

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CODE OF CONDUCT



Dear Student:

You are made in the image of God and you are a unique young person who will continue to grow physically, intellectually and spiritually. You and your education are very important to us. We want you to be curious and enthusiastic about your learning. St Mary Catholic School is committed to offering you a challenging curriculum in all areas based on Gospel values and the teachings of the Catholic Church in order for you to be best prepared for the future and grow to your fullest potential.

To achieve this, St Mary Catholic School is committed to fostering and maintaining positive learning environments and a safe school. We will help you solve your problems and we will protect your right to learn. We recognize that although everyone is in different stages of development, we have different gifts from God that will contribute to the rich and positive learning environment at St Mary.

We have a Code of Conduct to ensure the rights and responsibilities of all members of the school community. We will focus on prevention and restorative practices that will foster dignity and respect while ensuring the safety of everyone through fair and progressive strategies designed to promote self-respect, and respect for others.

We look forward to making your school experience a positive one!

Yours in Catholic Education,

St Mary Catholic School community

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The administration, teachers, support staff, students, parents, volunteers and visitors share the responsibility of maintaining the spirit and character of the Catholic school. This environment depends upon the cooperation and commitment of all involved. All members of the school community must conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the beliefs and practices of the Catholic Faith. St Mary believes that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and, as such, have the right to be treated with dignity, respect and fairness. We also recognize that a whole-school approach to engaging the school community will help our efforts to address inappropriate behaviour and to promote a positive school climate and the well-being of all.

Principals, under the direction of the school board, take a leadership role in the daily operation of the school. They provide leadership by:

- demonstrating care and commitment to academic excellence and a safe teaching environment and learning environment;
- holding everyone, under their authority, accountable for their behaviour and actions;
- developing and enforcing local codes of conduct;
- communicating the contents and expectations contained in local codes of conduct regularly with all members of their school community;
- ensuring the communication of local codes of conduct includes a plan that outlines how these standards will be made clear to the entire school community;
- providing an example of respect and civility for all members of the school community;
- empowering students to be positive leaders in their schools and community.

Teachers and school staff, under the leadership of their principal, are expected to hold everyone to the highest standard of respectful and responsible behaviour. As role models, staff uphold these high standards when they:

- help students work to their full potential and develop their self-worth;
- communicate regularly and meaningfully with parents;
- maintain consistent standards of behaviour for all students;
- demonstrate respect for all students, staff and parents;
- empower students to be positive leaders in the classroom, school and community;
- prepare students for the full responsibilities of citizenship.

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Students are to be treated with respect and dignity. In return, they must demonstrate respect for themselves, for others and for the responsibilities of citizenship through acceptable behaviour.

Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- comes to school prepared, on time and ready to learn;
- shows respect for themselves, for others and for those in authority;
- refrains from bringing anything to school that may compromise the safety of others; and
- follows the established rules, policies and local codes of conduct and takes responsibility for his or her own actions.

Parents/Guardians play an important role in the education of their children and have a responsibility to support the efforts of school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students. Parents fulfill this responsibility when they:

- show an active interest in their child's school work and progress;
- communicate regularly, and appropriately, with the school;
- help their child be neat, appropriately dressed and prepared for school;
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time;
- promptly report to the school their child's absence or late arrival;

Volunteers play an important role at our school. Under the direction of the principal and teachers, volunteers contribute to our school in many different ways. Volunteers fulfill their responsibility when they:

- consider any information, to which they have access, while assisting at the school as confidential;
- avoid any comments/conversations which may be harmful/hurtful to students;
- use the same care and consideration that they would use with their own children;
- refer any concerns or requests for student information to the school principal.

Parish and Clergy Members provide support and resources in the development of the faith life, providing the foundation for the moral tone of our school community.

Police and community partners are essential in making our schools and communities safer. Community members need to support and respect the rules of our school. Police investigate incidents in accordance with the Police/School Board Protocol developed by our school board. These protocols are based on a provincial model developed by the Ministry of Education.

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STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

Respect, Civility and Responsible Citizenship

All school community members must:

- respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial and municipal laws;
- demonstrate honesty and integrity;
- respect differences in people, their ideas and opinions;
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, especially when there is a disagreement;
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability;
- respect the rights of others;
- show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others within the school community;
- take appropriate measures to help others in need;
- respect all members of the school community, especially persons who are in a position of authority;
- respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching;
- seek assistance from a member of the school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully;



Progressive Discipline

Progressive Discipline is a step-by-step process of supporting positive behaviours and responding to and resolving a wide range of infractions and conflicts with appropriate interventions and consequences. It is a whole school approach that helps to facilitate the renewal of relationships and to ensure new beginnings for students within a nurturing environment. It considers the developmental needs of all students and provides opportunities for students to learn and grow. Progressive discipline exists at all times for all students and includes classroom management strategies and school wide programs that teach and reinforce positive social skills, provide support for students, promote virtue formation and foster Catholic values.



*“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ”
(Philippians 1:27)*

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Respect

- The Administration, teachers, support staff, parents and volunteers share the responsibility of maintaining the friendly welcoming and cooperative atmosphere of the school.
- All games are to be non-contact (*hands off*). Verbal and physical acts of aggression, profanity, name calling, threats, racial slurs, discrimination and sexual harassment are unacceptable. Students are expected to respond to staff requests in a respectful and timely manner.
- Students will not bully other students. Students will help others who are being bullied (both physically and emotionally) by speaking out and getting adult help. Students are encouraged to include others in activities at our school.
- Students are expected to treat their own property, school property and the property of others respectfully. Supplies, equipment, textbooks, and computers should be used with care. Students have a responsibility to help maintain the school facilities and playground in a neat and tidy manner. Vandalized property will be replaced by the student.

Bullying

Bullying: means aggressive and typically repeated behaviour by a pupil where;

the behaviour is intended by the pupil to have the effect of, or the pupil ought to know that the behaviour would likely have the effect of,

i) causing harm, fear or distress to another individual, including physical, psychological, social or academic harm, harm to the individual's reputation or harm to the individual's property, or ii) the behaviours occurs in a context where there is real; or perceived power imbalance between the pupil and the individual based on factors such as size, strength, age, intelligence, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, disability or the receipt of special education ("intimidation").

Cyber-bullying: For the purposes of the definition of "bullying" bullying includes bullying by electronic means including:

- a) creating a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- b) impersonating another person as the author of content or messages posted on the internet; and
- c) communicating material electronically to more than one individual or posting material on a website that may be accessed by one or more individuals.

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PROCEDURES

Attendance at School

We believe every school day counts! School attendance is the responsibility of the school, parents and students. Students are more likely to succeed in school when they attend consistently. Successful schools work to engage students to ensure they come every day. If students are experiencing difficulty attending school we want to work together with parents and students to support a plan for success.

- If a student needs to leave the school for any reason, a note from the parents must be provided. Notes should be sent to the office so a record can be maintained. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the office and the teacher of planned and prolonged absences.
- If a student is to be absent, parents are asked to notify the school by 9:00 am. You may leave a message on the machine which is in operation 24 hours per day. If the school is not notified, a telephone call will be made to your home or place of business to clarify the reason for the absence. Parents will be contacted regarding frequent absences or ongoing late arrivals. Chronic problems of absenteeism may be tracked by the board's Attendance Counsellor.
- Students will not be excused from any classes (i.e., Physical Education) without a note from the parents and/or a medical certificate as required.
- Students who are well enough to be in school are well enough to benefit from the fresh air and exercise of outdoor activities.
- There are cases when a child appears well before leaving for school, but becomes ill during the day. When this happens, we will contact you. In the case of certain contagious diseases (e.g., measles, scarlet fever), the Health Unit must be notified. We ask that parents inform us of any cases of pediculosis, scabies, etc., in order to prevent rapid spreading of cases. This practice is supported by the Health Unit.
- In cases of injury at school, appropriate first-aid will be administered. If an injury appears more serious, we will notify you or your emergency contact in order that your child may receive the necessary medical attention.
- A parent or guardian dropping off or picking up a student must report to the office. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.
- All parents or visitors must sign in upon entering the school and report to the office before proceeding beyond this point.

Punctuality

- It is very important to have students arrive on time.
- The late arrival of students will be monitored and recorded on school records. All students who arrive late must report to the office prior to going to their classrooms.
- School starts in the morning at **9:15** and in the afternoon at **1:30**. Dismissal is at **3:45**. Buses leave the school promptly.

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Personal Appearance

- A student shall demonstrate self-respect through personal hygiene, appropriate language, good manners and behaviours.
- Clothing must be appropriate and reflect the moral tone of the school. Backs and midriffs must be covered. Spaghetti straps are not allowed for any students.
- Shorts should be of the appropriate length and cut off shorts or very short shorts are not permitted.
- Profane or suggestive pictures and/or slogans on clothing are not acceptable.
- Hats are to be removed when students enter the school. Coats and outside footwear are also to be removed and neatly arranged upon entering the classroom. Pyjamas are not allowed as day wear at school.
- Attempts will be made to ensure that inside footwear be worn at school including appropriate shoes for gym with non-marking soles.

Preparation for Class

- Students are to be prepared for each class by having all notebooks, textbooks and material indicated by the teacher as necessary and by having homework assignments completed.
- Assignments are to be completed by due dates and students are to be prepared for tests. Students are expected to submit work which is original, completed by themselves, and represents their best efforts.
- The school agenda, which is a communication tool, is used to organize assignments, homework, tests and projects. A note from a parent should accompany uncompleted homework.

Storage and Dispensing of Medication

On occasion we have been asked by parents to ensure that their child receive a prescribed medication. Please be aware that in order to do so, ***we require the completion of a Medical Information and Consent Form signed by the parent and the physician prescribing the medication.*** These forms are available in the office. All such medication should be clearly labelled, dated and stored in the office area. It is a parent's responsibility to initiate this arrangement on a yearly basis.

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Participation in Out-of-School Activities

- On school trips, on buses, and during school-related activities such as sports events, dances, and field trips, all relevant school rules apply.
- Ongoing cooperative school behaviour and consistent daily effort in school work are required of all students who wish to participate in any extra-curricular activity.
- Students should always remember that they represent their school and that any behaviour deemed injurious to the moral tone of the school may result in loss of the privilege to participate in extracurricular activities.

The School Board offers opportunities for schools throughout the system to send representatives to a Board sponsored tournament. The criteria for establishing a school representative team is consistent with the following:

- skill in the activity
- good sportsmanship/team play
- regular attendance in school and at practices
- representative of school expectations in terms of behaviour and up-to-date classroom assignments.

Homework Guidelines

Our school board has created a homework guideline to suggest an appropriate framework for daily homework. Following are the suggested average homework times for each division:

Grades	Suggested Average Times	Recommended Activities
1 - 3 * parental supervision is highly recommended	15 - 20 minutes	- assigned school activities - parental activities, i.e., reading - reviewing math facts, playing a board game, memory or card game, dictating a letter to a friend or relative, talking about the best part of the day.
4 - 6 * parental supervision is highly recommended	40 minutes	- continuation of the above activities - reviewing a subject's work, studying for a test, silent reading, preparing reports
7 - 8	60 minutes	- continuation of the above activities - reviewing one subject per evening - researching at the local library

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Use of Technology

Computers and other devices (ie. ipods, tablets, etc.) are in schools for instructional purposes. When students are using technology in school they should be engaged in a purposeful activity that requires them to complete an activity/task with the use of information technology. Student use of e-mail should be limited to instructional activities as directed by the classroom teacher.

Teachers are responsible for ensuring that students are using the Internet for instructional purposes. Students are supervised at all times when given permission to access the Internet. Students and parents will be asked to sign the Acceptable Use Policy and be aware of the school policy for inappropriate use of the Internet.

Transportation

Transportation is a privilege provided by the School Board. Students travelling on a bus or by taxi are expected to view this as part of the school day, and therefore, they are expected to act accordingly:

BEFORE BOARDING THE BUS:

- i) Be on time at the designated school bus stop so that your bus can remain on schedule.
- ii) Stay off the road at all times while waiting for your bus. Bus riders are expected to conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting.
- iii) Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop and make eye contact with the driver before attempting to board your bus.

WHILE ON THE BUS:

- i) Get on the bus one at a time and take your seat quietly.
- ii) Remain in your seat while on the bus and keep the aisle clear.
- iii) Speak in a moderate voice and avoid horseplay as this may take the driver's attention off the road.
- iv) Inform the driver if you have a large package and do not bring dangerous items on the bus.
- v) Do not eat or drink on the bus.
- vi) Ask permission to open windows. Keep your hands and your head inside the bus at all times and do not throw anything out of the bus windows.
- vii) Do not touch emergency exits unless you are instructed to do so by your driver during an emergency situation.
- viii) In the case of a road emergency or accident, remain in your seat quietly and follow your bus driver's instructions.
- ix) Silence is required when a bus stops at a railroad crossing.
- x) Persons responsible for damaging bus seats or equipment will be held financially responsible.

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GETTING OFF THE BUS:

- i) Get off your bus in an orderly manner and be careful if you are carrying items. Ask for the driver's assistance if you drop something.
- ii) Be alert and watch the traffic carefully.
- iii) If you must cross a road, be sure to cross 3 meters in front of the bus and watch for signals from the driver. Make sure you can see the bus driver while crossing in front of the bus.
- iv) Help younger students.
- v) Do not ask your bus driver to let you off at stops other than your regular stop unless this has been authorized by the office. A written note from the office must be given to the driver to permit a student to get off the bus at an irregular destination or to ride a different bus.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THERE IS INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR ON THE BUS?

Bus slips may be given when there is inappropriate behaviour. The student will speak with the Principal or designate and review the bus safety rules. Parents will be notified as well. If a student receives several pink slips or a pink slip for severely dangerous behaviour then riding privileges may be suspended. Parents will be notified and will need to make alternate transportation arrangements.

DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES

The school has expectations, rules and regulations. Parents expect the school to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning. The school expects students to be cooperative and responsive to the teaching process. A partnership between the school and the home is necessary for a positive atmosphere to exist.

Students should receive recognition for appropriate behaviour. Much can be learned through the practice of good habits demonstrated by others. The school staff will reinforce positive behaviour, the list below are some commonly used strategies:

- verbal praise and acknowledgement
- helping the teacher with a special project
- a positive note or special certificate sent home
- getting to go first in something
- extra free time
- a material reward ("cool" pencils, stickers, candy, etc.)
- Terrific Kids Assembly
- Leadership opportunities
- Celebrate the Hero

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CARING AND SAFE SCHOOLS

The discipline of pupils, based on the importance of setting a caring but firm atmosphere is the responsibility of each school. The exercise of that responsibility shall have as its goal the development of responsible, self-disciplining Christian adults. School learning environments are to be safe, orderly, nurturing, positive and respectful. Such learning environments are to be peaceful and welcoming for all. They must be free of negative factors such as abuse, bullying, discrimination, intimidation, hateful words and deeds and physical violence in any form. They must demonstrate respect for social justice and human rights and promote the values needed to develop responsible Catholic members of a democratic society. It is the policy of ALCDSB that the conduct of students as members of the school community is expected to be modeled after Christ and Catholic values. Conduct falling below that standard requires appropriate discipline which may include suspension and expulsion from school.

The purpose of a suspension is to caution students and deter them from continuing with or repeating unacceptable behaviour, prevent other students from being exposed to or involved in dangerous and damaging activities, discipline students who have transgressed the rules of the school, and to warn parents or guardians of serious discipline problems with their children. Police will be involved in accordance with the Police/School Board Protocol.

SUSPENSION

Suspension will be considered in the following cases if the Principal believes that the pupil has engaged in any of the following activities while at school, or at a school related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the school climate.

Activities leading to a possible suspension under the Education Act, s. 306(1):

- a) Uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person;
- b) Possessing alcohol or illegal drugs;
- c) Being under the influence of alcohol;
- d) Swearing at a Teacher or at another person in a position of authority;
- e) Committing an act of vandalism causing extensive damage to school property at the pupil's school or to property located on the premises of the pupil's school;
- f) Bullying;
- g) Any other activity for which a Principal may suspend a pupil under the policy of the Board.

Activities leading to a Possible Suspension under Board Policy:

- a) Persistent truancy;
- b) Persistent opposition to authority;
- c) Habitual neglect of duty;
- d) Serious breaches of the Board Code of Conduct or the School Code of Conduct;
- e) Conduct injurious to the moral tone of the school;

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- f) Conduct injurious to the physical or mental well-being of others in the school;
- g) Use of tobacco;
- h) The willful destruction of school property, vandalism causing damage to school or Board property, or to property located on school or Board premises;
- i) The use of profane or improper language;
- j) Infraction(s) off school property where the pupil's conduct in the community negatively impacts on the school;
- k) Dress that contravenes the established dress code within a school;
- l) Being in possession of, or being under the influence of, or providing others with legal drugs without a prescription for the said drugs, or in a manner or an amount not contemplated in the general instructions for use of the said drug;
- m) Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs;
- n) Taking photographs and/or video and/or audio recordings during an instructional class and in other areas of the school, unless authorized by the Principal or classroom teacher;
- o) Harassing another person by the use of mechanical/electronic technology or communications;
- p) Invading another person's privacy by the use of mechanical/electronic technology or communications;
- q) Production, possession and/or distribution of hate material, including pornography;
- r) Possession or misuse of any harmful and/or explosive substances;
- s) Extortion
- t) Theft;
- u) Aid/incite harmful behaviour; and/or
- v) Physical assault;
- w) Lack of immunization as determined by local Health Unit.

EXPULSION

The Education Act, Section 309(1), stipulates that a pupil must be expelled and the police will be involved if a pupil commits any of the following infractions while he/she is at school or is engaged in school-related activities. Expulsion will be considered in the following cases:

- a) Possessing a weapon, including a firearm;
- b) Using a weapon to cause or to threaten bodily harm to another person;
- c) Committing physical assault on another person that causes bodily harm requiring treatment by a medical practitioner;
- d) Committing a sexual assault;
- e) Trafficking in weapons or illegal drugs;
- f) Committing robbery;
- g) Giving alcohol to a minor;
- h) Bullying if,
 - i. The pupil has previously been suspended for engaging in bullying, and

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- ii. The pupil's continuing presence in the school creates an unacceptable risk to the safety of another person.
- i) Any activity listed in subsection 306(1) that is motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other similar factor, any other activity that, under a policy of the Board, is an activity for which a Principal must suspend a pupil and conduct an investigation to determine whether to recommend to the Board that the pupil be expelled.

In the above instances, police may be involved as required, and the conditions for the return to school will be specified in accordance with school Board policies.

In all cases where a Principal is determining whether to suspend or expel a student, consideration will be given to mitigating and other circumstances. Mitigating factors include:

- a) The pupil does not have the ability to control his or her behaviour;
- b) The pupil does not have the ability to understand the foreseeable consequences of his or her behaviour; or
- c) The pupil's continuing presence in the school does not create an unacceptable risk to the safety or well-being of any person.

The Principal shall take the following other factors into account, if the said factors would mitigate the seriousness of the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended:

- a) The pupil's history;
- b) Whether a progressive discipline approach has been used with the pupil;
- c) Whether the activity for which the pupil may be or is being suspended was related to any harassment of the pupil because of his or her race, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation or to any other harassment;
- d) How the suspension would affect the pupil's ongoing education;
- e) The age of the pupil; and
- f) In the case of a pupil for whom an individual education plan has been developed:
 - i. Whether the behaviour was a manifestation of a disability identified in the pupil's IEP
 - ii. Whether appropriate individualized accommodation has been provided, and
 - iii. Whether the suspension is likely to result in an aggravation or worsening of the pupil's behaviour or conduct.

“As followers of Jesus Christ, we are all responsible to create communities of shared belonging that are safe, sustainable, inclusive, respectful and healthy.”