



St. Alexander – Newsletter



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*St. Alexander Catholic Elementary is proud to be part
of the Notre Dame Catholic Family of Schools*

MARCH 2024

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK

Called by Name: "Hear My Voice"

Is hearing God's voice good enough? Or does God want more than for us to acknowledge that He speaks to us? God tells us to "be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves" (James 1:22). Listening to God is the first step. From God's word, we are called to move to action. Sometimes this can feel overwhelming. "You mean, God wants me to do His work? Isn't there someone more qualified?" The reality is, without God, no one is qualified. God gives us everything we need to hear and do what He calls us to. God, help me to be a doer of the word. When I am discouraged, help me to remember that "I can do all things through him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

We look forward to a continuing reflection and celebration together as a Catholic School Community as we continue to navigate this Lenten Season.

Mr. M. Venzon

***May Lent be a time of grace,
mercy and hope that unites
us more fully with Christ***



Please take a few minutes to watch this short video that is all about Lent

<https://bustedhalo.com/video/watch-lent-3-minutes>

Looking ahead - 2023/2024 - Class Placements

During the months of April and May, staff will be meeting to discuss and create student groupings for next year. Students will be placed with others whom they will be most successful. A great deal of time and effort is spent determining the composition of classes. When organizing class groupings, attention and diligence is required by the classroom teachers, resource teacher, vice principal and principal. A variety of factors are seriously considered when establishing classes. Creating a successful learning environment for all students is a goal we aim to achieve. Some of the criteria considered include: abilities, individual needs, behaviour, work habits, age, learning styles, class size and boy/girl ratio. Please note that requests for specific classroom teachers will not be considered.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP? Talk positively to your child about next year. If your child is with a different group of students, please discuss relationship building and new friendships.

REPORTING STUDENT ABSENCE—BUS CANCELLATION

On days when there are bus cancellations and schools are open, parents/guardians of students who normally ride the bus should report, using the electronic Safe Arrival program, their child(ren) as absent if they are not sending them to school. It is only if schools are closed, by the Director of Education, due to inclement weather or any other reason that student absences do not need to be reported. The system will contact parents/guardians who have not reported their child as absent.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING

As a reminder for families who are familiar with the process outlined in our *School Operations for Inclement Weather and Workplace Closure AOP* – and as information for those who are new to the school in Niagara or Niagara Catholic – the decision to cancel buses is made by Niagara Student Transportation Services very early in the morning, based on the current **and** forecast conditions to ensure students are safe throughout the day. NSTS makes its decision with bus companies and consults agencies such as Niagara Regional Police about whether buses are safe on the roads. They communicate the decision to the local school board directors of education, who decide whether to open schools or keep them closed for the day. Niagara Catholic communicates decisions about bus and/or school cancellations by 6 a.m. You will find the information in the following places:

- On the Board website – a red banner appears on the main page when buses and/or schools are cancelled
- The Board's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) pages
- Local radio and TV stations and newspaper websites
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Most often, buses are cancelled but schools remain open. If you choose to keep your child at home due to inclement weather, **you must report their absence using the appropriate code through Safe Arrival**. We advise parents that Niagara Region Public Health continues to caution against mixing cohorts, which means that we cannot put classrooms together this year to ensure proper supervision of students. If, for some reason, a school does not have adequate coverage in place to ensure the safety of students while at school, an individual school *may* be closed.

Please keep in mind that driving a car is much different than a bus, and even though roads seem fine to drivers in personal vehicles, the conditions (such as snow drifts) may make it impossible for school buses to navigate through neighbourhood streets, particularly if they are not ploughed.

As well, we remind families that buses can be cancelled if the temperature falls to a point where stop arms and other mechanical parts required for the safe operation of the vehicle may freeze. We understand that may be frustrating for parents on a bright, cold, snow-free day, but the safety of students is the top priority of the

school bus companies, NSTS and Niagara Catholic and if the buses cannot operate safely due to the cold, transportation will be cancelled.

Living between two lakes can mean completely different weather in parts of Niagara. Occasionally, that leads to bus cancellations or school closures in one part of Niagara due to weather, while the rest of the region is unaffected. We encourage you to please check our website and social media feeds for accurate information to ensure that what you are reading online applies to you.

If the entire system is shut down, we will call, email and text your family using School Messenger by 6 a.m. to advise you it's a snow day. You do not need to report your child's absence from school, as schools are closed.

Although weather systems do blow through without warning, we usually have some idea that bad weather is coming and we encourage families to be prepared for this, especially if parents have to go to work while children are at home.

