



Student Handbook

Administration & Front Office Staff

Phone/Attendance Line: 403-938-8048

Fax line: 403-938-8007

Website: www.stmarysokotoks.ca

Brandon Bailey - Principal
Crystal Exner - Vice Principal
Shari Gustafson - Vice Principal
Michele Halstead - Administrative Assistant
Leah Alford - Receptionist/Clerk
Trish Hanning - Receptionist/Clerk (part-time)

A complete Staff Listing is available on our website.

CTR Catholic School District Information

District Office: 403 938-2659

1 McRae St. Box 1318, Okotoks, AB T1S 1B3

District Trustees

Mark Chung	John de Jong
Ron Schreiber	Joanne Van Donzel
Vijay Domingo	Harry Salm
Christie Caskey	Andrea Keenan

Central Office

Scott Morrison - Superintendent
Aileen Brunette - Superintendent's Admin Assistant
Vanessa Douville Transportation

Our School Motto

"With Open Arms"

Our School Mission

We are followers of Jesus. We teach, we learn, we grow as a Catholic family. By nurturing the whole child, confident knowledgeable Disciples of Christ emerge.

St. Mary's Way Creed

*We work, play and welcome all with "Open Arms."
We use our words, hands and hearts to help others.
We ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?"*



*We are a family.
We pray to St. Mary to watch over,
guide and protect us.*

Our Patron

St. Mary, the Mother of God.

St. Mary is our patron. St. Mary was the Mother of God. According to tradition, Mary was born in Jerusalem to St. Anne and Joachim. The angel Gabriel announced her Immaculate Conception (Luke 1:26-38). Her cousin Elizabeth called her the Mother of God. Mary replied with the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem where the baby Jesus was born. Little is said in the Bible about Mary after the birth of Jesus. She visited the Temple of Jerusalem and was instrumental in Jesus' first recorded miracle at the wedding feast in Cana (John 2:1-5). She was present at the Crucifixion (John 19:26-27) and was with the disciples before Pentecost (Act 1:14). Tradition holds that she was present at the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ.

We pray to St. Mary to act on our behalf to God. The most popular devotion to Mary is the rosary, a prayer emphasized during May, the month of Mary.

Religious Focus

Our Faith

The gospel of Jesus Christ inspires our Catholic education and guides our school in every dimension of the day. The faith of Christ is permeated in not only what we teach but what we say, do and believe. Our authentic Catholic education allows us to share the good news of Jesus Christ freely. We are committed to instilling values Jesus taught us, to love freely, forgive easily, to reconcile willingly following the path of Jesus. We are one, we are many and we are blessed to share our faith with children, families and colleagues throughout each and every day.

Celebrations and Masses

We have many school-based Masses and celebrations at our school. We also attend Whole School and Grade level Masses at St. James Church. Our St. Mary's Way Committee, in consultation with our Priest, determines dates, themes and readings.

Family Groups

All students will be assigned to a Family Group. Each group will consist of a mix of students from grade one to grade six. Each teacher on staff will lead a family group and the group will be named after a Saint. These groups

will be used for masses, special celebrations, community building, and school spirit.

Prayer

Prayer is an integral part of our school day. We routinely pray to start and end our day but more importantly we teach children to pray in times of joy, sorrow, of disappointment, celebration, difficulty and success.

“May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord look upon you with favour and grant you peace.”

Service Projects

Our School Board encourages all our students to be involved in a project to enhance our community. In the past, students from various grades have sung at Sandstone Lodge, helped clean the river parks, collected items for various charities, or held a car wash with money raised going to charity. Our staff also participates in at least one service project during the year.

We believe that our time, talent and treasure are gifts given to us by God to be used wisely in sharing with others. We show kindness to others and honour God by caring enough to serve those less fortunate.

Faith Focus in the Classroom

Each of our homeroom classes has a faith focus area to assist us all in reflecting on our faith and providing a focus for prayer throughout the day. Teachers permeate faith into all aspects of instruction. Our faith is not simply a class or a period but a way of thinking and living.

Retreats

Our classes are involved in retreats, a time for prayer and reflection and an opportunity for our students to experience the richness of our faith. For lower Elementary students, the Retreat is usually a half-day and for upper Elementary students it usually lasts for a full day.

Sacrament Preparation

Generally, students prepare for the Holy Eucharist in Grade 2, Reconciliation in Grade 3, and new this year Confirmation in Grade 6. These preparations are coordinated through our parish. The school feels very strongly that these students should be recognized for their fulfillment of such important sacraments.

For information on the sacraments please contact the St. James parish office at 403-938-3122.

