



# ST MARK CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HOME OF THE MOUNTAIN LIONS

A member of the Blessed Trinity Family of Schools

## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

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God of all growth,  
We ask You to bless all students and staff at  
St Mark Catholic School.  
May they remain constantly curious in their pursuit of  
knowledge and truth,  
May they see their gifts and talents  
to spread Your light and love  
throughout the earth,  
And may all of their learning  
ultimately draw them closer to  
Your Son, Christ the Teacher.  
We make this prayer  
in your Holy Name,  
Amen



## St. Mark Staff 2024-2025

We are extremely excited to have such an amazing staff!  
 Please see the current staff organization for the 2024-2025 school year.  
 We have had a few changes this year, and possibly more to come.  
 Please join us in wishing Ms. Lukacs all the best  
 as she starts a new journey at Holy Rosary in Thorold!

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Secretaries</b>                          | <b>Mrs. Manchuk, Ms. Traficante, Ms. MacDonald, Mrs. Cnossen</b>                       |
| <b>Caretakers</b>                           | <b>Diane Pizzicarola (Head Caretaker), Tyler Barbas, Anthony Ramos, John Marischuk</b> |
| <b>Educational Assistants</b>               | <b>Mrs. Nowe, Mrs. Ribeiro, Mrs. Spiering, Mrs. Penner, Ms. Weber</b>                  |
| <b>Designated Early Childhood Educators</b> | <b>Mrs. Monterroso, Mrs. Frian, Mrs. Croce, Mrs. D'Achille</b>                         |
| <b>Kindergarten</b>                         | <b>Mrs. Traficante, Mr. Moscato, Mrs. Warriner, Mrs. Huot, Mrs. Borg</b>               |
| <b>Grade 1</b>                              | <b>Mrs. Baldasaro, Mrs. Pellizzari, Mrs. Loutraris</b>                                 |
| <b>Grade ½</b>                              | <b>Mrs. Romano</b>   |
| <b>Grade 2</b>                              | <b>Mrs. Morawek, Mrs. Fisher</b>   |
| <b>Grade 2/3</b>                            | <b>Mrs. Melfi</b>  |
| <b>Grade 3</b>                              | <b>Ms. Lohin, Mrs. Semple</b>  |
| <b>Grade 3/4</b>                            | <b>Mrs. Metelsky</b>   |
| <b>Grade 4</b>                              | <b>Mr. Totolo, Mrs. Appel</b>  |
| <b>Grade 4/5</b>                            | <b>Mrs. Pokolic</b>  |
| <b>Grade 5</b>                              | <b>Mr. D'Orazio, Miss Reid</b>   |
| <b>Grade 5/6</b>                            | <b>Ms. Foster</b>  |
| <b>Grade 6</b>                              | <b>Ms. McLaughlin, Mrs. Cormier</b>  |
| <b>Grade 7</b>                              | <b>Miss. Sirianni, Mrs. Ferrelli, Mrs. Clifford</b>                                    |
| <b>Grade 7/8</b>                            | <b>Mrs. Perkic</b>   |
| <b>Grade 8</b>                              | <b>Mr. Montague, Mr. Costantini</b>  |
| <b>French Teachers</b>                      | <b>Mme. Zamfir, Mme. Reka, M. Kinney, Mme. Maddalena</b>                               |
| <b>Primary Team Teachers</b>                | <b>Mrs. Reka, Mrs. Tessaro, Mr. Kinney, Mrs. Fotivec, Mrs. Buergler</b>                |
| <b>Itinerant Arts Teacher</b>               | <b>Mrs. Dionne</b>   |
| <b>Educational Resource Teachers</b>        | <b>Mrs. Duffy, Mrs. Zamfir</b>   |
| <b>Child and Youth Worker</b>               | <b>Ms. Roy and Ms. Rogers</b>  |
| <b>Library Technician</b>                   | <b>Ms. Tessier</b>   |
| <b>Vice Principal</b>                       | <b>Ms. Villella</b>  |
| <b>Principal</b>                            | <b>Mrs. DeCoff</b>   |

