

Holy Cross Catholic School

Name: _____

Teacher: _____



**Holy Cross
Catholic School**

Student Handbook

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year.

The new school year brings many opportunities and changes. We warmly welcome all students and families who are new to the area and hope they will soon feel very much at home with us.

Our school has a balanced day with two “split” recess/nutrition breaks at 10:55-11:35 a.m. and 1:15-1:55 p.m. Students are outside for twenty minutes of recess and have 20 minutes in class for the nutrition break.

Please read the agenda notes carefully and feel free to contact the office if you have any questions. We look forward to an exciting year of learning together.

God Bless,

Madeline White
Principal
smcdsb.on.ca/hcc

FAITH IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Goals to Achieve, Faith to Believe

We strive to be a faith filled community, focusing on the needs of others and providing support for them. Through service and commitment to our goals we aspire to maximize the potential of all.

Our Parish Partner

We believe in fostering a strong relationship between your home, our school and St. John Vianney Parish. Our parish works closely with our school community to provide your child with an education rooted in the Catholic faith. Throughout the year, there will be opportunities for our students to participate in the sacraments, Mass and prayer celebrations. You will see our pastor, Father Biju visiting our school and celebrating special events with our community.



Sacramental Preparation

We work closely with our parish community to support students as they prepare to receive the sacraments.

Each year, students in Grade 2 have the opportunity to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. Parents will work with St. John Vianney Parish to prepare for these sacraments. Our school supports and complements what children are learning at the parish through classroom teaching.

Students in Grade 7 will have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Again, arrangements for this sacrament are made through the parish, but the preparation

and celebration of the sacrament is an important part of the students' year.



COMMUNICATING WITH YOU

Establishing a positive and open relationship between parents, teachers and students is a critical part of achieving excellence in education.

The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board uses the SchoolMessenger Communicate Tool to send messages and updates to our staff and families. These messages can be sent via email, text message or phone. Our school will use this tool to send regular updates to families throughout the year and it will also be used by the Board or the school to communicate information during crisis or emergency situations. It is important that the school office has your most current email address and phone number on file so that you receive the messages in a timely manner.

You will also find information posted on our website smcdsb.on.ca/hcc.

This student agenda is also an excellent way to communicate with your child's classroom teacher.

Online Payment Using School Day

Our school is excited to offer online payment through a program called School-Day.

The system will enable parents to:

- Approve permission forms and pay online instantly
- Register your child for extracurricular activities
- Order and pay for hot lunches
- Reduce the amount of paper sent home in backpacks

If you haven't done so already, please obtain your family's secure key code from the school and visit

www.school-day.com to register. Once you have registered you can pay for items and approve permission forms by clicking on the “School Day” quick link on our school website or logging in directly on the school day website www.school-day.com.

DIGITAL RESPONSIBILITY AND TECHNOLOGY USE POLICY

All students have the privilege of accessing a variety of technology resources available at school. Teachers will engage students in using technology effectively, morally, and ethically, for student learning. By providing relevant and compelling programs, teachers will encourage students to discern when and how to use technology, and to become reflective, responsible digital citizens. Technology is to be used appropriately to promote creative, innovative and expanded learning opportunities for all students.

Holy Cross Catholic School recognizes the benefits of technology and that many students have access to personal technological devices (smart phones, cell phones, iPods, iPads, etc.). In keeping with the board's virtues and values, we need to ensure responsible use of these devices. Student use of personal technology devices, including cell phones, is strictly prohibited during school hours, in all areas of the school as well as in the schoolyard, except for when used in class with teacher supervision and for educational purposes. **Holy Cross Catholic School is not responsible for lost or stolen or damaged devices that are brought to school.** If a student chooses to bring one to school, it must be turned off and kept out of sight.



Progressive discipline will be used in response to students seen with personal technology devices, including cell phones

Please remember that no pictures or videos may be taken on personal devices at school due to privacy regulations.

There will be no posting on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) of inappropriate content affecting the moral tone of the school and the school community, such as name calling, threats, negativity, bullying, etc., nor will there be any posting of pictures or videos taken at school. Students engaging in these

activities will be dealt with using progressive discipline measures and, if required, the police.

The use of technology in our school, as well as the use of social media outside of the school, must be in the spirit of Catholic education and reflect the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

Promoting a Positive School Climate

Maintaining a positive school climate at Holy Cross Catholic School is a key priority because it helps students feel safe, welcome and secure. Using our Catholic values as a guide, we have developed procedures and guidelines to ensure that our students and staff learn and work in a positive and productive environment.