St. James Parish Office 403 938-3122

Rev. Luciano Cortopassi (Pastor)
Aileen Lamontagne (Secretary)

Hours of Operation

Monday - Thursday	
Period	Time
Warning bell	8:30
1	8:35 - 9:17
2	9:17 - 9:54
3	9:54 -10:31
Recess	10:31 -10:46
4	10:46 -11:23
5	11:23 -12:00
Lunch	12:00 -12:20
Lunch Recess	12:20 -12:44
6	12:44 - 1:21
7	1:21 - 1:57
8	1:57 - 2:33
9	2:33 - 3:09
Homeroom	3:09 - 3:13
Dismissal	3:13

Friday

Period	Time
Warning bell	8:30
1	8:35 - 9:17
2	9:17 - 9:54
3	9:54 - 10:31
Recess	10:31 - 10:46
4	10:46 - 11:23
5	11:23 - 12:00
Dismissal	12:05

Kindergarten Schedule

Monday/Wednesday
8:25 a.m. – 3:13 p.m.

Tuesday/Thursday
8:25 a.m. – 3:13 p.m.

School Fees Information

School Fees

CTR Catholic announced that the funding provided by the Ministry enables the Board to eliminate ALL school fees commonly assessed at the start of each year. At a recent Board meeting, trustees applauded the Ministry’s funding announcement and were supportive of administration’s suggestion that a host of common fees can be eliminated.

CTR Catholic will continue to charge fees for field trips (eg. museum trips), value added co-curricular experiences (eg. band trips or swimming programs), and all extra-curricular programs (eg. basketball team expenses).

Band Program

Students in Grade 6 take band and are charged for the rental of a band instrument. The cost will vary depending on the instrument chosen. The instruments are rented through St. Mary's School or St. John's National. For further information, please contact Mrs Amsterdam, the Band Teacher. Please make cheques payable to St. Mary's School, or St. John's Music. Grade 6 students may have to pay an additional cost for Band Camp.

School Pictures

Our school photographs are delivered through Life Touch Photography. The cost of photos will depend on the package chosen by each individual family. Please visit our website to see school photograph and retake dates.

Fundraising

The school does not want to financially burden parents with massive amounts of fundraising. Fundraising in the school will be done for two purposes. First and foremost, monies from fundraising will be allocated to charitable organizations that are local (e.g. Okotoks Food Bank, Backpack Campaign), regional, (Annual Bishops Appeal,) and worldwide (Terry Fox Walk, Cancer Society, Mission Mexico, Heart and Stroke Foundation).

The second form of fundraising would be for special needs in our school like the music program, and library, and to have special guest speakers and performance groups visit the school.

We understand that fundraising programs can be overwhelming and we therefore have implemented a few regular fundraising activities that are easy to participate in. They include the school's hot lunch program and donations. As the school division is a non-profit organization, all cash donations would warrant a tax receipt.

Student Conduct

Student Behaviour

We expect the students to behave in a Christian manner towards each other at all times, respect each other and others' property, to apply themselves diligently to their schoolwork and to apply the teachings of Jesus in their daily lives. We encourage all our community to welcome each other *"With Open Arms."*

A focus for our school is to create a safe and caring environment for all. We aspire to guide students to become self-disciplined and reflective of their behaviors and their actions. Students should understand the impact

their choices have on themselves and others. The school discipline and behavior policy is based on acting in a virtuous way towards ourselves and others. Our Catholic faith is central as we believe all students are gifts from God and deserve to be treated with respect, dignity, honour and kindness.

In managing student behavior, teachers will deal immediately with problems which may arise. Issues may be escalated to administration if issues persist or if the severity deems it necessary. The following are some examples of unacceptable behaviours:

- physical or verbal harm to another individual in person or through social media
- use of profanity
- defiance of someone of authority
- behaviors that interfere with the learning or safety of others
- students may be held accountable for conduct that occurs outside of school hours if the conduct negatively affects other students and the school environment

Parental involvement and communication is a crucial aspect of our school discipline policy. Consequences for inappropriate behavior will escalate in seriousness and with increased frequency of offenses. Interventions will be put in place to prevent further indiscretions whenever possible, and practical. In the most severe cases, in school suspensions from regular classes and/or school activities may occur. The school may also implement restorative practices, counselling support and/or connection strategies to help reduce negative behaviours.

We take a strong stand on bullying as per Christ the Redeemer Catholic School Administrative Procedure STU #21. This is defined by repeated hostile or demeaning behavior that is intended to cause harm, fear, or emotional distress to another individual. The harm can be either physical harm, psychological harm, or harm to the individual's reputation (the school will distinguish bullying from a conflict in relationship which occurs through single episodic acts of breakdowns in relationship between students). When behavior affects the ability of other students to attend to their studies - whether the incident occurs on school grounds, off of school grounds, or via electronic means - the school may intervene. The ultimate goal is to ensure all students feel safe and cared for at school.

