



February 2024



# St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School

Proud member of the Dennis Morris Catholic High School Family of Schools

D. Smolders, Principal

L. Forsyth-Sells, Superintendent of Schools  
33 Woodrow St., St. Catharines, ON, L2P 2A1



## THE JOYOUS WORDS OF THE GOSPEL

"But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart."  
(Luke 2:19)

Throughout her life, Mary reflected on the words of Jesus, pondering them in her heart. Mary's heart was and is full of love for Jesus. The words that He spoke to her were not passing things, quickly forgotten. They were opportunities for her to marvel at the Son of God. Mary's example invites us to make time to reflect on the words of Jesus. A simple way of doing this is by praying the rosary. In the rosary, Mary takes us by the hand and leads us closer to Jesus. We learn about the heart of Jesus through the heart of Mary, who pondered His words in her heart.

**D. Smolders**  
Principal

## KINDERGARTEN OPEN HOUSE

We are excited to welcome anyone interested in joining our Kindergarten classrooms in September to our open house and registration day on **February 7 from 9:00 am - 6:00 pm**. Parents and their child(ren) are invited to visit the school to gather more information, visit the classrooms, and begin the registration process. Kindergarten registration is open to any student who was born in 2020. This is a great time to ask any questions that you may have so we hope to see you and your child(ren) here.

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Every February, people across Canada participate in Black History Month events and festivities that honour the legacy of Black people in Canada and their communities.

The 2024 theme for Black History Month is: "Black Excellence: A Heritage to Celebrate; a Future to Build". This theme represents both an opportunity to look back on the many wonderful things that Black Canadians have added to Canadian heritage and to look forward to the many fantastic ways that our society can continue to build together.

This month teachers will work hard to highlight the many accomplishments of Black Canadians both past and present.

## ST. THOMAS AQUINAS MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday - 5:00 pm

Sunday - 10:00 am

Pastor: Reverend Chad Grennan



## A LOOK AHEAD

- Feb 1 - Black History Month begins
- Feb 2 - Local black history presentation for grades 6-8
- Feb 7 - Kindergarten Open House & Registration  
Intermediate girls basketball
- Feb 8 - Intermediate boys basketball
- Feb 12 - 23 - Kids Helping Kids campaign
- Feb 12 - Term 1 report cards sent home
- Feb 13 - Shrove Tuesday & Valentine's Day Celebrations
- Feb 14 - Ash Wednesday
- Feb 16 - PA Day (no school)
- Feb 19 - Family Day (no school)
- Feb 28 - Pink Shirt Day

## TERM 1 REPORT CARDS

Term 1 report cards will be available after 3:00 pm on Monday, February 12 through the online portal. Parents will need to go to: <https://connect.edsembli.com/ON/NCDSB/stchr178/Portal/viewer/login/login.aspx?logintype=P> and enter the email that we have on file as the username and the password that you previously setup.

Additionally, a paper copy will also be sent home with the students on Monday, February 12.

## CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL

We will be hosting a Catholic School Council meeting on Monday, February 5 at 6:00 pm in the library. This is an opportunity for parents/guardians from the community to share your ideas and hear

about upcoming events happening at our school. If you are available, please join us.

### HOT LUNCH DAYS

We have scheduled our next pizza day for Thursday, February 15. We will also have a Happy Meal day on Thursday, February 29. Orders will be made through <https://ncdsb.schoolcashionline.com/>. No cash orders or late orders will be accepted.

We cannot provide any refunds for students who are away on the hot lunch day.

### SHROVE TUESDAY

On Tuesday, February 13 members of the Catholic School Council will be distributing pancakes and syrup to students as a snack. This tradition dates back many years and harkens back to when families would remove oils, fats, and other rich foods from their houses to eliminate the temptation they may feel during their Lenten fast.

### ASH WEDNESDAY

To mark the start of Lent, Fr. Chad will distribute ashes at the school on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. The season of Lent marks the 40 days prior to Easter and our focus as Catholics is on: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving. The ashes are an outward sign of our faith to others.

### KIDS HELPING KIDS CAMPAIGN

Niagara Catholic's Annual Kids Helping Kids fundraiser will take place at St. Christopher Catholic from February 12-23, 2024. 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. Donations to the Kids Helping Kids fundraiser can be made in [School Cash Online](#). 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](mailto:jim.marino@nfce.org). To find more about the Niagara Children's Centre, please visit their website: Niagara Children's Centre

Our School Events:

Monday, February 12 - Shine Bright Day (Bright Clothes)  
Tuesday, February 13 - Red, White, Pink Out of Dress Code  
Wednesday, February 14 - Ash Wednesday  
Thursday, February 15 - Green, Yellow, Red, Black Day  
Tuesday, February 20 - Crazy Sock Day  
Wednesday, February 21 - Wild Hair Day  
Thursday, February 22 - Sports Jersey or Hat Day  
Friday, February 23 - Comfy Cozy Day

### VALENTINE'S DAY UPDATE

Because Ash Wednesday is happening on Wednesday, February 14 this year, all school Valentine's Day activities will take place on Tuesday,

February 13 to ensure that students and staff are able to maintain the solemnity of Ash Wednesday.

If your child would like to distribute Valentines on Tuesday, February 13, please label them "To a Friend" to help avoid confusion. **Additionally, in order to respect the dietary wishes of each family, remember that students are not able to distribute any food items to their classmates.** There are plenty of Valentine theme pencils and erasers available at various stores, if your child would like to give something to their classmates.