## Daily Schedule

As communicated last year, all elementary schools across Niagara Catholic will be following a balanced day schedule. **Please see the schedule below for our new bell times including a 10 minute earlier start to the day.**



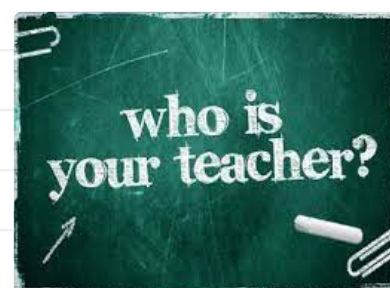
**Any student who arrives to school during or after announcements will be logged in as late in the Safe Schools Arrival system.**

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>8:40</b>          | <b>Bell Rings</b>   |
| <b>8:40 – 8:50</b>   | <b>O' Canada, Land Acknowledgement &amp; Announcements</b>  |
| <b>8:50 – 9:30</b>   | Period 1  |
| <b>9:30 -10:10</b>   | Period 2  |
| <b>10:10 – 10:50</b> | Period 3  |
| <b>10:50 – 11:10</b> | <b>Kindergarten, Grades 4 – 6 RECESS OUTSIDE<br/>Grades 1 – 3, Grades 7 – 8 NUTRITION BREAK INDOORS</b> |
| <b>11:10 – 11:30</b> | <b>Kindergarten, Grades 4 – 6 NUTRITION BREAK INDOORS<br/>Grades 1 – 3, Grades 7 – 8 RECESS OUTSIDE</b> |
| <b>11:30 – 12:10</b> | Period 4  |
| <b>12:10 – 12:50</b> | Period 5  |
| <b>12:50 – 1:10</b>  | <b>Kindergarten, Grades 4 – 6 RECESS OUTSIDE<br/>Grades 1 – 3, Grades 7 – 8 NUTRITION BREAK INDOORS</b> |
| <b>1:10 – 1:30</b>   | <b>Kindergarten, Grades 4 – 6 NUTRITION BREAK INDOORS<br/>Grades 1 – 3, Grades 7 – 8 RECESS OUTSIDE</b> |
| <b>1:30 – 2:10</b>   | Period 6  |
| <b>2:10 – 2:50</b>   | Period 7  |
| <b>2:50 – 3:00</b>   | <b>Dismissal</b>  |

## Class Lists

As of Thursday August 29th, at 12:00 pm, families are able to log into the parent portal and see who their child(ren)'s teacher will be for this school year. A great deal of time and effort has been put into creating class lists.

**No changes/switches will be made to the class lists.** Registrations at St. Mark are constantly changing as well as staffing so **changes**



**to class lists are not possible.**

Thank you for your understanding and patience with this process.

Mrs. DeCoff and Miss. Villella

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**Communication to the School**

St. Mark Catholic 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 community which can solve problems and help one another achieve success.