It is important for both students and parents to inform the school of these instances in a timely manner so that they may be immediately addressed. Early intervention is key to ensure the well-being of all of our students.

Attendance and Child Safety

As guardians, "in loco parentis", staff members are required to know the whereabouts of students at all times.

To assist us in this important task we ask that if your child is absent to contact the school office. The school will monitor student attendance and in all situations where a student is unaccountably absent, the school secretaries will make contact with the parents.

The school attendance line is 403 938-8048 (prior to 8:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m.). Please call and leave a message. You may call this line at any time.

If a child is required to leave for any reason during the day we expect that they will sign out through the school office. This also will assist us in accounting for all students at the end of the day.

For regular medical and other personal appointments, we request that students have a note from their parents indicating the proposed departure time and purpose. This note should be shown to the teacher involved at the time of departure and to the staff in the general office prior to leaving.

If a student becomes ill during the day, he/she will have the opportunity to contact a parent/guardian for permission to come home. If a student is ill, the safest place for him/her is at home.

Student Absenteeism

We believe that attendance is a vital aspect of the student's education. What a student learns while under direct instruction from their teacher and through their interactions with other students is irreplaceable. Every day counts and every day is important. Build the habit of good attendance early. Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school and themselves. Start building good attendance habits in kindergarten so children learn early that going to school on time, every day is important. School is better when we are there together. Students, who miss an unreasonable amount of school, place their academic success in jeopardy. **Any time a student misses more than 15% of the instructional time, we believe that their education is compromised.** Worksheets or homework does not capture the learning that takes place through teacher instruction, modelling or class discussion. When parents know that their child will be away from school for an extended period of time (e.g. family vacation), they are asked to inform the appropriate teacher and complete the Extended Absence Form from the office prior to the absence.

Attendance records will be reviewed by the administration for each school term. The school's administration, in consultation with the student's teacher, may send out letters to parents whose children have missed in excess of 15% of the instructional time to date. These letters are meant to help parents to determine the amount of time a student has missed in the hope that the student's attendance will improve.

Tardiness

Students, who arrive late to school on a consistent basis, place their learning at risk and interfere with the learning of others. **Lates will be tracked and reported to parents.** It is the students' and the parents' responsibility to ensure that the student arrives to school and to each class on time. Any habitual tardiness will be treated as a disciplinary infraction.

Students Leaving the School Grounds

The school is responsible for the safety of the students during the school day. Therefore all students are to remain on the school grounds during the school day with the exception of students going home for lunch and students who have signed out from the school with parental consent. Students must have a written note from a parent or guardian if they wish to leave the school grounds for any reason.

Dress Code

This Dress Code applies to all students in Kindergarten to Grade 6. The students are attending a Catholic School and are required to dress in an appropriate fashion. Dress should be in good taste and appropriate for the activities of the school. Questionable slogans, messages or pictures on clothing, torn clothing, or revealing clothing as a fashion statement are not permitted.

Specifically but not limited to, parents are asked to ensure that their children do not wear clothing that permits the exposure of their mid-rift, under garments or shoulders. Pajama pants are not appropriate at school except on a theme days.

We respectfully request that parents and students adhere to the following guidelines in warm weather:

Students will be permitted to wear sleeveless shirts or shirts with straps that are wide enough to conceal the under garment.

Students are asked not to wear shirts with spaghetti straps, halter-tops or tube tops. Modesty should be the guiding principle in the choice of clothing appropriate at school. Further to this we would ask that students wear shorts that are cut no higher than "mid-thigh". Should students choose to wear clothing that is deemed outside of these guidelines, please bring a shirt or sweater that may be used as over wear.

The administration in consultation with the staff will deem what is appropriate dress and may have a student change into more suitable clothing, cover up the inappropriate clothing or turn a shirt inside out, whichever is most appropriate at the time. Should a student choose to ignore the dress code on a regular basis, further disciplinary consequences will be considered and parents will be contacted.

All students are required to have outdoor footwear that must be removed at the student's entrance. All students must have a pair of indoor shoes for internal use, as it is very possible that we could have fire drills or emergencies in inclement weather.

As we live in a climate where weather varies drastically all students should come to school dressed appropriately for the weather. All outdoor garments like coats, hats, and gloves are to be removed once the students have entered their classroom. Students are **not permitted to wear hats** in the school throughout the day. Parents are asked to write their children's names in their clothing to ensure that students return home with only their clothes. We encourage you to discuss the dress code with your child (ren).

