. Hill and Wilson O. Brooks,

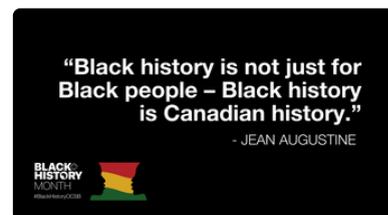
presented a petition to the City of Toronto to have February

formally proclaimed as Black History Month. In 1979, the first-ever Canadian proclamation was issued by Toronto.

In 1993, the OBHS successfully filed a petition in Ontario to proclaim February as Black History Month. Following that success, Rosemary Sadlier, president of the OBHS, introduced the idea of having Black History Month recognized across Canada to the Honourable Jean Augustine, the first Black Canadian woman elected to Parliament.

In December 1995, the House of Commons officially recognized February as Black History Month in Canada following a motion introduced by Dr. Augustine. The House of Commons carried the motion unanimously.

Black people have lived in what we now call Canada since the 1600s. From that time until the early 1800s hundreds were forced to come here as enslaved people. After slavery was abolished here in 1834, thousands of people of African descent from the United States, the Caribbean and Africa chose to come to Canada at different times for different reasons. For 400 years, Black men and women have contributed to all areas of society. They have fought for Black people to be treated



with fairness and equality in the struggle against racial discrimination, a fight that has benefited all Canadians.

Supports for Children and 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 the Educational Resource Teacher at your child's school. Members of the Applied Behaviour Analysis Team from the Student Support Services Department are available to provide additional information.

KIDS HELPING KIDS

February 10 - 21, 2025

Please make your donation through the Kids Helping Kids link at School Cash Online



Kids Helping Kids 2025

Niagara Catholic's 27th Annual Kids Helping Kids fundraiser will take place from February 10-21, 2025.

This year's event will jointly support the Niagara Children's Centre, as well as the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education.

Kids Helping Kids is a fun, informal fundraiser, which supports these causes through paid participation in events such as Creative Hair Day, Red & White Day, & Jersey Day. Kids Helping Kids is open to students attending in school and students in our virtual schools.

Donations to the Kids Helping Kids fundraiser can be made in School Cash Online.

At St. Martin, we are asking for a \$5 donation per student. However, a donation is not mandatory in order to participate.

For further information about the Niagara Foundation for Catholic Education, please contact Jim Marino, at 905.735.0240 ext. 210 or jim.marino@nfce.org. To find more about the Niagara Children's Centre, please visit their website: [Niagara Children's Centre](#)



Our 2025 Forest of Reading program is underway! The Forest of Reading Programs, created by the Ontario Library Association, encourage and promote reading for enjoyment and information, and introduce students to quality Canadian texts and authors, as well as challenging students to read books they might otherwise overlook.

Our primary students will be introduced to picture books in the Blue Spruce Program, which will be read aloud during library visits. In April, students will vote for their favourite book from the selection. Based on student voting across the province, the author and illustrator of the winning book are honoured with the Blue Spruce Award™.

Our Junior and Intermediate students will have the choice to participate in either the Silver Birch, Yellow Cedar, or Red Maple programs. Students who choose to participate will read from a list of nominated books and those who read at least five of the ten nominated titles in any of the programs are eligible to vote for their favourite book on a province-wide voting day.

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PINK SHIRT DAY

Pink Shirt Day

Pink Shirt Day, also known as Anti-Bullying Day, is on Wednesday, February 26, 2025. Throughout February and the year, [CKNW Kids' Fund's Pink Shirt Day](#) raises awareness and funds for programs promoting children's self-esteem. This year the theme is: LET KINDNESS GROW. Wear a pink shirt on this day to stand against bullying and contribute to creating a kinder, more inclusive world.

Let victims know they're not alone; help and support are available.

For more ways to get involved visit <https://www.pinkshirtday.ca/get-involved>.