Student Behaviour

Our school has established some key statements to outline expectations around student behaviour. As per the *Safe Schools Act*, progressive discipline measures will be employed.

Students at Holy Cross Catholic School:

- Will be active, positive and enthusiastic participants within our Catholic community as we strive towards living the Gospel message.
- Come to school on time and prepared to work with an enthusiastic and positive attitude, while striving to achieve their academic goals.
- Will be familiar with and practise the school procedures as outlined in this school agenda in addition to any policies outlined by administration during the school year.
- Will respect and obey those in authority within our school community. Students will address staff and visitors to our school community in a polite and courteous manner.
- Will respect fellow students as they listen actively, speak honestly and respond positively in the classroom, on the schoolyard and as ambassadors of our school in the community.

Dress For Success

Students will be participating in a wide range of activities – both inside and outdoors – at school and so it is important that they wear comfortable, durable clothing that is suitable for the weather.

Our school is special because we model ourselves after Jesus Christ. How we present ourselves must

reflect our commitment to promoting a safe, positive and respectful learning environment.

Appropriate Dress Guidelines:

Clothing with inappropriate slogans or images, narrow strapped tops, crop tops or short shorts/short skirts are not acceptable. Hats are not to be worn inside the building.

Footwear

For safety reasons and to maintain cleanliness in the classrooms, students **MUST** have slippers or shoes to wear inside their class. Outdoor footwear is not to be worn in teaching areas. Students **MUST** have running shoes for gym classes. Flip-flops and other similar footwear are discouraged as they present a safety issue in the school.



Dressing for the Weather

We ask that students dress in clothing that is suitable for the weather – this is especially important during the winter months. Durable and warm clothing will help ensure that your child's outdoor experiences are enjoyable. It is also advisable to label all clothing with your child's first and last name. In the summer, hats and sunscreen are recommended.

SAFE SCHOOLS

Safe Arrival and Attendance

It is important that your child arrives at school safely and on time. Our Safe Arrival Program, which includes communicating with our office when your child is late or absent, helps ensure student safety.

Reporting Your Child Late or Absent

Please follow this simple, but critical process when reporting your child as late or absent

Step 1: Phone our school at 705-431-2935 at any time to inform us when your child will be absent or late. There is voicemail 24 hours per day.

Step 2 – Leave your child's full name, teacher's name and the reason for the absence on the school voicemail.

Step 3 – When your child returns to class, provide the teacher with a note explaining the reason for your child's absence.

Step 4 – If your child is late, please direct them to the office where they will check-in for attendance.

Important Note: If your child regularly walks to school, it is assumed that he/she will attend class

when buses are cancelled due to inclement weather. If you decide to keep your child home during an inclement weather day, you must use the process listed above to report your child's absence.

Safe Welcome Program

All of our elementary schools have front door intercom and video technology installed as part of the Ministry of Education's Safe Welcome Program.

The intention of the program is for all elementary schools in Ontario to have doors locked throughout the school day. This means that students who are late for school or return to school after an appointment will need to be buzzed in through the main entrance. This enhanced security measure provides us with one more way to monitor who is visiting our schools and help us ensure that all visitors sign in at the office.

Leaving Early

Students who are leaving school early must bring a note to their teacher stating the need for the early dismissal. Please avoid any last minute early dismissals. We do not want to interrupt the learning in the classroom. At the time of dismissal, your child will proceed to the office to be signed out by a parent/guardian.

Morning Drop-off

School begins at 8:55 a.m. and supervision in the schoolyard begins at 8:35 a.m. **Please do not drop your child off prior to this time.**

Students will remain outside until the 8:55 a.m. bell, unless there are inclement weather conditions.

All students are to enter and exit the building through their designated door (the same door they use for recess). Students should only use the main doors (adjacent to the office) when they are being signed in due to lateness or signed out by a parent/guardian prior to the end of the school day.

Afternoon Pick-up

Our school day ends at 3:15 p.m.

As we have a significant number of buses, bus students line up to the west of the school in bus order and are directed onto the buses once the kindergarten students have boarded.

Kindergarten students are directly supervised from the kindergarten yard to the bus. Walking students and those meeting parents are asked to exit to the east and rear entrances of the school. Parents should wait outside the fenced area.

School Parking Lot

Please note that there is no access to the school parking lot during the following times:
8:30 - 9 :00 a.m. and 3:00 - 3:30 p.m.