Valuables

Valuable items should not be brought to school. **All items like iPods, cell phones, iPhones, and other handheld electronic equipment should not be used during school hours.** In some situations, under the direction of a teacher, a child may bring an item of value to enhance the learning experience. In these situations the valuable items that are brought to school are the sole responsibility of the student. They should be carefully labeled and taken home immediately after use.

Student Phone Use

Student school phone use will be controlled through the main office and the school's secretary and receptionists. Students will be allowed to use the school's phone in situations where they are ill or have a medical crisis. Students will also be allowed to use the classroom phone if they have forgotten their lunch. Students **will not be allowed** to use the school's phone to have homework brought to the school. The rationale for this is that we are attempting to develop the student's responsibility and feel it is imperative for them to understand there are consequences for not completing homework or leaving homework at home. Further, students will not be allowed to use the school's phone to make after school playtime arrangements. **The use of cell phones by students is not permitted during school hours unless instructed to do so by a teacher. If used inappropriately the cell phone will be confiscated.**

School Safety

School Facility Security

To ensure a safe learning environment we must take considerable measures to keep our building secure. **We are requesting that all visitors to our school enter through the main school entrance** on the South West Side and exit through these doors as well. It is also important that all visitors sign-in at the main office with one of our secretaries and notify them of the nature of their visit. **All visitors must wear a visitor's badge.**

We will be locking all doors except the main entrance during the day. However, at student break times the kindergarten (south) entrance will be opened to provide quick access for use of school facilities and in case of emergency situations.

Supervision

School supervision by staff begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends after the last bus leaves the school at the end of the day unless special events or activities are being held at the school. Supervision during recess and noon hour is provided by an adequate number of staff members at all times.

Emergency Procedures

The school has implemented an **email fan out system** that will be used to contact parents in school wide emergency situations. By doing so, all parents will be informed of the nature of the emergency and the school's action plan to deal with the situation. **Please ensure that the school has your most current email address.** As a proactive measure in emergency conditions that require the school to be evacuated, we will have a number of drills including fire, lockdown, evacuation, shelter in place and duck cover hold. This will provide students and staff the opportunity to build a calm, natural response to an emergency.

These procedures relate to school emergency evacuations, lockdowns and shelter-in-place.

Scheduled drills for these procedures will take place throughout the year and students, staff and parents can expect the following steps to be followed.

WHEN A SCHOOL IS CONFRONTED WITH AN EMERGENCY SITUATION there are a few possible courses of action the school may take; what that action is will depend on the specifics of the incident. A school may choose to do any or all of the following:

Shelter in Place

During Shelter-In-Place students and staff retreat to classrooms or another safe area to seek shelter. This includes having any students and staff members who are outdoors come back into the school.

Generally Shelter-In-Place is used during an environmental emergency such as severe storms or chemical spills affecting air quality. Each school's emergency response plan identifies the safest location for its occupants and how to seal a room from possible hazardous conditions.

Lockdown

Lockdowns are usually used in response to acts or threats of violence to the students and/or staff, including any such activities in the general vicinity of the school.

During a lockdown all the outside doors to the building and rooms within the school are locked. No one is permitted in or out of any area once the area has been locked. Students and staff must respond very quickly to a lockdown command to ensure they get to a safe location before the doors are locked. Parents are not permitted access to the building or to their children until the lock-down is over.

Emergency Evacuation

An emergency evacuation requires all students and staff to leave the school and go to an alternate location. In some cases this may mean only going outside and away from the school building until it is all safe to re-enter the school. In other cases, students and staff may need to go to an evacuation centre. Our primary evacuation centre is St. John Paul II Collegiate. Parents would be informed of the alternate location via the school's crisis notification network.

Dismissal

Under some circumstances it may be determined that it is best to dismiss students to their homes and families as expeditiously as possible. Should this be the case, every attempt will be made to alert the emergency contact for each student of the situation and to ensure young students are not left unsupervised.

Schools conduct drills throughout the school year to rehearse emergency procedures. In addition to the Procedures described above schools also practice protocols such as: "On-Alert", which is an early warning system; "Duck-Cover-Hold", which is a method of protecting vital body parts from harm during incidents such as tornados or earthquakes; and Fire Drills.

These drills and exercises are precautionary actions designed to prepare students and staff to act quickly and to minimize a child's fear should a real emergency occur. The school encourages students to engage in open discussion with their parents and teachers regarding any concerns they may have.

Medical Alert

There are a number of students in the school who have severe allergies or medical problems. In support of these children we will make every attempt as a Catholic community to minimize the risk of a serious incident occurring.