The Importance of Reading

Children love the feeling of closeness when a parent, grandparent or other caregiver reads to them. When children find out that reading with a loving adult can be a warm, happy experience, they begin to build a love of reading that will last a lifetime. Reading together not only nurtures positive

relationships, it also helps children learn specific things about books and words. Reading together helps young children learn about books-how to hold them, how to turn pages one at a time, and that books have words and pictures to help tell the story. They are also learning about print-that there is a difference between words and the pictures. Pre-readers are most interested in the pictures initially. Think of all the things children are learning about words and language! They discover that there are many new words to learn and that sometimes book language sounds different from everyday conversation. Sharing books together will open the world up to your child. They can visit places, see objects, engage in activities and attend events they have never heard of before! Let the adventures begin, read on!



Winter Weather

The students will be kept indoors whenever the temperatures are below -15 degrees with wind-chill. This measure is in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all of our students. In addition, please make sure your child(ren) are dressed appropriately for the cold temperatures and snow. Also, please be sure that they have an extra pair of shoes to wear in the classroom. Furthermore, all students are expected to be outside during recess times. Finally, if the weather is hazardous in the morning, a decision would be made by 7:00 am if the school will be closed. In order to convey this message to you, a notice will be posted on the Niagara Catholic District School Board website www.niagaracatholic.ca as well as on the local radio stations and social media outlets.

Niagara Public Health

Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

February 2025

Welcome to Kindergarten!

Do you have a little one starting Kindergarten?

Public Health works in partnership with teachers, support staff, students, and parents to build a healthier school community.

Check out our [School Health webpage](#) for some important links and supports:

- [Childhood illnesses and diseases of public health significance](#)
- [Non-reportable illnesses and exclusion periods](#)
- [Dental Screening](#)
- [School-aged vaccines](#)
 - Parents and legal guardians of junior and senior kindergarten registrants and students new to Ontario are asked to report their vaccinations to [Public Health](#).

Is your child due for vaccines?

Go to [Immunization Connect](#) to review your child's immunization history and check the **Immunizations Needed** section for missing vaccines.

If your child is missing any vaccines, book an appointment to get them vaccinated. Vaccines are available at healthcare providers' offices, walk-in clinics or Public Health vaccination clinics.



Bring your yellow card or immunization record print out from [Immunization Connect \(ICON\)](#) to each vaccine visit. This will help you and your health care provider keep an up-to-date record of which vaccines have been received.

Can't find any immunization records? Here are some [tips](#) to help you.

- **Previous healthcare providers** will keep records for a limited time. Also check with local health units, your pharmacist, and any urgent care clinics, as well as hospital emergency departments.
- **At home** – Close family members such as parents or guardians may have copies of your childhood immunizations in old papers, including baby books and school or camp forms.
- **Schools, colleges, universities or other post-secondary institutions** may still have records for you or your child.
- **Previous employers**, including the military, may still have records from your employment.

If your family is having trouble with locating or transferring immunization records, please [contact the Vaccine Team](#) and a nurse will discuss what needs to be done. Translation services are also provided.

Eating Disorders Awareness Week

From **February 1st to 7th 2025** join, National Eating Disorder Information Centre (NEDIC) and eating disorder groups nationwide that come together to observe [Eating Disorder Awareness Week](#). This dedicated week of action aims to educate the public about eating disorders, raising awareness of their impact, dispelling harmful stereotypes and myths, and highlighting available support for those living with or affected by these disorders.

Discover the support services provided by the National Eating Disorder Information Centre for [parents and caregivers](#). Below are some resources worth exploring:

- [Niagara Region x National Eating Disorder Information Centre "Transform the Narrative" Livestream](#)
- [A Parents' and Caregivers' Guide to Supporting Youth with Eating Disorders](#)
- [A Guide to Discussing Your Concerns with Your Child's Primary Care Provider](#)
- [Coping Strategies for Families and Partners of an Individual Living With an Eating Disorder](#)

Family Day

Family Day is coming up on **Monday, February 17th** and it's a great chance to spend time with loved ones Whether it's starting a new tradition like a family hike, playing outdoors, trying a nutritious recipe, or enjoying a fun board game together, this Family Day can be all about building lasting memories and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

To support you in making Family Day a meaningful occasion, we invite you to explore local programs and events to make the most of the day and keep your family active, engaged, and healthy!