Bicycles

Students may ride their bicycles to school, but it is important that they are left and locked in the designated bicycle racks. Wearing a bicycle helmet is mandatory and students must walk their bikes when on school property. Please note that the school cannot accept responsibility for damaged or stolen bicycles.

Skateboards, In-line Skates, Scooters and Heelies

Skateboards, in-line skates, scooters and heelies (shoes with wheels in the heels) are not to be used on school property

Riding the Bus

We are committed to providing safe and reliable bus transportation for those students whose distance from home to school. Riding the bus should be an enjoyable and positive experience for our students.



In order to ensure the safety of children riding the bus we ask the following:

- Students must take their bus home in the evening unless they have a note from a parent or guardian indicating that they can remain at school or walk home.
- A note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the office if a student plans to get off the bus at a different stop. This note will be approved by the office and then provided to the bus driver.
- Occasionally, we receive requests from parents to allow their child to ride the bus in order to visit a friend's house. Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate these requests.

Ensuring Safety on the Bus

It is helpful to periodically remind your child about the rules and regulations of riding a school bus. Although it is very rare, school bus privileges can be suspended temporarily or permanently if a child does not respect the rules and regulations

that are in place for the safety of everyone. Here are some basic guidelines to follow:

- Your child must always enter the bus in an orderly manner and immediately find a seat. Once on the bus, he or she must always follow the instructions of the school bus.
- All students must remain in their seats while the bus is in motion. With children sitting quietly, the bus driver is free from distractions and able to focus on road safety.
- Parents are financially responsible for any willful damage to the bus caused by their children.
- Keeping in mind the safety of all riders, we ask that your child not bring any objects onto the bus that may hinder safe operation.
- Students must also refrain from eating or drinking on the bus.
- Heads and arms must stay inside the bus at all times and aisles should be kept clear.

Bus Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather

On inclement weather days we urge you to visit simcoecountyschoolbus.ca or listen to a local radio station to find out if buses are cancelled. When buses are cancelled in the morning, they are automatically cancelled in the afternoon.

Know Your Weather Zone

Weather zones are used to allow for partial bus cancellations. Holy Cross Catholic School is in the **CENTRAL weather zone**. There are four weather zones and it is possible that buses will run in our zone, but be cancelled in another zone and so it is important for you to know your zone.

Custody

We are always concerned about the safety of your child. In some family situations, there may be custody issues, visiting rights and special instructions – it is critical that we be made aware of any such situation. Please ensure that the office staff and the classroom teacher are aware of legal agreements between separated or divorced parents and copies of current legal documents are on file in the office.

Emergency Situations

At Holy Cross Catholic School, procedures are in place so that we are fully prepared for an emergency situation. Staff and students routinely practise these procedures. If it is necessary to evacuate the school, our students will be relocated to Goodfellow Public School. In the case of an emergency, transporting students to this location is the responsibility of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. In any emergency

situation, our school would work closely with the school board and emergency personnel to provide updates via websites and the media.

In very rare circumstances, for example a power outage or loss of heat in the winter, we may be required to close the school early. In emergency situations or early school closures, your child may be picked up by you or an authorized designate. If a parent authorizes a designate to pick-up a student, the teacher would appreciate a signed and dated note.

Major Incidents

We know that being proactive and preparing for the potential of a major incident is a key way to keep our students and staff safe. As part of our safe schools initiative, Holy Cross Catholic School has worked with the local police service to develop a response plan should a violent incident occur.

This involves immediate contact with the police and a lockdown of the premises. Although it is highly unlikely that something like this would occur, our staff regularly reviews and practises procedures with the students. Your child may mention to you that they were involved in a “Lock Down” drill because that is what our response plan is referred to within the school.

Making the Most of Your Child’s Learning

In order to promote the best learning environment possible, we strive to keep school day/classroom interruptions to a minimum. Planning in advance and maintaining regular communication through this agenda will help ensure a harmonious and smooth day at school.

Dropping off items – parents are not permitted to go to their child’s classroom to drop off items, check-in, etc. If a parent needs to drop something off during the school day they are asked to check-in at the office, leave the item on the drop-off table and ensure their child’s name is affixed to the item. Students will be called down to collect their items 5 minutes before Nutrition Break/recess.

Speaking with the teacher – if you have questions, we encourage you to speak to your child’s teacher, but we recommend that you arrange discussion for either before or after school hours. In addition, if you are making a change to your child’s regular routine, please make these arrangements well in advance and communicate changes with your child’s teacher in writing.