Parents of these children are required to inform the school of any special condition and to provide the staff with the necessary medications that can be used in an emergency situation. One identified condition at our school is anaphylaxis (severe allergic reactions to nuts, citrus fruit, shellfish or bee stings). The most common form of this in our school is a severe allergy to nuts.

Therefore, we have made our school a **nut restricted environment**. This means that we request all parents refrain

from sending nut or peanut products in their children's lunches. However this risk is still present, **all students who have a medically verified severe allergy/anaphylaxis will be required to wear their Epi Pen daily.**

The school understands that this may cause some inconvenience when preparing lunch. However, in consideration of the severe nature of these allergies, we seek your cooperation in making the school a safe environment for all children. Additionally, many of our students have allergies to animals, perfumes and scents. We respectfully request that you consider this daily.

Administering Medication to Students

The administering of medication to a student is the responsibility of the student's parent/legal guardian and physician. If possible, medication schedules should be arranged so that students take the medication at home. When no other viable alternative exists to a student requiring medicine during the school day, school staff may be requested to provide such assistance in accordance with Board Policy.

All requests for the administering of medication to students shall be made through the office of the school.

The school requires a signed request from the parent/legal guardian and physician indicating the type of medication to be administered, time and manner of administration, required dosage, and action to be taken in the event of possible hazards or side effects.

To decrease the likelihood of an emergency medical situation, our school will take measures necessary to create a safe environment for all students.

Parents In The School

Volunteers

At St. Mary's School we welcome all our community members "With Open Arms". Our Adult Volunteer Program provides an excellent opportunity for parents and other adults to be involved in the education of children.

A variety of volunteer opportunities exist at St. Mary's, both during the day and the evenings. We invite you to become involved.

To help ensure the security of the students all parent volunteers must check in at the front office and be given a parent volunteer name tag.

Also, a meeting of all new parents who wish to volunteer in the classrooms will be held in September. All new parents who wish to assist in the school must attend this meeting or set up a personal interview with the principal. The purpose of these meetings and interviews is to provide parents with clear and specific guidelines to follow when volunteering in the school.

Parent Council

We again plan to have the school council involved in a variety of activities at our school and to advise us on issues at the school. We encourage you to become involved in the council, to participate in the meetings, and to consider running for an executive position on the council. Meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Many parents may have the misconception that the School Council is a huge commitment and often associated with fundraising. This belief is contrary to the operation of our Parent Council. The role of this Council is to advise on school based issues, assist in providing support for the school and its families, and to foster a positive school climate and learning environment.

Parent Council agendas and minutes are available on the Christ the Redeemer website and at our school.

Lost and Found

Alas, schools are great collectors of Lost and Found items. Most items found will be placed in containers located outside the school gym on the west side of the school. However, items such as, books, jewelry, calculators or other valuables should be taken to the school office.

Lost and found items will be on display three times throughout the year. We ask you to peruse the display. (Of course, you are welcome to look through the Lost and Found containers at any time).

You can help decrease the number of found items by clearly marking clothes, lunch kits and other easily misplaced items. Those items that are found and are clearly marked are readily returned to the rightful owner.

All items that remain at the end of the year will be given to a local charity for distribution to needy families. All items will be sent to a charity organization after both Parent Teacher Interviews and at the end of the school year.

Transportation

Busses

Christ the Redeemer Catholic has contracted with Southland Transportation to provide bussing for eligible students. Bus routes have been determined in consultation between the bus company and our District Office taking into account safety of students, rider-ship time and economics.

The routes will be advertised in the local papers. Should you have questions or concerns, please contact Vanessa Douville at our Central Office) transportation@redeemer.ab.ca or 403 938-8073.

Ineligible Bus Fees

The annual fees for students living within the 2.4 km radius that wish bussing (subject to seat availability) is set as follows:

Payment can be made by cash, cheque (payable to Christ the Redeemer) or automatic debit.

Please contact CTR Transportation Department for the fee schedule depending on Kindergarten and number of children requiring transportation.

Morning Procedures

The buses will drop passengers off in front of the school each morning. Adult supervisors from the school will be present. As each bus arrives, it will proceed to the front of the school to discharge the students. After each bus has dropped off their passengers and the students have cleared the immediate area the driver will then precede out of the bus loop. All students are to exit their bus and go directly to their door area or the playground

Afternoon Procedures

All buses will be lined up in an established order at the front of the school by 2:50 p.m. on Monday to Thursday and by **12:00 noon on Friday.**

Students will board the buses directly after dismissal. The buses will depart when ready and other buses from John Paul II Collegiate have departed.

At the end of the day all bus students are to go directly to their buses and all other students are expected to return to their home or their childcare provider. **All bus students will be put on the bus if we do not receive a note or phone call stating otherwise.** This helps to alleviate children going missing at the end of the day.