### ON TIME ARRIVAL

This is a reminder that school begins at 8:35 am each day. The opening routines and morning lessons are an important part of setting the tone for students for the remainder of the day.

We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that your child arrives at school on time each day.

### WINTER WEATHER

With wet winter weather now here, parents are reminded that students must bring indoor shoes to school for health and safety reasons. It is a good idea to bring a change of clothes, especially pants and socks, that students can change into if they get wet. Please remind your children to dress appropriately for the dropping temperatures and label all of your child(ren)'s clothes.



Additionally, we would like to remind parents that if bus transportation is **cancelled** in the morning, it also will be cancelled for the entire day. Children will not be picked up by bus at the end of the day. If you drive your child to school on a day that transportation is cancelled, it

will be your responsibility to pick them up at the end of the day. **Any child staying home when transportation is cancelled will need to be reported to the Safe Arrival system.**

Please follow @niagaracatholic on twitter, instagram or facebook for weather related cancellation.

### EXTRA CLOTHES

It is always a good idea for students in all grades to have an extra set of clothes in their backpack/cubby/locker in the event of a spill or an accident. In the winter months students tend to play much more on their hands and knees or may step in a small puddle of water when transitioning from outdoor to indoor footwear.

## SPIRIT WEAR ORDERS

Big Bear Spirit Wear, a board approved supplier for spirit wear items, offers a wide range of dress-code approved items through their online store at: <https://www.bigbearspiritwear.com/>. Students are allowed to wear the spirit wear items to school and these are a worthwhile purchase to show off your school pride. **Please label all clothing items that come to school so that we can return all misplaced items to the correct person.**

## ANAPHYLAXIS

St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School promotes a healthy, allergy aware environment for the safety of our children. Parents are requested to not pack any foods that contain or may contain nut or peanut products in their children's lunch. Please give our children with anaphylaxis the same consideration that you would wish for your child's protection.

If you have a child with anaphylaxis to any allergens, please contact the office immediately so that we can work together to keep your child(ren) safe.

**Additionally, at no time are students allowed to share food amongst themselves. This includes during special event days, such as birthdays and Halloween.** We respect and want to adhere to the dietary choices each family makes for their own child/ren. If your child comes to school with food items to distribute to classmates, they will be held in the office and sent back home with your child at the end of the day. We greatly support your cooperation with this.

## MEDICATIONS IN SCHOOL

Parents should be aware of the strict guidelines established by the Niagara Catholic District School Board for medication in schools.

1. The medication must be in the container prepared by the pharmacist and the label must include: the name of the doctor, student and the name and strength of the medication.
2. The school must have a written request from the physician indicating the frequency and dosage of the prescribed medication (this form is available at the school).
3. Deliver prescribed medication directly to the school office. Please do not send them with the child.

## FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM

St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School can be found on Instagram **@st.christopherces**. Please follow us to see what fun and exciting things your children are getting up to while at school.

We take student safety and privacy very seriously and only images of students for whom parents have given consent will be used on our social media account. If you would like to update your consent, please click [here](#) or contact the school to inquire about your current consent status.

## PARKING LOT SAFETY

Please drive with caution in the parking lot and near the school. We have many students who are being dropped off and picked up at the same time. They are all at varying places on their learning journey and may not always remember to look both ways before stepping out into traffic. Please exercise extra caution when driving in the school parking lot.

We would greatly appreciate your cooperation in ensuring that your child arrives at school on time each day and staff are on duty at 8:20 am.

## CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes concussions as a serious injury which requires appropriate follow-up measures to reduce the risk of potential additional injury. Concussion awareness, prevention, identification and management are a priority for the Board. The implementation of the Board's Concussion Administrative Operational Procedures is another important step in creating healthier schools in the Niagara Catholic District School Board

If staff, in communication with the school principal, suspects head trauma or a concussion might be possible based on signs and symptoms reported by the student, they are required to complete the appropriate documentation, call home and send home a copy of the documentation.

Medical doctors and nurse practitioners are the only healthcare professionals in Canada with licensed training and expertise to diagnose a concussion; therefore, all students with suspected concussions should undergo evaluation by one of these professionals.

## SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

St. Christopher continues to move forward using the School Cash Online System and we require all families to make online payments for their children when paying for things like pizza days, field trips, etc. If you have not already done so, please register for an account at: <https://ncdsb.schoolcashionline.com/>

## DONATIONS TO THE SCHOOL

Parents and guardians who would like to make a financial donation to support the many learning and extra curricular activities happening each day at St. Christopher Catholic elementary school are able to do so at any time through <https://ncdsb.schoolcashionline.com/>. Once logged in, you will see a button in the top menu that says Make a Donation. By clicking here, you are able to select the donation amount and the Destination (St. Christopher CES). Once submitted, you will be immediately sent an official receipt for tax purposes.

## ABSENT/LATE/EARLY DISMISAL

The Safe arrival program is aimed at verifying the location and safety of each child in our school. Parents are asked to report their child's absences, lates, or early dismissals before the start of school. The

system will call you repeatedly if your child is not present in school once the bell rings.

Absences and lates can be quickly and conveniently reported in one of three ways:

1. Through the School Messenger App available through the Android or iOS app store.
2. By calling the automated telephone system at 1-844- 287-6287 through which absences can be reported.
3. By logging into the website: [go.schoolmessenger.ca](http://go.schoolmessenger.ca)

