



Sacred Heart Spectator



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 Telephone: (905)-295-3732
 E-Mail: sacred.heart@ncdsb.com Board Website: www.niagaracatholic.ca
 Principal: Mr. J. Romeo School Secretary: Mrs. D. Plyley
 Superintendent: Mr. D. Massi Parish Priest: Fr. Stuart MacDonald

MARCH 2025



THE LENTEN SEASON IS HERE!

The Liturgical season of Lent begins on Wednesday March 5, 2025 which is Ash Wednesday. It is important for us as partners in Catholic education to help children see that Lent is more than "giving up" something. Rather, it is more a time to look at where we ought to be. We also need to help our children see that Lent is not something we do by ourselves. God is always with us, and so are our friends at school and at church. Together, we place ourselves with Jesus in His mission of prayer and care for others. Through acts of social justice and a focus on peace, we can all make a difference, locally and globally. Although the Lenten season often seems to be cold and the landscape barren, we need to look with hope to the promise of Easter and the

Spring season that comes with it



CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION for 2025 - 2026

Plans are in the preliminary stages for the 2025-26 school year. While we await approval from the board office on the number of classes and teachers required, **we ask that you submit any specific requests concerning academic and social grouping placements by email (sacred.heart@ncdsb.com) by May 1, 2025**, to the attention of Mr. Romeo. Many situations unfold from now until the beginning of a new school year. As professional educators working at Sacred Heart Catholic, we will **CONSIDER** all requests, but we will base all student placement decisions on what is in the best interest of the entire student grade-level community at Sacred Heart. **These decisions are made in good faith and based on, but not necessarily limited to, the following considerations:** individual needs of students; academic strengths, weaknesses and needs; social and emotional needs of the students; special education needs; resource support requirements and personnel allocation; as well as classroom teacher strengths.




EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

With the arrival of winter, we can expect colder temperatures and more snow. The Niagara Catholic District School Board will make every attempt to keep schools open during periods of inclement weather. Only in exceptional circumstances will schools be closed part way through the day. In these rare cases, we will follow the procedure that you have selected on the Student Information Form that you filled out in September. If your contact information or pick-up arrangements have changed, you are asked to please contact Mrs. Plyley at the office so the necessary updates can be made. Announcements concerning school closures or cancellations will be made on all local radio stations beginning at 6:00 a.m. You can also check the Board website at www.niagaracatholic.ca as well as the board's social media accounts.

SACRED HEART PARISH MASS TIMES

- **Saturday:** 5:00 p.m. Parish Phone Number: 905-295-4455
- **Sunday:** 11:00 a.m.

SACRED HEART ON SOCIAL MEDIA

 Follow Sacred Heart on Instagram to get the latest updates: [@sacredheartniagara](https://www.instagram.com/sacredheartniagara)



Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary
A proud member of the Saint Michael Catholic High School Family of Schools



Sacred Heart Catholic



ON THE CALENDAR

MARCH BREAK

Our March Break is March 10 to March 14. Students return to school on Monday, March 17th, 2025. If you are planning on taking a vacation earlier or will be away later, please ensure to report those dates on the Safe Arrival System.



POPCORN SALES



Beginning the first week of March, our Gr. 8's will begin their fundraising initiatives for their year-end trip and Graduation by selling Popcorn two days per week. **Each Tuesday, the Gr. 8's will make their way through the Primary hallway (Kindergarten through to and including the Gr. 3/4 class) and on Wednesday's they will sell to the Junior / Intermediate Hall (Gr. 4/5 class through to the Gr. 8's)**
Please have students bring \$2 in with them if they are interested in purchasing popcorn on their specified day.

HOT LUNCHES & MILK PROGRAM

Hot lunches this month (orders are processed via School Cash Online):
Pizza Day – Thursday February March 6, 2025 (orders are due March 3)
Sub Day – Thursday March 27, 2025 (orders are due March 24)



SHROVE TUESDAY

Shrove Tuesday is the last day before Lent begins...and the last chance to feast and celebrate before the 40-day season of Lent. Shrove Tuesday, also known as Mardi Gras, is a joyful conclusion to Ordinary Time and a joyful preparation for one of the most important Catholic seasons: Lent. Here at Sacred Heart, thanks to volunteers from our Catholic School Community, our students will enjoy freshly made pancakes as a small treat on Tuesday March 4, 2025



Shrove Tuesday



ASH WEDNESDAY

Fr. Stuart will be coming to our School on Wednesday March 5, 2025 to assist with the distribution of ashes as part of our Ash Wednesday Prayer Service.

COZY, COMFY SWEATER DAY

Sacred Heart Catholic students and staff are encouraged to wear a cozy comfy sweater on Thursday March 6, 2025 as part of an Eco-School Initiative. Please note this is **NOT** an out of Dress code day, regular dress code bottoms need to be worn, thank you!



ST. PATRICK'S DAY



Wear Green on St. Patrick's Day! On Thursday March 17, 2025, students and staff are encouraged to wear green to honour St. Patrick. Please note this is not a out of Dress code day, if not wearing green, students are expected to be in full regular dress code, thank you!

WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY—"Lots of Socks"

World Down Syndrome Day will take place around the world on Monday, March 21st. Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School is inviting all staff and students to wear colourful socks on March 21st to raise awareness about Down syndrome, and how people with Down syndrome play a vital role in our lives and our school communities.



EPILEPSY AWARENESS DAY



Purple Shirt Day is a day dedicated to increasing awareness about epilepsy worldwide. On March 26th annually, people in countries around the world are invited to wear a purple shirt in support of epilepsy awareness. Please note this is **NOT** an out of Dress code day, regular dress code bottoms need to be worn, thank you!



Sacred Heart Catholic



SPORTING NEWS!!!

SACRED HEART STUDENT ATHLETIC NEWS

SPORTS UPDATE

The first month of 2025 has set up the remainder of the school year to be quite busy when it comes to student athletics and we are quite proud of all of our students including our student athletes!!! February saw Intermediate Girls and Boys basketball teams in action as they travelled to Saint Michael Catholic High School and Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Catholic Elementary School on February 25 & 27 respectively for their tournament. Mrs. Bender and Mr. Capacchione had a great time coaching our girls and boys teams and we appreciate the time and effort they put in with our students. Congratulations go out to:

Intermediate Girls Basketball — Raina B., Aalyah K., Hannah L., Abby M., Aria M., Aimee P., Ella P., Arybella P., Madyson S., Jaeda T., and Chloe W.

Intermediate Boys Basketball — Seth B., Alex B., Hunter C., Caleb C., Sawyer D., Ethan G., Teo H., Adrian O., Sebastian R., Ethan R., Jack S., Tyler S. and Bailey C.



LOOKING AHEAD!

NEW HOT LUNCH OPTIONS

At our Last Catholic School Council meetings parents in attendance inquired about:

- A) Increasing the number of hot lunch dates within a give month and
- B) Trying to finds some alternatives (or different vendors)

The month of April is shaping up to be a good month to trial those requests. Be on the lookout on School Cash Online as well as April's Calendar and Newsletter.

In addition to Pizza and Sub Day, we will have a Swiss Chalet day.

Also, as is our custom at Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary, **Holy Thursday** will see the option of placing a Fish & Chips (or just Chips) order from Betty's....and each order comes with a slice of Betty's famous pie.

More details to follow



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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SACRED HEART SPIRIT WEAR

Please note that Bigbear Spiritwear will now be supplying Spirit wear and dress code items that will be available for sale via their website. Please access [Sacred Heart's](#) direct link.



ELEMENTARY STANDARDIZED DRESS CODE



The Niagara Catholic DSB has a Standardized Elementary Dress Code in place for students in elementary schools. All students are to wear navy bottoms and navy blue or white shirts. For more detailed information, please view the NCDSB flyer [here](#).

CELL PHONE USE IN SCHOOL & SOCIAL MEDIA ACCESS

To minimize distractions, 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. Outside of these times, students are expected to keep their phones turned off or on silent and have them stored away.

Social media platforms on school networks and board devices will be disabled. 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.

WINTER WEATHER AND WINTER RULES

Parents should be advised that going out for recess during the winter season will be a normal thing each day. In extreme weather cases, children will remain indoors. Proper attire must be worn, i.e., boots, gloves, hats, scarf, etc. As is always the case, it is imperative that we all emphasize the dangers of throwing snow in any form. Please make sure your children are aware of the possible dangers of throwing snow at school. No one wants anyone seriously hurt. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated. Please remember that snow is nice to look at, but should be left on the ground.



STUDENT CONSENT FORMS

Each year students have the opportunity to join in many learning activities here at school or on educational field trips. The school is asking that parents complete the following consent forms ([found on School Cash Online](#)), to ensure the school has the necessary information to keep your child/children safe.

Parent Consent - Student Personal Information (all K-8 students) - This form allows us to know parent preferences when it comes to using a child's information (ie. images, etc) in school publications such as social media posts, class photos and the school yearbook.

NCDSB Athletic Participation /Acknowledgement of Risk Form (Gr. 4-8 students only) - This form explains risks associated with participation in activities happening on school property and allows parent to indicate preferences regarding a child's participation in day-to-day activities (ie. intramurals, sports team tryouts, etc).

Educational Field Trips and activities happening off school property will have a separate consent form sent home.



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FOR YOUR INFORMATION

SCHOOLCASH ONLINE—PAYMENT FOR SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

As activities and educational field trips are being scheduled for our students, we ask that parents sign up for our convenient payment program, SchoolCash Online. This is an excellent way to pay for student activities without sending money to school. **To register, please go to:** <https://ncdsb.schoolcashionline.com/>

SCHOOL MESSENGER - SAFE ARRIVAL

One of our greatest priorities is ensuring that all our students arrive safely to school each and every day. School Messenger allows parents to report their child's absence quickly and conveniently using the **mobile app**, a **website**, or an **interactive toll-free phone line** to report an absence, late arrival or early departure, in advance. This process allows the school to verify student attendance and notify parents of an unreported student absence efficiently.