Problem with a Student(s) On the Bus

The behaviour of students on the bus is generally the bus driver's responsibility, however if you have a concern or question regarding behaviour on the bus, it is imperative you make contact with your child's bus driver. Communication between families and the bus driver is key to a successful ride for your child. If the bus driver feels a student's behaviour is a chronic problem or if the student commits a major infraction of the rules, the driver will make contact with the parents as well as complete a behaviour report to be forwarded to the school's administration. The administration may suspend a student from riding the school bus should behaviour warrant this.



Excuses from the Busses

Parents should communicate directly with the bus driver and the school's office regarding times the student will not require bus transportation (e.g. sickness, regularly scheduled after school activity). In the afternoon, all students must be accounted for before each bus leaves. Therefore, if a student will not be riding their designated bus, parents must provide a written note to the school's office or call 403 938-8048.

Southland Safety Procedures

Guidelines

- ❖ The driver is responsible for your safety and her/his instruction must be obeyed.
- ❖ We respect one another at all times.
- ❖ We conduct quiet conversation with our neighbours and help in maintaining an acceptable noise level on the bus.
- ❖ Heads and arms remain inside the bus at all times.
- ❖ We remain seated while the bus is in motion at all times.

Consequences

- ❖ First Check - A verbal warning and an opportunity to correct the problem.
- ❖ Second Check – A seat at the front of the bus and a record made in the driver’s log.
- ❖ Third Check – A visit to the Administrative office with a Misconduct Report and a report made in the driver’s log.
- ❖ Severe – Any problem that the driver considers serious, the driver will follow the procedure outlined in the previous step.

Rewards

- ❖ The driver will recognize good behaviour and safe bus habits by keeping the student and Principal informed.

Transportation Shutdown

The Board office may cancel school bus operation when road or weather conditions are hazardous and constitute a safety risk to students. Generally, our district will cancel school bus operation when Foothills School Division does.

Announcement will be made on local radio stations and on the CTR Website as well as Facebook.

School, however, will remain open when the transportation system is shut down. Parents would be responsible for the transportation of their children on these days.

Should it be necessary to dismiss students early from school, announcements will be made on these radio stations. As well, an email will be sent to all parents. Every effort will be made to contact all parents prior to dismissing students should an early dismissal be necessary.

Drop Off and Pick Up Areas

Student Drop Off

Parents of students who drop their children off at school are asked to use the parking lot north of the school or the street south of the school. Children will have direct access to the doors from these areas.

Student Drop Off Continued

If you need to come into the school, please park in the parking lot or on the street and enter through the front doors. **Please use designated parent drop off area.** This area is for drop off and pick up of students only. The staff parking area is designated for employee and contractor parking only.

There should be no unattended vehicles in the Bus Loop. The Bus loop is restricted to bus traffic only. **Please do not use the bus loop between 8:10 – 8:50 a.m. and 2:00 - 3:30 p.m.**

Student Pickup

Students are expected to leave school out of their regular doors. **Students and parents should follow all pedestrian rules including using crosswalks. Parents picking up their child(ren) after school should not double park or block the lane in the parking lot.** Parent should arrange for a consistent pick up location for their child(ren).

Students Walking/Riding Bikes to School

Students walking to school are asked to use the sidewalks and to cross Cimarron Trail (if necessary) at the crosswalk in a safe manner. They should proceed directly to their door at the school.

Students may ride their bicycles to school if done so in a safe manner. Bicycle stands will be provided at the North West end of the playground for all bikes. Students should not ride bicycles in the parking lot or near the buses. Bicycles should not be ridden on the sidewalk.

Bicycles are not to be used at recess. Students going home at noon are allowed to ride their bikes. Students who stay for lunch are not to ride their bikes during the lunch break.

Bicycle riders must ride in a safe manner, obeying all traffic laws. Failure to do so could result in suspension of bike riding privileges. **Students are required by law to use helmets.**

For safety reasons, heeies, skateboarding, rollerblading and scooters, will not be permitted in the school nor used on school grounds. They may be locked to the bike racks.

Safety Patrols

Our school is providing an AMA School Safety Patrol at the corner of Cimarron Trail and Cimarron Park Circle. Please respect and honour the work of our student patrollers. Please do not jaywalk or park near that intersection or through the bus loop.

Indoor Recess Policy

Winters can bring extremely cold weather. Students should be dressed for the weather. We follow the CTR Inclement Weather Policy for indoor recesses. Please dress your child

appropriately accordingly to the weather forecast and be aware that weather conditions can change suddenly.