- **Explore an EarlyON centre**, providing free, high-quality drop-in programs for children from birth to six years of age. Click [here](#) to access their family day calendar!
- **The local Performing Arts Centre** has a full day of exciting events for all ages. Check out their [schedule](#) and enjoy a variety of activities happening throughout the day.
- **Visit the Merriton Community Centre** on February 15th for their annual Family Fun Day
- **Find a new adventure spot** in a [regional walking or hiking trail](#)

- Check your [local public library](#) for free family day activities



French Immersion with Niagara Catholic

French Immersion

The Niagara Catholic District School Board is proud to offer parents and students the opportunity to enroll in a French Immersion (FI) Program. The French Immersion 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. The entry point for September 2025 is either Kindergarten Year

1 or Grade 1, depending on the school site offering the program.

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 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.

- Please visit www.niagaracatholic.ca and click the Register Now Banner

OR

- click the French Immersion tab for information about the program.

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

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 4th, 2024** 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 4th, 2024** are to contact the elementary French Immersion school site directly.

Blessed Trinity Corner

We at Blessed Trinity hope 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 be taking next year in Grade 9 at Blessed Trinity. The process began back in December and in the first two weeks of January, 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 continued with our Grade 8 Open House at Blessed Trinity. We would like to thank all parents and students who attended. It was a very exciting evening that saw one of our largest turnouts ever.

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 My BluePrint from January 22nd to February 9th.

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.

Standardized Dress Code

A reminder that students are expected to adhere to Niagara Catholic's Standardized Dress Code. An additional copy of the Dress Code is attached below. According to the Standardized Dress Code, the following items are **not permitted**:

- Black Pants
- T-shirts of any kind (spiritwear exempt)
- Faded or torn Jeans. (Jeans must be dark blue and in good condition)

Your cooperation is important and appreciated.



NIAGARA CATHOLIC

Standardized Elementary Dress Code

Niagara Catholic has a standardized dress code for students in all of our Catholic elementary schools. All students wear navy blue bottoms and navy blue or white shirts.

OUR DRESS CODE COLOURS

Tops

At a minimum, every student is required to wear one of the following:

- Navy or white Oxford shirt (short or long sleeve) or;
- Navy or white collared shirt (short or long sleeve) or;
- School-designed spirit wear

The elementary standardized dress code shirt must be plain (no logos or advertising) and buttoned in a respectable manner. Visible t-shirts worn under the elementary standardized dress code top must be either navy blue or white.



Bottoms

- At a minimum, every student is required to wear one of the following:
- Navy sweat pants (Kindergarten - Grade 3) or;
- Navy pants (capri, cargo, denim, kobe or corduroy) or;
- Navy skirts, skirts or dresses or;
- Navy walking shorts.

Only knee-length shorts, skirts or dresses are permitted. All clothing must be in good repair. Grade 8 students have the option to wear grey secondary uniform pants.



Shoes

For health and safety reasons, running shoes with a full back and closed toe are the recommended footwear. Parents/guardians should provide a pair of indoor shoes for physical education and indoor wear. Socks must be worn with the elementary standardized dress code pants or shorts at all times.

REMINDER- No single serve plastics available

Parents are reminded to ensure that their child(ren) have the required utensils needed to eat their snacks/lunches as well as a reusable water bottle they can fill at the hydration stations. We are no longer permitted to distribute plastic/styrofoam spoons, forks or cups to students that do not have them.



Maria Ruggi Dietsch

Maria is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters