



"In partnership with family, church and community, we provide Catholic Education of the highest quality to our students."

École St. John Paul II School

Student-Parent Handbook

2024-2025

École St. John Paul II School
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Medicine Hat Catholic
Board of Education



Welcome to École St. John Paul II School

École St. John Paul II School is dedicated to the fullest development of the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional and physical dimensions of each student.

We are extremely pleased to have assembled a very unique and powerful learning environment for the students at École St. John Paul II School. As a dual-track school, we proudly offer two programming options for our parents to choose from. The school very intentionally (by design) is equipped with modern furnishings, programming, and spaces that are very conducive to learning. Each classroom offers a balanced learning approach to optimize learning for every child. The school is equipped with a Learning Commons for extended learning and enrichment opportunities. A modern Sensory Room is equipped with some distinct pieces of equipment and instruments to facilitate a self-regulation/calming environment. The playground equipment area offers modern features with a safe pour-in-place rubberized surface for added protection. A Front-Row speech amplification system has been equipped into every classroom and open space in the school.

As a Catholic School, École St. John Paul II School endeavors to:

- Teach and reinforce the principles of the Catholic faith.
- Provide a Catholic Christian atmosphere to enable each student to gain understandings of his/her faith and learn to apply Catholic principles to everyday life situations.

In order to achieve our objectives, parents are encouraged to communicate frequently with the school and participate in school-sponsored activities whenever possible. École St. John Paul II School provides a safe and caring environment. Our goal is to continue to work diligently with all stakeholders to ensure that we provide an optimum learning environment for all of our students.

Sincerely,

Mr. Robert Dumanowski,
Principal



Mrs. Edlyn Murphy
Vice Principal



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School Expectations

Expectations of Parents:

- To ensure regular & punctual attendance of their children, sending them fully prepared for their days work
- To encourage and support student growth by providing a home environment conducive to learning
- To support school staff as they attempt to foster the spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural and moral development of each student
- To contact school personnel and discuss student progress at regular intervals
- To attend parent-teacher conferences as requested
- To support staff in having students follow through with their responsibilities

Expectations of Students:

- To be responsible for their education and be actively involved
- To be prepared for learning and receptive to new ideas
- To exercise self-control
- To become a self-directed learner
- To possess a positive attitude
- To have respect for authority
- To treat others and their property with respect & dignity
- To work to the very best of their ability

Expectations of the Parish:

- To serve as a link between home, school and the parish
- To work toward the development of the spiritual growth of students, staff and their families
- To provide sacramental programs for students and assist in the development of their lives within the church

School Timetable

(Morning) ELP & Kindergarten:

8:30 AM.....Classes Begin
11:15 AM.....Dismissal

(Afternoon) ELP & French Kindergarten:

11:55 AM..... Classes Begin
2:40 PM..... Dismissal

Grades 1 to 6:

8:25 AM – Warning Bell
8:28 AM – Classes Begin
10:00-10:15 AM – Recess (Grades 1-3)
10:15-10:30 AM – Recess (Grades 4-6)
11:50-12:08 PM – Lunch (Gr. 1-3) & Recess (Gr. 4-6)
12:08-12:25 PM – Lunch (Gr. 4-6) & Recess (Gr. 1-3)
12:25 PM – Warning Bell
12:27 PM – Classes Resume
2:40 PM – Dismissal

Programming Options

The dual-track nature of École St. John Paul II School provides maximum opportunity for English and French-language programming. French Immersion is regarded as a highly successful approach to second language learning — an effective way for students to become functionally fluent in French while achieving all of the objectives of the regular school program. This program is designed for students whose first language is not French. The objective in this program is full mastery of the English language, functional fluency in French, as well as an understanding and appreciation of the French culture.

Counselling Services

Counselling services are provided at École St. John Paul II School. Parents will be contacted if the school recommends any students for counselling services. Parents may also inquire about this service by contacting the school administration or your child's teacher.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Elementary Athletic Association

All elementary schools have formed an association to promote sports and inter-school activities. Many sporting activities are held throughout the year e.g., floor hockey, volleyball, and dodge ball events.

Skating

Our students will have access to the outdoor rink located behind our school. They also have the opportunity to access a City rink during the winter months.

Intramurals

Students will have the opportunity to participate in intramural games during the second half of the lunch period each Tuesday and/or Thursday (on a rotating schedule) during the colder winter months.

Free Throw Basketball

Students in Grades 5 & 6 will have the opportunity to participate in the annual Knights' of Columbus Basketball Free Throw Competition.

Children's Art Exhibition

A selection of student artwork will be selected and subsequently exhibited at the Alberta Teachers' Convention and at the Medicine Hat Art Museum and Art Gallery Children's Art Show at the Esplanade.

School Policies

Student Code of Conduct (AP 351 Appendix A)

1. Statement of Purpose - Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education is committed to providing welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and a sense of belonging for students. (School Act Sec 45.1). The treatment of all persons with respect and dignity is a core value within the division. Expectations for student conduct arise from School Act requirements and the school district's Catholic values.

In our ministry, we value and celebrate:

- Teaching and living our Catholic faith
 - Our Catholic traditions
 - Our ability to offer a full range of educational programs for all students
 - That every child is a unique creation who possesses an intrinsic dignity which must always be respected
 - Parents as primary educators. Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children
2. Definition of Bullying - Section 1.1 (b.1) Alberta School Act, defines "bullying" as "repeated and hostile or demeaning behavior by an individual in the school community where the behavior is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation."
 3. Communication - The Student Code of Conduct must be:
 - Made publicly available
 - Reviewed every year, and
 - Provided to all staff, students and parents/legal guardians
 4. The Alberta Human Rights Act - our priority is to ensure that all of our students are provided with a respectful and compassionate school environment rooted in Catholic values and teachings. This includes placing a strong value on having students conduct themselves properly at all times by respecting:
 - All individuals and not engaging in discriminatory actions towards others because of their age, race, colour, place of origin, ancestry, family status, religious beliefs, physical disability, mental disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation
 - School authorities and School and Division property, as well as, the property of others
 5. Shared Responsibility - Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education recognizes that responsibility for student conduct is a shared responsibility between the Division, students, their parents/guardians and the broader community. The students in our Division are expected to behave in a virtuous manner that is charitable, courteous, respectful of others and supportive of the school philosophy and the goals of Catholic education.
 6. Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior - As required in Section 12 and Section 45.1(3) of the School Act the following behaviors are deemed acceptable and unacceptable within the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education.

6.1 Acceptable Behaviors

Students are expected to meet the requirements of the School Act (Section 12) which states a student shall conduct himself or herself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:

- Be diligent in pursuing the student's studies
- Attend school regularly and punctually

- Co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services
- Comply with the rules of the school
- Account to the student's teachers for the student's conduct
- Respect the rights of others
- Ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging
- Refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behavior directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means
- Positively contribute to the student's school and community

6.2 Unacceptable Behaviors

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviors with regard to student conduct in schools that interfere with the establishment of welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and a sense of belonging for students:

- Defiance and disrespect
- Inappropriate use of language
- Behaviors that interfere with the learning of others and/or the school environment or that create unsafe conditions
- Open opposition to authority
- Bullying, including cyber-bullying
- Breaches of digital on-line safety
- Physical harm/assault; Personal and/or sexual harassment
- Possession or use of weapons
- Drug, tobacco, e-cigarette, alcohol use, possession or distribution
- Inappropriate student dress
- Inappropriate use of mobile devices
- Theft and vandalism; Threats or intimidation
- Extortion; Discrimination

7. Progressive Discipline Plan - The school's discipline plan will outline the expectations, consequences, and the progression of actions to be taken depending on the severity and/or frequency of the occurrences and will consider the student's age, maturity and individual circumstances, and must ensure that support is provided for students who are impacted by inappropriate behavior, as well as for students who engage in inappropriate behavior. As well, parental and district involvement may be requested to support school discipline procedures. At all times, teachers and administrators will use their professional judgment in applying consequences. Each school will keep a record of any disciplinary action taken with a student or group of students.

Consequences are intended to have a positive effect on the student's journey through reconciliation, either formally or informally, with the school community and those affected by the student's behavior.

The following consequences are progressive in their degree of intervention and will be enacted depending on the frequency and severity of occurrences. They will be applied consistently and fairly to all students, notwithstanding the individual differences of children and the uniqueness of specific circumstances and situations.

Progressive discipline is a whole school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences, including:

Prevention measures and initiatives:

- Early and ongoing intervention strategies
- Strategies to address unacceptable behavior

Interventions and consequences increase when:

- The concerning behavior is persistent
- The concerning behavior escalates
- There is a very serious infraction of the code of conduct

Interventions and consequences may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Informal Conferences
- Restriction of Privileges
- Parent Conferences
- In School Suspensions
- Risk Assessment
- Suspension / Expulsion (AP 357)
- Student Redirection
- Behavior Support Plan
- Learner Support Plan
- Involvement of Instructional Services and Supports
- Involvement of External Services and Supports

The Principal may involve police in disciplinary matters when criminal activity has become evident. When police are involved, the Principal will conduct a separate, parallel investigation at the school level and provide disciplinary action separate from any criminal charges that may be issued.

8. Student Support - Support will be offered to students impacted by inappropriate behavior and to those students who engage in inappropriate behavior. This is significant because while the student code of conduct must address the consequences for inappropriate behavior, it also ensures that support (not just consequences) is provided to those students who engage in unacceptable behavior. Examples of how support could be provided to students who have engaged in unacceptable behavior include mentoring, restorative processes, and regular check-ins with teachers or schools' counsellors, etc.
9. Consideration of Student Diversity - The School Act requires that the student code of conduct address consequences for unacceptable behavior and that these reasonable consequences consider the student's age, maturity, and individual circumstances. The specific circumstances of the situation and of the student need to be taken into account when determining appropriate consequences. For example, any diverse needs that the student has – whether they are physical, behavioral, communicational, mental health, trauma, etc. must be considered.

School Attendance and Late Arrival

1. Parents are asked to contact the front office by no later than 8:45 AM when their child is going to be absent or late.
2. Students are expected to attend all their classes and must make up missed schoolwork when they are absent. Repeated absences will be addressed by school Administration.
3. As there is sufficient break time allowed between classes, students must arrive to class on time. Appropriate steps will take place if a student is consistently late.

Early Arrival and Supervision of Students

Students are not to arrive to the school grounds before 8:10 A.M. Supervision is provided mornings between 8:10-8:25 A.M., during the recess/lunch breaks, and after school (until the busses depart). Students who do not normally take the bus at the end of the day must be picked at the 2:40 P.M. dismissal time unless they are registered in the Out of School Care Program.

Closed Campus

Students must notify the front office whenever entering or leaving the school during the instructional day. This includes the lunch hour when students are only permitted to leave the grounds accompanied by their parents or guardians (i.e. medical, dental, etc.). Parents/Guardians are asked to notify the office or administration by note or telephone (in advance) whenever they plan to take their child out of school during the school day.

Student Evaluation

Report Cards

1. Report cards are sent home to parents three (3) times per school year (November, March and June).
2. Our school uses Outcome-Based Report Cards to communicate student achievement/marks in each subject, for each reporting period. Please see your child's teacher or school administration for more detail.
3. Provincial Achievement Tests will be administered in May/June in the core subjects for Grade 6 students.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are welcome to request a conference with the classroom teacher or the Principal/Vice-Principal at any time (with reasonable notice, and at a mutually agreed upon date & time).

Formal Parent-Teacher conferences will be available and scheduled after the 1st reporting period in November and again following the 2nd reporting period in March.

General Information

School Council

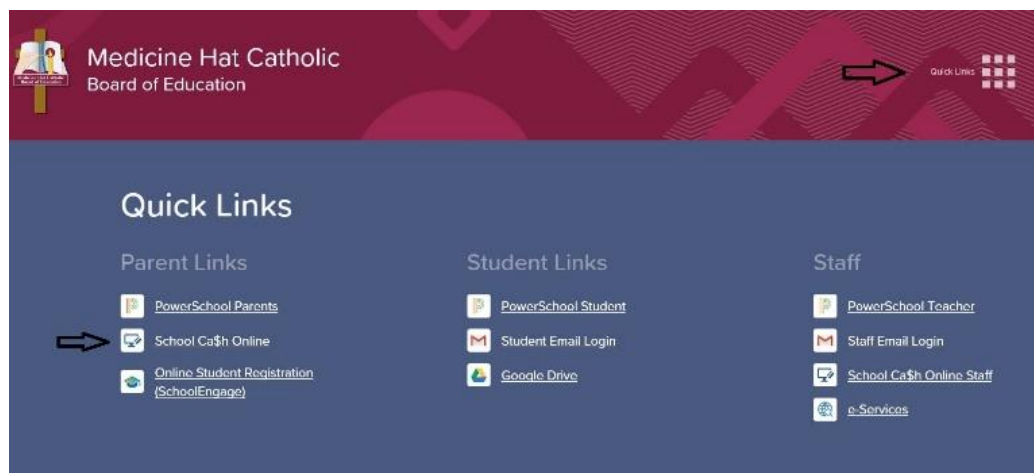
The School Council AGM and elections are held each September. Meetings are scheduled approximately once per month. Parents are encouraged to become involved and support the teaching staff and administration of the school.

Monthly Newsletter

Our school Newsletter is sent out monthly by email. Parents are therefore asked to sign up for a digital copy of the Newsletter via our school's website.

School Fees / Payments

SchoolCashOnline is an online parent portal that offers a safe, fast, and convenient way to pay for all fees related to our school. All parents must create an account. You require your child's student identification number to set-up an account (which can be obtained by calling the front office).



Telephone Protocol

The telephone at the front office is available for use if a student is ill or if it is deemed an emergency by the school administration. Students who miss a bus should phone home – do not attempt to walk home before contacting parents. The phone cannot be used to arrange social events with friends.

Electronic Equipment

Please keep electronic equipment at home. In the event that a cellphone is brought on campus, it must be stored in the students' lockers and/or backpack in the off or silent position during the instructional day. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items under any circumstances.

If a student is found in possession of one of these devices during any part of the school day, the student will be asked to turn it off and immediately surrender it to a staff member where it will be stored at the front office until the end of the day (or in some cases even longer, if the problem persists). These devices will only be returned to the students at the end of the school day upon the request of the student and/or a parent. In some cases, the school may require that a parent come pick up the device from the office.

Visitors to the School

Parents are most welcome at the school. ALL visitors must call and/or enter via the front office. Parents are not permitted to interrupt the learning environment and/or instruction at the school. Therefore, the school secretary will ensure that items left at the office are delivered to your child's classroom at the appropriate time. If you are volunteering in a classroom or working with students, you will need to register at the front office and ensure that we have a current Police Information Check (PIC) and a Child Welfare Check on file. The school can provide a PIC letter application form upon request.

Learning Services

Support for students through Learning Services is done following a series of individual tests and assessments. Parents are required to give their consent before testing or a placement of this kind can occur.

Speech Language Therapy services for those students in need of such a service can be accessed through a school referral. Referrals for assessment of speech difficulties are made following the consent of the parent, and/or upon the request of school.

Religious Instruction

As a Catholic school, our goal is to provide an environment where religious values are permeated throughout the entire school day. Periodically, we will have masses and celebrations that mark the liturgical calendar. Parents are most welcome to attend these events. Dates and times are outlined in our digital monthly newsletter and calendar.

Students in Grade 1 to 6 receive 150 minutes (or 30 min/day) of classroom instruction in Religion class per week. They will also receive an integrated unit on Family Life / Human Sexuality in Grades 4 to 6. Students in Grade 2 are candidates for preparation for the Sacraments of First Communion and Reconciliation. Likewise, students in Grade 6 are candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. It is the responsibility of the parents to contact the Catholic churches in Medicine Hat to make arrangements for their child's sacramental preparation. The School Newsletter will include this information at the beginning of each school year.

The sacraments will be conferred through the Catholic parishes only. We encourage you to watch your Sunday Parish Bulletin for announcements regarding parent meetings. Although the sacramental themes are discussed in the Religion programs at the school, parents are required to do the preparation and instruction of the sacraments at home.

Out of School Care Program

The Out of School Care (OSC) Program is available for students whose parents are working and require such a service. The program will be in place as long as a sufficient number of students are actively participating in such services. All fees must be paid on time (no exceptions) otherwise the student will be removed from the program. Information on how to register for this program is available at the front office of the school.

Milk Program

The school operates a daily milk program. Parents are asked to inquire about the milk program at the front office. Milk cards are requested via SchoolCashOnline and then by notifying the front office.