Field Trips

Field trips are planned to enhance the instructional program by providing opportunities for learning, which cannot be replicated in the “regular” classroom. A letter will be sent home for each trip to outline the details regarding departure and arrival times, purpose, curricular relevance, location and costs. All students are expected to participate in these learning activities unless parents have a serious objection, a health concern exists, or a student is under disciplinary consequences. It is naturally expected that students will represent our school well by demonstrating responsible and mature, productive behaviour in the community.

Communication

Student Assemblies

It is our belief that we need to celebrate our students’ successes and our school on a regular basis. To help us in providing focus time for these celebrations we have several student assemblies for Grade 1-6 students.



All parents are encouraged to join us during these times of sharing and celebration.

Report Cards

Report Cards are a formal method of communicating your child(s) progress. We ask that you discuss and analyze your child’s report card with them. **Our Report Cards will be now be available online through the Parent Portal for each term (November, March and June).**

Regular Home/School Contact

We encourage our teachers to make formal and informal contact when student successes and problems arise. We also believe that it is of utmost importance that parents initiate contact with the school if they have any concerns. It is important not to let concerns fester. Our staff is here to help, so we encourage parents to let us know their concerns as they arise.

Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews

Formal Parent/Teacher/Student Interviews provide the opportunity for all involved to discuss the progress of the child. We strongly encourage the child to be an active participant in the interview process.

November Interviews 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

March Interviews (by request only) 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Agenda Communication Books

The main form of communication between the school and the home will be through the use of the Student Agenda Books. Each day the student will write in their books.

The students will put important information, upcoming events, and homework assignments into the books.

The teachers check the agenda books on a regular basis and will write notes when required to the parents using the books. We encourage all parents to use the agenda books to communicate any minor concerns or questions to the teacher. In situations where the communication is regarding a serious or confidential nature either personal contact or a confidential sealed envelope should be used. This will protect the child from a possibly difficult or embarrassing situation. For those families with email capacity, this form of communication can also be very effective. Staff emails will be provided in the first newsletter of the year.

School Newsletter

The Newsletter or information updates will be available via email and all content is uploaded to our website (www.stmarysokotoks.ca). We encourage families to visit our website, Instagram and Facebook to keep up to date on school events. The purpose of the newsletter is to inform all parents of the special happenings and upcoming events for the school.

School Programs

Catholic Learning Communities

Staff gather as a Catholic Learning Community each Friday afternoon from 1:00-2:10 p.m. Catholic Learning Communities are a commitment to **faith development, student learning and school improvement**. Our Catholic Learning Community is based on the work and research of Professional Learning Communities by Richard Dufour, Rebecca DuFour and Robert Eaker. CLC’s are where educators work collaboratively in an ongoing process of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve. This is a structured meeting time for staff to review data, create action plans, and evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction toward student learning and faith formation.

Mission

As lifelong learners we collaborate to build a Community of faith and knowledge.

Vision

We are a learning Community of passion, innovation and love.

Learning Support Programs

Mission

The Learning Support Team exists to support diversified programming for all students to reach their full potential as lifelong learners. We have succeeded when students show their love of learning confidently and independently.

Early Reading Intervention (ERI)

This program is available to grade one and two students who require reading support. Students are identified through teacher and school assessments. The goal of this program is to provide assistance in the primary years to promote confident, independent readers.

PUF (Program Unit Fund)

Kindergarten students who qualify for this funding may receive extra support for speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, social skills, and/or extra educational experiences.

Enhanced Reading

This program supports readers in grades three to grade six. Students read with an adult in a small group to develop reading skills, reading comprehension, and to promote an interest and love for reading. Students are identified through school and classroom assessments.

Precision Reading (PR)

This program assists students in developing reading fluency. Students read a passage ten times to increase their sight vocabulary and fluency. Their progress is documented on a graph to validate to students their daily progress. Students needing support are identified through school and classroom assessments.

Enhanced Math (EM)

This program supports learners to develop essential skills in mathematics. Students work in a small group with a teacher or teaching assistant to develop necessary skills to support math learning in the classroom. Students are identified through school and classroom assessments.

Gifted and Talented

We offer both homeroom and extended enrichment programming. Teachers know that there are a variety of ways students learn hence adaptations are made to their classroom environment and programs in order to meet individual learner needs. Students are coached to understand their learning style and ability. This enables them delve deeper into enrichment strategies and apply to their studies. Teachers may also provide students with additional enrichment.

Family School Liaison Program

The mission of the Family School Liaison Program (FSLP) involves partnering with Parents and School Personnel to enhance a child's social, behavioral and academic functioning throughout the academic year.

This program is for students and their families who may be struggling with difficulties at home or school.