Thank you,

Mrs. DeCoff and Miss Villella

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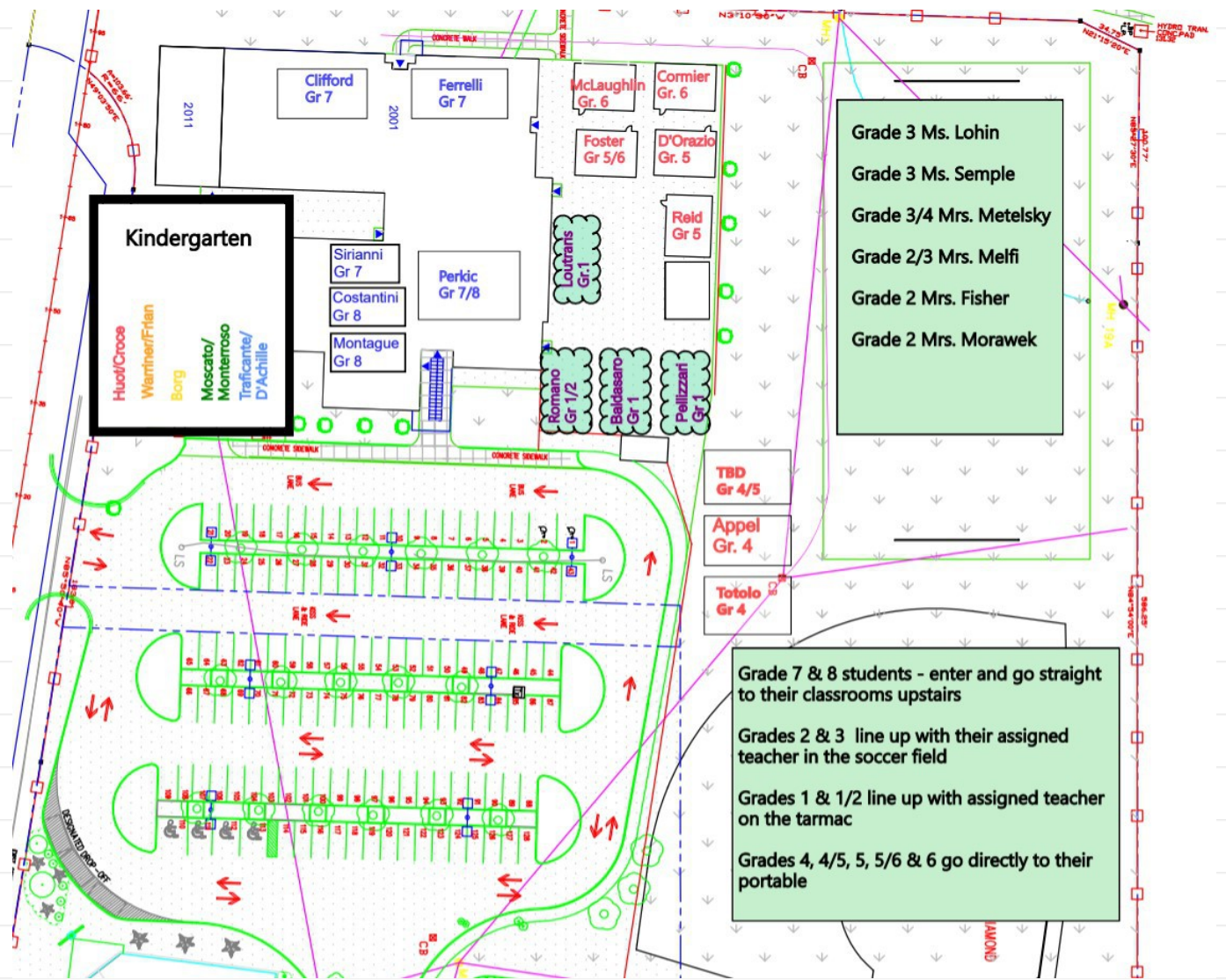
**First Day of School Arrival and Departure**

We cannot wait to see all of our students on the first day of school! As we know our parking lot is not easy to maneuver on a regular day, and the first day of school adds a little extra challenge. Adding on a larger school population makes the first-day drop-off even more difficult. BUT, we can do this!

Please see the chart below showing where the classroom teachers will be standing (with sign in hand) to welcome their new class. We ask parents to please stay on the sidewalk and to have only staff and students on school property. This reduces the volume on school property and helps staff with locating students more easily. For the first few days, the location they meet in the morning will be the location they will be at the end of the day. Once students are comfortable with the location of their classroom, we will resume free entry in the morning.