Using the telephone – students will not be permitted to use the office telephone unless they have permission from their teacher. If a phone call is necessary, it will be made by the teacher or another adult (this includes calls regarding illness or injury).

Catholic School Community Council

Members are elected each fall. Anyone is welcome to attend the council meetings.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS

We know that parents want us to promote a healthy environment at school. This includes promoting healthy food options, opportunities for physical activity as well as minimizing exposure to illness – all of these contribute to better learning.

Scent-Safe Schools

Please be advised that a Scent-Safe Schools program is now in place for all schools and board office locations. This means that we are asking for the cooperation of students, staff and visitors in not using scented products in our working and learning environments.

Not using scented products is a simple thing to do and it will help ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all of our students and staff.

Accident or Illness

If your child becomes sick or is injured while at school, we will contact you as soon as possible. If you are not available, or unable to be contacted, we will call the emergency contacts that you have listed in your child’s record. It is essential that parents and guardians notify the school of changes to phone numbers or contacts.

Communicable Diseases

The *Health Promotion and Protection Act* requires that children with certain communicable diseases must remain at home. Unfortunately, we do not have the space or staff supervision for children who are not well enough to go outside at recess. The following list defines some of the more common childhood diseases and how long your child should stay home if he/she becomes ill with one of these illnesses.

- **Chickenpox** - for 5 days after the rash begins or until all blisters have crusted.
- **Impetigo** - until the antibiotic prescribed by the doctor has been taken for at least one full day.

- **Pink-eye** - until the antibiotic prescribed by the doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
- **Scabies** - until treatment has been given.
- **Scarlet Fever** - Until the antibiotic prescribed by the doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
- **Strep Throat** - until the antibiotic prescribed by the doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
- **Fifth Disease** - even though this is not a communicable disease, it should be reported to the office because there is a risk posed to pregnant women.

For more information we encourage you to contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit or visit their website at simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Head Lice

Any situation related to head lice will be dealt with in a discreet manner, which protects the dignity of the children and privacy of families.

We are asking parents and guardians to help us prevent incidents or the spread of head lice by doing the following:

- Examine your child's head for possible infestations at regular intervals.
- Notify the school of any infestations.
- Ensure that proper and full de-infestation takes place within a reasonable length of time.

The major signs and symptoms of head lice are: intense itching, frequent and persistent head scratching with scratch marks, or an apparent rash on the neck and scalp. Further information regarding head lice is available through the school office or by visiting the Health Unit's website at simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Immunizations

In Ontario, under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*, you must provide proof that your child's vaccinations are current. When you register your child for school for the first time, you will be asked for a record of your child's immunization. Students who do not have up-to-date immunization or a valid exemption on file at the Health Unit, may be suspended from school. You can find out more about immunization programs on the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's website at simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Administering Medication

There are some students who require regular or special medication. We all want to be sure that

your child receives any medication he or she needs. Our board has a medication administration policy, which states that no medication can be administered by staff without written permission from parents. Students may not carry medication with them at any time, with the exception of an EpiPen and/or inhaler. Informed consent must be provided from parents should a child be required to carry it with them. If a child requires medication assigned staff will administer it. For medication to be administered, a consent and instruction form must be filled out. These forms and our board's policy are available at our office or on the board's website at smcdsb.on.ca.

HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Nutrition

Nutrition breaks are at 10:55-11:15 or 11:15 – 11:35 a.m. and 1:15-1:35 or 1:35 – 1:55 p.m.

Students will eat their lunch at their desk and will remain on school property. Students who walk to school may go home for lunch if they have written permission from a parent/guardian.

Students are NOT permitted to leave school to have lunch at a local restaurant unless accompanied by a parent.



Snacks

Students will be provided with time in the classroom to have snacks and drinks. All food and beverage must be eaten in the classroom and are not to be consumed in the hallway, gym, washrooms or outside at recess.

Allergies

Many children have allergies, but for some students an allergy can be life threatening. For example, even minimal exposure to peanuts can prove fatal within minutes. Some other common allergens include tree nuts, sesame seeds, shellfish, eggs, milk, perfumes/scents and latex – all of these can cause severe reactions.

If your child has a severe allergy, it is absolutely critical that you let us know. With your help, we will do our best to reduce risk and make sure all our students are safe, healthy, and able to concentrate on learning. Please ensure that anaphylaxis emergency plans are completed and signed by both parent and doctor, then submitted to the office.