If your child is marked absent and the absence hasn't been explained in advance, our SafeArrival system will contact you to get a reason for the absence. Calls will continue until you choose an option to explain your child's absence.

PLEASE use the following information to report your child's absence: mobile app, online at <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca/#/home> or by calling 1-844-287-6287. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

STUDENT AWARE INTERNET FILTER

This is just a reminder to families that all Niagara Catholic schools use a software program called "Student Aware". This program enables schools to monitor its student internet traffic while using Board internet devices. The "Student Aware" program will be identifying and notifying school staff when students access online websites related to suicide, violence, abuse and/or other dangerous activities that could be injurious to themselves and/or others. When high-risk incidents are identified, the occurrence will be investigated and school administration will respond accordingly to support student mental health and well-being.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME & SCHOOL—QUESTIONS, CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

The Ministry of Education has given school boards new requirements on how to communicate with parents who have questions, concerns, or complaints. 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. The process is outlined below:

- Parents/guardians should expect a response to a concern within **two business days**.
- If parents have a question about a classroom-related matter, such as curriculum, homework, classroom behavior, or specific incidents, please contact the child's teacher.
- If the parent cannot resolve the issue at the classroom level and/or have a question about school procedures, extra-curricular activities, or safety concerns, please contact the school 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 Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary

MORNING SUPERVISION REMINDER

Our first bus arrives at 8:35 a.m. Students should not be beyond the gates of the school until 8:35 a.m. Parents are reminded that students should not be at school earlier than 8:35 a.m. Your cooperation is appreciated.

NIAGARA CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD MISSION

We are a Christ-centred Catholic faith community that celebrates diversity and fosters spiritual growth, inspiring all to reach their full potential in mind, body and spirit.

JUSTICE ♦ COMPASSION ♦ STEWARDSHIP ♦ ACCOUNTABILITY ♦ COMMUNITY ♦ INTEGRITY ♦ FAITHFULNESS



Sacred Heart Catholic



FOR YOUR INFORMATION

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING PROTOCOL

While in the middle of the winter season, and as we hope that it doesn't come to this, it is important to remind all of our parents of the Emergency School Closing Protocol. The Niagara Catholic District School Board will make every attempt to keep schools open during periods of inclement weather. Only in exceptional circumstances will schools be closed part way through the day. In these rare cases, we will follow the procedure and prior information collected regarding the picking up of your children. If your contact information or pick-up arrangements have changed, you are asked to please contact Mrs. Plyley at the office so the necessary updates can be made. Announcements concerning school closures or cancellations will be made on all local radio stations beginning at 6:00 a.m. You can also check the Board website at www.niagaracatholic.ca as well as the board's social media accounts.

NIAGARA REGION PUBLIC HEALTH NEWSLETTER March 2025

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) is excited to launch [Youth-Vaping, Substance use, and Technology \(VAST\)](#). Youth-VAST is a program for youth in Ontario who are using vaping, substances, or feel like technology is taking up too much of their time. This program brings together existing and new resources across CAMH to deliver virtual services directly to youth and their family.

- Program offered for youth ages 12-21 years.
 - Appointments are offered virtually for youth all over Ontario
 - Youth will be assigned a care coordinator to create a customized treatment plan
- Individuals can self-refer directly into this program, no physician referral required.

To refer, visit [Youth-VAST](#) to book an appointment or email youth.vast@camh.ca for more information.

Sleep is important for physical and mental health, yet many children and youth just don't get enough. Lack of sleep may cause a number of health problems and have a big impact on your child's school performance, behaviour and mental health.

How much sleep does my child/youth need?

AGE	RECOMMENDED SLEEP
Ages 3-5 (Preschoolers)	10-13 hours per day
Age 6-12	9-12 hours per day
Ages 13-18	9-10 hours a night

Source: Recommended amount of sleep for pediatric populations, from the American Academy of Sleep Medicine, 2016

Here are a few tips to consider that may help youth sleep better:

Limit naps – some kids are really tired when they get home from school. A short nap can be helpful, but long naps can interfere with nighttime sleep. Consider keeping after school naps short, no more than 30-60 minutes.

Spend at least 1.5 hours outside during daylight hours – natural light from outside helps set the body's internal clock. This is also important for helping a child's eyes develop properly and prevent nearsightedness.

Have an electronic curfew – it can be helpful to have any electronic screens turned off 1-2 hours before bed. Avoiding screens will reduce blue light and help the brain produce melatonin, a hormone that controls the sleep-wake cycles.

Have a regular bedtime routine – typical routines can include brushing teeth, having a bath or shower, putting on pajamas, going to the bedroom and doing relaxing activities such as reading, drawing, writing, or listening to calming music.

For more information, visit caringforkids.ca - [healthy sleep](#)
Source: <https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/resources-and-support/resources/P5643E.pdf>

March is [Nutrition Month](#)! This annual campaign has been created by the [Dietitians of Canada](#) to highlight the importance of making informed food choices and developing both balanced eating and physical activity habits. Adults have a unique opportunity to help youth learn that healthy eating is more than the foods they eat. Below are some helpful resources to encourage healthy behaviours in children.