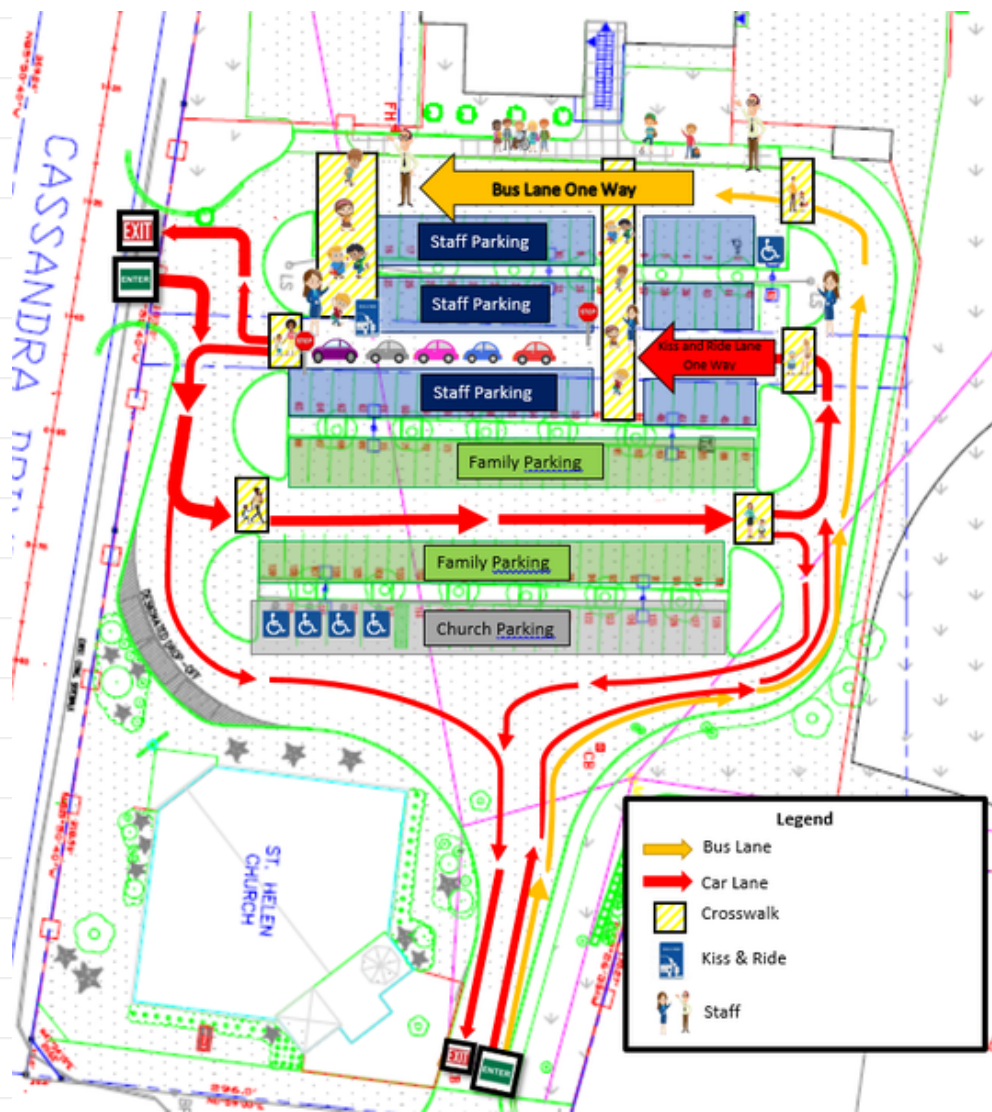
## Dedicated Kiss and Ride Area

The kiss and ride area is for families to drive to a dedicated area in the parking lot and drop their child off who will be directed by school staff to the front of the school. The kiss and ride area allows for the driver to stay in the car, while a staff member assists their child. This is an efficient way for families to drop off their child(ren) at school. For families who prefer to park and walk their child(ren) to the front of the school, there will be a parking area dedicated for you to park. For this to run smoothly and efficiently, we ask parents to ***please park in the family parking zones only (white lines).***

**Parking in no-parking zones creates congestion and increases the risk of a child being hurt.**

Please see the diagram below outlining the dedicated areas for Kiss and Ride as well as parent parking. We will have extra staff outside during the morning to assist in this process. **We ask families to please be patient and SLOW DOWN in the parking lot.**





## Student Cell Phone use - PLEASE READ

As we continue to foster a safe and positive learning environment for all students, I would like to remind you of the new regulations regarding cell phone use that have been implemented in all Ontario schools.