Our staff is instructed on how to deal with anaphylactic shock. However, our best course of action is to prevent exposure to potentially life-

threatening allergies. As a school community, we must work together to ensure the safety of our students.

Here is what we are doing to reduce the risk of allergic exposure:

- All food and beverage must be consumed inside the classroom – under no circumstances are students allowed to have snacks in the schoolyard.
- Our school strives to be a peanut free zone. Please ensure that all food sent to school with your child meets this standard. This includes “pea butter” products.
- Your child’s teacher will inform you if there are other allergies in your child’s classroom. We ask that you please understand and appreciate the health and safety of every student by not sending food and beverage items that may be a cause for concern.
- Please check with your child’s classroom teacher before providing treats for the classroom for special occasions. There are many students with a variety of food allergies and so we err on the side of caution to make sure all of our students are safe.
- There are also severe allergies to scents/perfumes in our school. Please do not wear these to school.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Recess

Getting some fresh air and participating in physical activity at recess is important. Unless the weather is unsuitable, students are expected to be outside during recess. We cannot leave children unsupervised inside the classroom and so they must go out to the yard where supervision is provided.

Yard Safety

While outside at recess, we expect students to play safely and respect the rules of the schoolyard at all times. During the winter months, it is essential to leave all snow on the ground. Throwing snowballs or kicking snow is not acceptable.

Bringing Personal Property to School

We request students not bring valued personal property to school including mobile devices, trading cards, etc. These items can easily be lost or damaged. Please note that the school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.

Students should not bring money to school.

Lost and Found

We encourage our students to check the lost and found for any misplaced items. If you know your child is missing something, you are welcome to check the lost and found yourself (please check-in at the office first). Unclaimed items will eventually be donated to a local charity.

Field Trips

Parent will be required to sign a Permission Form that outlines the Field Trip and the Elements of Risk associated with the trip. Prior to the field trip, the teacher will discuss the purpose of the field trip and learning outcomes for students. The classroom teacher will inform parent volunteers of responsibilities and expectations as well as appropriate strategies for dealing with misbehaviour. Parent volunteers must have a current criminal background check in place at the school.

Co-curricular Activities

There are various clubs and sport teams offered at the school. Many take place during nutrition/recess breaks, as well as before or after school. These co-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to learn new skills and form friendships. They help to teach teamwork, co-operation and demonstrate school spirit.

In order to participate in co-curricular activities, students must make a sincere effort in their academic endeavours, and demonstrate acceptable levels of trust-worthiness. Students must sign a Code of Conduct contact with their coach, as well as, submit a \$40 team jersey deposit (refunded upon return of the jersey). Students must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner both in and out of the school. We also expect students to be courteous, respectful and show appreciation to the people organizing the events and activities. It is important for students to represent our school community by showing positive sporting conduct and by dressing appropriately for the event.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD’S LEARNING

Homework

Homework is an integral part of a student’s learning experience. In order to get the most out of school, students will be required, at times, to finish or continue their studies outside of the classroom. Research clearly shows that students who successfully complete homework achieve greater academic success in school.

On occasion, parents become concerned with the amount or content of homework assigned by the classroom teacher. If this is the case, please take the time to contact your child's teacher. It is recommended that all students take the time to read each night, and if possible, be read to by a parent or older sibling.

Your Child's School Supplies

During the course of the year, students will need a variety of items to ensure that they are able to complete their work and to support their learning. We will send home a division specific list of basic items that your child will be required to bring to school for their own use.

Learning Commons (Library)

The library Learning Commons is the hub of Holy Cross Catholic School. This is where students and teachers come to collaborate, and inquiry based learning is promoted. Our goal is to continue to be a thriving educational and spiritual community.

Students will have the opportunity to sign out books or resources. These items must be returned the next time they visit the library. Students will not be able to sign out new material until their previous items have been returned.

It is the student's responsibility to take care of books after they have signed them out. If a book is lost or damaged, it is expected that the student or parent will replace it.

Contact Information

Please inform the school office if your address or any other pertinent information such as home or work telephone numbers change throughout the year. We need to make certain that our records are accurate.

Wishing You a Successful Year

We hope you found the information in this agenda informative and useful. If at any time throughout the school year, you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or our office staff. We know that each child will grow tremendously – both in learning and in faith. We look forward to working with you to provide your child with a fulfilling year.