If your child is staying home due to a bus cancellation or a school closure, they will have the opportunity to participate in asynchronous learning from home. Click [here](#) for a link to for Primary, Junior, and Intermediate literacy, numeracy, and other subjects for students to keep up with work if that is what you choose to do. Please note that participating in this work is voluntary and should be considered as revising or reach-ahead work, rather than teacher-led new learning. Secondary students may also review any classroom work or reach-ahead where possible if they choose to do so.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at St. Alexander.

WINTER WEATHER

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 important that we all emphasize the dangers of throwing snow in any form. Snow is lovely to look at, but while at school it should be left on the ground. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL COUNCIL

Our next Catholic School Council meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 26th, beginning at 5:30pm here at St. Alexander School. All parents are welcome and there is no experience necessary - just a desire to make St. Alexander Catholic School the best that it can be!

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION OPEN HOUSE

We had a very successful Kindergarten Registration Open House on Wednesday, February 8th, 2024, from 9:00am to 6:00pm here at the school.

Many families came out to St. Alexander with their little ones, took a tour, and saw what was going on in our 4 Kindergarten classes!

We are always accepting registrations for our Kindergarten Program. Please feel free to pass this message along to other parents, friends or neighbours. You can visit our board website at <http://www.niagaracatholic.ca/> and click on JOIN US! REGISTER online, call St. Alexander Catholic at (905) 892-3841, or stop in at St. Alexander anytime to get information!

Niagara Region Public Health School Health Newsletter

March 2024

Nutrition Month 2024

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.



- [Building Healthy Eating Habits | Support Your Picky Eater](#)
- Visit unlockfood.ca for recipes, food allergies, [menu planners](#), and to also find a Dietitian
- Check out this [free downloadable e-recipe](#) book from a previous Nutrition Month
- For more support around healthy eating, visit [Healthy eating for parents and children - Canada's Food Guide](#)

World Sleep Day, Sleep is Essential for Health – March 15th

Sleep is very important for physical and mental health, but 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](https://www.caringforkids.ca) - [healthy sleep](#)

Source: <https://www.cheo.on.ca/en/resources-and-support/resources/P5643E.pdf>

Niagara Parents

Public Health Nurses are available to answer questions and provide reliable advice about pregnancy, nutrition for all ages, child or parental mental health concerns, and provide connections to community



supports through [Niagara Parents](#).

Individuals can connect with a Public Health Nurse at [Niagara Parents](#) **Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.:**

- Call 905-684-7555 or 1-888-505-6074 ext.7555
- [Email](#)
- [Live Chat](#)
- [Facebook Messenger](#)

Active School Travel



Walking home from school can take less time than driving. This is especially true if you must arrive early for a parking spot. If you live too far away to walk all the way to school, try driving to a location near your school and walk the rest of the way.

Here are benefits and fun facts about Active School Travel:

- It only takes about 12 minutes to walk 1 kilometre. Try walking to school or a destination near your home. You might surprise yourself with how fast you get there.
- More people walking means fewer cars and less congestion. This makes it safer for everyone. Cars actually drive slower when there are large numbers of people walking.
- Kids who walk or bike to school arrive alert and ready to learn. Practice a walking route to your school to help your child get ready for an active return.

Educational Resources



Transform Your Classroom with Conversation Cards

Ignite meaningful dialogue and create a supportive community with School Mental Health's new conversation starters! Designed to boost mental health self-care, social-emotional skills, and reduce stigma,



these cards empower students to thrive.

Visit <https://smho-smso.ca/online-resources/class-conversation-starters/> and join School Mental Health Ontario in fostering wellness and equity in our classrooms!

Nutrition Month



- OPHEA has partnered with *Growing Chefs! Ontario* to provide lesson plans related to Healthy Eating for grades one to eight – [Lesson Plans by Growing Chefs! Ontario](#)
- Teach youth [how to read a nutrition facts label](#). As part of the lesson, ask students to bring in nutrition labels from home. Spend some time with youth reading labels and comparing information.

International Women Day – Inspire Inclusion



March 8th is [International Women's Day](#). This day is to recognize and celebrate women and girls' social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. There are many great ways to keep the conversation going within your class!

- [Women of Impact in Canada](#) – learn about the inspiring achievements of Canadian women in various fields such as politics, sciences, and the arts.

- Government of Canada's [Teacher Toolkit](#) – learn of more about celebrating International Women's Day in the classroom!
 - [Engaged, Spark and Lead](#) – topics and activities suitable for grades four through 12.
- The [International Women's Day Toolkit](#) – resources to ensure International Women's Day is impactful and engaging.

Shine On  Niagara

STRONGER TOGETHER

Stronger Together supports YMCA programs for children and youth in Niagara through:

-  **Day Camp Experiences**
-  **Youth Programming**
-  **Health and Wellness Opportunities**

The proceeds will ensure that all children and youth have the opportunity to participate.

**JOIN US TO SUPPORT CHILDREN
ACROSS NIAGARA.**



**DONATE
TODAY**