To minimize distractions and maximize learning, cell phones are only permitted during instructional time when they are being used for educational purposes as directed by the teacher. Outside of these times, students are expected to keep their phones turned off and stored away unless needed for documented learning needs and/or health related requirements. We kindly ask for your support in reinforcing this policy with your children and encouraging them to focus on their studies during school hours.

Your cooperation is essential in helping us maintain a healthy and respectful school environment. If you have any questions or concerns regarding these rules, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Thank you for your understanding and support.

Mrs. DeCoff and Miss Villella







## SCHOOL PICTURE

Students will have their individual pictures taken on Tuesday, September 24th. The school photographer is Pegusus.

Bring your smiles!!!!

## Hot Lunches

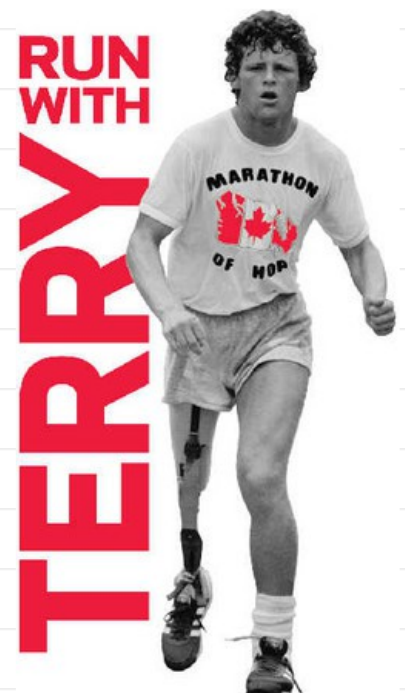
Our hot lunch programs will begin the week of September 30th. We will continue to offer subs on Tuesdays, pizza on Thursdays, ice cream on Fridays, milk on Tuesdays & Thursdays, pasta from Valentino's on the first Wednesday of each month and Shelby's

Shawarmas on the third Wednesday of each month. We will serve any food ordered during our first Nutrition Break at 10:50 am. Items will be posted on School Cash Online the first week of school for purchase.



## TERRY FOX WALK/RUN

On Friday, September 27th all students at St. Mark Catholic Elementary School will be participating in The Terry Fox School Event. On-line donations will be accepted throughout the month of September.



## ORANGE SHIRT DAY

September 30th has been declared Orange Shirt Day throughout Canada in recognition of the harm done to generations of children by the Indian Residential Schools. As an affirmation of Niagara Catholic's commitment to ensure that every child matters as we continue on our reconciliation

journey, the Niagara Catholic District School Board is acknowledging Orange Shirt Day on Friday, September 30th. The origin of Orange Shirt Day is based on a story shared by a survivor of the Residential School system, Phyllis Webstad, during the Truth and Reconciliation meetings held in Williams Lake, BC in 2013. In response, staff, students and community members of St. Mark Catholic School are encouraged to wear the colour orange on Monday, September 30th as a visible symbol in support of the notion that every child matters and that we are called to love, respect, and care for one another as children of God.



Orange shirts will be available for student purchase through Pegasus School Images - more information will be provided at a later date.

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## Catholic School Council Sign-Up

The Catholic School Council is a valued partner of the St. Mark Catholic School Community. The Ministry of Education mandates that elections to the Catholic School Council be held in the Fall of each school year. Parents interested in being a part of the St. Mark Catholic School Council are asked to complete a Nomination (Sign-up) Form by clicking on the link below. The election of the Catholic School Council Chair will be held at **our first meeting on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.** This meeting will be held in person at St. Mark in the school gymnasium.

# Catholic School Council - Nomination Form

The Catholic Education of each student is the shared responsibility of the Board and its staff, its students, parents, guardians, parishes, and community members. When all of these groups enthusiastically and cooperatively share this responsibility, our students benefit.

It is for this reason that all schools across Ontario, each school year, elect a School Council comprised of parent, school, parish, and community members.