Parking (Bus Zone & Parking Lot)

There is a new student drop off zone at École St. John Paul II School. This new 'Kiss & Go' zone will be dedicated to the dropping off students during the peak times of 8:00 – 9:00 am ONLY. In the afternoon, the entirety of the bus zone will be utilized by the buses and parents parked in the bus zone will be in violation.

This zone is for 5-minute parking only and will fall under City of Medicine Hat Bylaw 4346 – 25,26 regarding restricted parking. Please respect the zone and utilize it for its intended purposes as staff at the school will be monitoring this zone and relaying feedback to Bylaw. Parents are encouraged to utilize this zone during the peak times as an efficient drop off of their child(ren).

Lunch Policy

1. Students will eat lunch in their own classroom. Students are expected to finish eating their lunch between 11:50-12:08 PM (Gr. 1-3) and 12:08-12:25 PM (Gr. 4-6).
2. Bag lunches should be sent to school with your child. There are no microwaves available for students to use.
3. Students are expected to clean up their desk area after they have eaten.
4. Students are required to put their disposable items in the garbage receptacles as they leave.
5. Students are expected to either go outside before/after they have eaten (depending on their scheduled eating time).
6. Any student who abuses his/her lunchroom privileges may be asked to eat his or her lunch in an alternate area e.g., front office.
7. Students who eat lunch at school are expected to remain on the school property for the duration of the entire lunch period. École St. John Paul II School is a closed campus.

Homework

The need for homework has been a much-debated topic for many years. Most studies completed on this topic indicate that homework leads to immediate, higher academic achievement, as well as improved study skills & attitudes for the remainder of a student's academic life. Homework can range from daily reading to routine study/practice of spelling, math facts, etc.

Although homework can take on various modes, its fundamental principles & purpose are to:

- reinforce lessons taught during the school day
- give students extra drill in an area where more practice or enrichment is required
- teach students how to budget their time
- facilitate the development of self-reliance and solid study habits
- provide an opportunity for parent involvement and monitoring of their child's progress
- strengthen the ties between the school & home

Parents can help their child by:

- ☑ providing a quiet place to work where they can monitor their child's progress
- ☑ assist the child with their organization skills when it comes to assignment completion or study
- ☑ taking an active part by being an "audience" for reading practice, spelling practice, math drills, etc.
- ☑ helping the child access information for assignments on the internet or researching the Public Library

The support and interest of parents in their child's work will go a long way to help them develop a strong sense of competence and independence when it comes to their academic life. A balance of sport activity is critical to the overall development of a child – but it is paramount that a child's academic success comes first & foremost, for without the latter, the former is not possible.

Administration of Medication to Students – AP 316

In accordance with Administrative Procedure 316, we are not authorized to administer any medications unless specifically requested and supplied by the parents. A special authorization form (available from the front office) must be completed and include the following: name of the medication, specific amount to be administered (as indicated by the physician), and time to be administered. The original medication container (pill bottle) and the authorizing medical physician must be clearly displayed on the container.

Student Health Issues

Parents are requested to inform the school of any health problems that their child may have (e.g., allergies, bladder problems, asthma, etc.) at the beginning of the school year or when first medically identified. School administration reserves the right to ask for a medical note and/or documentation to support a parents' medical claim. This information will be kept confidential by teachers (and kept on file).

Disconnecting from Work – AP 493

In accordance with Administrative Procedure 493 – Disconnecting from Work. This AP recognizes the "Right to Disconnect" weekdays from 6:00 PM to 6:00 AM; all day on weekends, statutory and declared holidays and any other board designated non-working days, unless it is an emergency. Once again, this expectation applies across all the schools in the division and includes compliance by all staff members and the parenting community alike.

Locked Doors

It is a policy of the school to keep all outside doors (other than the front doors) locked during the normal school day hours. The front door will be locked at 9:00 AM. Parents can access the front office by pressing the doorbell/camera system (located on the side outside wall). All visitors to the school are required to contact the front office at 403-527-7333.

Nut-Sensitive School

École St. John Paul II School is a nut-sensitive school. Therefore, we would ask that all student lunches, snacks, etc. be free of peanuts and/or peanut by-products. We would like to thank you in advance for your attention and cooperation with respect to this matter.