Referrals to the program are accepted from parents, caregivers, teachers and school administrators. Referrals can be made to the program for a range of issues

including: anxiety, peer problems, social skills, parent/child conflict, depression, family breakdown, anger management, behavioral issues, alcohol/substance abuse issues, grieving and others.

The program provides a variety of services including: supportive counseling for students and their families, solution groups, information sharing with parents on a variety of topics, classroom presentations and referrals to other community agencies.

Communications Program

The Communications Program is a program offered for the special needs students requiring more intense one on one instruction and therapy. Therapies range from speech and language to occupational and physical therapy. It is a strong advocate of inclusive education, focusing on social skills, life skills and functional academics. Along with individualized programming, it supports both students and teachers in the regular classroom by providing behavioral supports, sensory adaptations and social skill instruction to large and small groups.

Home Reading Program

There are many important conditions, which help to improve student achievement. One is parental involvement in their children's education. A second is the development of good work and study habits for students at home. A third is the development of communication skills (such as reading).

The Home Reading Program will help both the teachers and parents to enhance the experiences of students, particularly in the area of reading. The program will develop students' work habits and stress students' responsibility (they have to read each evening and record their reading time on the provided form or slip). We hope this program will be another positive vehicle of communication between home and school.

We see this program as a positive step in enhancing your child's education. We trust you will cooperate fully in the organization and implementation of it.

Guidelines

Each elementary student who attends our school will participate in a Home Reading Program. The purpose of the Home Reading Program is to encourage pleasure reading and language development. Home Reading will be part of the Language Arts Program. Each student will be reading five out of seven nights a week and, depending on the grade they are in, will read for a minimum of ten to twenty minutes each of these nights.

Library/Learning Commons

The school's library provides curriculum materials and recreational reading for student use during class time and until 3:13 p.m. Each student will have the opportunity on a weekly basis to complete a book exchange. Other

media materials are available to the students for their use through their teachers. Students are responsible for overdue, damaged and/or lost library materials. At the end of each month the school's librarian, Ms Vicki Blum, will send out warning letters for books that are one month overdue.

Students will be allowed to go to the library during class time and break time as long as they have a library pass from their teacher.

Technology

All classrooms have permanent Smart Boards in place. These help to enhance student learning and provide new and updated instructional practices through technology. In addition, each classroom has a sound field system which projects a teachers voice and is proven to enhance student learning.

Our St. Elizabeth room has laptop computers which our classes use. We also have mobile Chrome books for classroom use. These labs can be moved into classrooms and used by students at their very own desk. Each student has Google Email and Google Drive account. We also have iPads which are available for classroom use. Individual devices are available in consultation with Learning Support and Classroom teachers.

School Extracurricular Clubs

The school is committed to providing the students with a variety of extracurricular activities that will help enhance their school experience. The school will operate clubs that are formed due to teacher or student interest. The focus of all extracurricular clubs is to provide students with opportunities to develop skills in a specific area. The clubs will also help develop each student's social skills, as they will be involved with other classmates and students.

As these clubs are dependent on the teachers' participation all school rules will be in effect during their operation. Any parents who have special talents and are interested in sharing these with our students are asked to discuss these talents with the school's administration.

We plan to offer special clubs and programs after school and at the school's lunch hour.

Student Recognition Programs

In keeping with our "With Open Arms" theme, we feel that it is very important to recognize students for their personal and class accomplishments. All of our teachers are encouraged to reinforce positive student behaviors and accomplishments.

The administration, faculty and staff will acknowledge student successes through special notes, letters, and phone calls to parents. Students will have the opportunity to be recognized through the school's "WOA!" awards. These

awards will be a small sign of appreciation for good deeds and examples of Christian action. We will also be recognizing students who show exemplary Christian actions.

Virtue of the Month

Students at St. Mary's School continually live as Christ would. To recognize this effort, each month two students per grade level will be recognized based on our pre-set virtue of the month. They will be announced during our monthly assembly, in the newsletter and will be presented formally with a certificate by administration.

Athletic Programs

Athletics at St. Mary's School are an opportunity for students to enjoy themselves through challenging activities while gaining self-knowledge and self-confidence. Athletics also present the chance to develop lasting friendships by sharing effort and experience with others. The first priority at St. Mary's School is academics, within the context of our Catholicity, and students' work to maintain quality classroom performance while members of school teams. Athletics should complement a student-athlete experience.

Lunch Program and Snacks

All students in Kindergarten to grade six eat lunch at the school. The students will be supervised during the eating portion of the lunch break by school staff. The students will be given up to 20 minutes to eat their lunch. Our Parent Council offers a weekly Hot Lunch program.

We will be encouraging all students to eat their snack before their break times to help reduce the possibility of a choking injury and to minimize the amount of garbage on our playground.