The purpose of Catholic School Councils is, through the active participation of parents, to improve pupil achievement, and to enhance the accountability of the education system to parents. A Catholic School Council's primary means of achieving its purpose is by making recommendations, in accordance with the Regulations, to the principal of the school and the Niagara Catholic District School Board. As an advisory body, the Catholic School Council may provide advice to the school board and/or

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## Celebrating Culture Day

Each month we will be participating in dress-down days. For September, we will be celebrating the many cultural backgrounds in our community by having our first annual Celebrating Culture day. During the month of September, we work hard at getting to know our students and their cultures.



What better way to know our families than to have a day dedicated to culture? On Thursday, 19th, students are encouraged to wear or bring in clothing that represents their cultural background. This can be from colours to traditional clothing. The choice is yours to share a part of your culture with our community.



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## SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND STUDENTS WITH PREVALENT MEDICAL CONDITIONS POLICY

At the beginning of every school year, we remind all students and parents/guardians of our Board's Policy on supporting students with prevalent medical conditions. At St. Mark Catholic Elementary School we have Emergency Guidelines which clearly state what medical procedures must occur for those students who have various life-threatening medical conditions. We are reminding all students and parents/guardians that we have students in our

school who are known to have a potentially life-threatening allergy called Anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe life-threatening form of allergic reaction. It may begin with severe itching of the eyes or face; a sense of constriction in the throat, then other symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, and difficulty with breathing may develop. This may lead to coma and death. Foods such as peanuts, other nuts, fish, shellfish, eggs, milk, sesame, and wheat as well as insect stings from bees and wasps, latex products, and medication, are the most common allergens that produce anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis requires immediate first aid response and immediate medical intervention. If your child requires a special plan to ensure their safety, please alert your child's teacher so we can ensure that we are doing all we can to keep your child, and all children, safe.

**Please see the Supporting Children, Students with Prevalent Medical Conditions Policy for more information.**



**302.1 - Supp. Children, Students w Prev. Med. I Cond. Policy A0 P.pdf**

**Download**  
274.3 KB

<https://docushare.ncdsb.com/dsweb/Get/Document-1982047/302.1%20-%20Supp.%20Children%2cStudents%20w%20Prev.%20Med.I%20Cond.%20Policy.pdf>

[docushare.ncdsb.com](https://docushare.ncdsb.com)



SCHOOLMESSENGER®

The Safe Arrival program reduces the time it takes to verify student attendance making it easier for you to report your child's absence and easier for staff to respond to unexplained student absences.

The Safe Arrival program allows parents to report their child's absence quickly and conveniently in one of three ways: 1) Use the SafeArrival website, <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca>. The first time you use the website, select Sign Up to create your account using your email address. After logging in, select the Attendance tab to Report an Absence. 2) Using your mobile device, download and install the SchoolMessenger app (blue logo) from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store (or from the links at <https://go.schoolmessenger.ca>). You must register through the website on a computer before you can access the app. Use your new login information to access your account. Select Attendance to Report an Absence. If you would like to receive attendance notifications on your mobile device please enable Push Notifications in the Settings area of the app. The document Using the SchoolMessenger app will give instructions for using the App. 3) The toll-free number 844-287-6287 will allow you to report your child absent without creating an account

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## Dress Code

We ask that all students follow the Dress Code policy that has been in effect since November of 2012 at all elementary schools across Niagara Catholic.

Our dress code consists of **SOLID navy-blue pants, and either a solid white or navy top with a collar.** Spirit Wear can be worn at any time, if it has been purchased through Big Bear Spiritwear or previously from Front Row Sports.

**White T-shirts are NOT dress code.**

**Hoodies/ Sweaters can only be worn if they are navy blue, or spiritwear.**

**Please do not send your child in black, grey, or camouflage-colored pants. Polka dots and stripes are also not a part of the dress code.**

**Students will be asked to call home for proper dress code items if they come to school out of dress code.**

**If you are having difficulty finding clothing, or require financial assistance with purchasing dress code items, please contact the school directly.**

Please see the attached dress code policy if you have any additional questions.

# 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.

Nurturing **Souls** & Building **Minds**



302.6.10 - Elementary Standardized Dress Code Policy.pdf

Download  
227.6 KB

<https://docushare.ncdsb.com/dsweb/Get/Document-1982054/302.6.10%20-%20Elementary%20Standardized%20Dress%20Code%20Policy.pdf>

[docushare.ncdsb.com](https://docushare.ncdsb.com)



## Spiritwear Orders - Big Bear Spiritwear

We are very excited to announce that our spiritwear provider is Big Bear spiritwear. By clicking on the link below, you will see a larger selection of styles and colours for our spiritwear. The prices are fair and the quality is excellent. Families have an option of embroidered or printed Mountain Lion logos.

<https://www.bigbearspritwear.com/st-mark-mountain-lions/>



## Mental Health Resources

School Mental Health Ontario is a provincial implementation support team that helps school districts enhance student mental health through the use of evidence-based strategies and services.



School  
Mental Health  
Ontario

School Mental Health Ontario provides

- leadership and guidance about best practices in school mental health
- implementation coaching
- tailored, co-created resources
- mental health literacy for educators and school/system leaders
- training for school mental health professionals
- mental health awareness for parents/families
- a platform for student voice and leadership in school mental health

Through these services, they aim to enhance the quality and consistency of mental health promotion, prevention, and early intervention programming in Ontario schools.

In addition to school supports, School Mental Health Ontario also created resources and supports for families.

For more information please visit: <https://smho-smso.ca/>



# St. Mark Catholic

## September 2024



A Member of the Blessed Trinity Family of Schools



| Sun   | Mon  | Tue                                     | Wed   | Thu  | Fri  | Sat  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| 1<br>Mass:<br>St. Helen Church<br>9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.  | 2<br>HAPPY<br><b>labour</b><br>DAY   | 3<br>Day 1<br>FIRST<br>DAY OF<br>SCHOOL | 4<br>Day 2  | 5<br>Day 3   | 6<br>Day 4   | 7<br>Mass<br>St. Helen Church<br>5:00 p.m.   |
| 8<br>Mass:<br>St. Helen Church<br>9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.  | 9<br>Day 5   | 10<br>Day 1                             | 11<br>Day 2   | 12<br>Day 3  | 13<br>Day 4  | 14<br>Mass<br>St. Helen Church<br>5:00 p.m.  |
| 15<br>Mass<br>St. Helen Church<br>9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.  | 16<br>Day 4  | 17<br>Day 5                             | 18<br>Day 1   | 19<br>Day 2<br>Out-of-Dress Code Day<br>Culture Day<br>(Wear clothing that<br>represents your cultural<br>background.) | 20<br>Day 3<br>Staff Professional Development Day /<br>School Closed | 21<br>Mass:<br>St. Helen Church<br>5:00 p.m. |
| 22<br>Mass:<br>St. Helen Church<br>9:00 a.m. & 11:00 a.m. | 23<br>Day 4  | 24<br>Day 5<br>Picture<br>DAY           | 25<br>Day 1<br>Catholic School Council<br>Meeting—6:00 pm<br>All are welcome! | 26<br>Day 2<br>You're Invited!<br>BACK TO SCHOOL<br>BBQ<br>Open House<br>3:30 pm<br>to 6:30                            | 27<br>Day 3  | 28<br>Mass:<br>St. Helen Church<br>5:00 p.m. |
| 29<br>Mass:<br>St. Helen Church<br>9:00 am & 11:00 am     | 30<br>Day 4<br>Orange Shirt Day<br>National Day for Truth<br>and Reconciliation<br>EVERY<br>CHILD<br>MATTERS |   |   |  |  |  |



## St. Mark Catholic Elementary School

J. DeCoff  
Principal

A. Villella  
Vice-Principal

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Twitter: [@StMark\\_Catholic](https://twitter.com/StMark_Catholic)



**Jennifer DeCoff**

Jennifer is using Smore to create beautiful newsletters