



JOHN SWEENEY CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



JOHN SWEENEY MISSION STATEMENT:

“Strengthening Body, Mind, and Spirit through Catholic Education”

Mission of The Waterloo Catholic District School Board:

“As disciples of Christ, we educate and nurture hope in all learners to realize their full potential to transform God’s world.”

Our Vision:

“Our Catholic Schools: heart of the community -- success for each, a place for all.”

We believe that:

As a unique creation of a loving God, every human being has inherent value.

Children and youth, our hope for the future, are entitled to first call on our energy and resources.

Human beings, our planet and the universe are interdependent, and all are sustained by God.

Education is fundamental to the development of all human beings in a just society.

Questioning, which seeks the discovery of truth, is the right and responsibility of each person.

Knowing Jesus Christ gives meaning and purpose to our lives.

Diversity in a culture enriches individuals and society.

We are called to be co-creators with God and Christ in the transformation of the world.

Both contribution to the common good and self-determination are vital to a healthy community.

The care and education of our children and youth are the combined responsibility of home, school, parish and local community.

Catholic education aims to transform students in Christ’s Spirit within a Catholic faith community.

IMPORTANT DATES

Sept. 5, 2023 - First Day of School
Sept. 30, 2023 – Truth and Reconciliation Day
Oct. 9, 2023 - Thanksgiving
Nov. 20-24, 2023 - Bullying Awareness Week
Dec. 23, 2023-Jan. 7, 2024 - Christmas Break
Feb. 14, 2024 - Ash Wednesday
Feb. 19, 2024 - Family Day
Mar. 8-17, 2024 - March Break
Mar. 29, 2024 - Good Friday
Apr. 1, 2024 - Easter Monday
May 20, 2024 - Victoria Day
June 27, 2024 - Last Day of School

REPORT CARD DATES

Nov. 20, 2023 - Progress Reports
Nov. 23, 2023 - P/S/T Conferences
Feb. 15, 2024 - First Term Reports
June 25, 2024 - Second Term Reports

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

Oct. 6, 2023
Nov. 13, 2023
Jan. 19, 2024
Apr. 19, 2024
May 31, 2024

SCHOOL HOURS

8:50 a.m. – Entry	12:35 p.m. – Afternoon session begins
10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. – Recess	1:55 p.m. – 2:10 p.m. – Recess
11:35 a.m. – 12:35 p.m. – Lunch	3:20 p.m. – Dismissal

ATTENDANCE

Absence

The school has a Safe Arrival Program to ensure that all students are accounted for each day. Parents/guardians are requested to notify the school as soon as possible if a student will be absent from school. Please phone the school at **519-579-5212 Ext. 1** and leave a message providing: child's name, teacher's name, grade, day(s) absent and reason for absence. A message may be left 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If the school does not know the reason for your child's absence, a phone call or email will be made after 8:50 a.m. or 12:35 p.m. to your home or place of employment. Please help us limit these calls by notifying us of your child's absence.

Late Arrival

When your child arrives late to school, they should ring the bell at the front door and speak to our office staff. They will be asked to state their full name, teacher's name, and the reason for lateness.

Notification of Vacation

If your child will be away from school for more than 15 days for reasons other than illness (e.g., vacation), please notify the office. An Intent to be Absent form will need to be completed. Please let us know if you need one of these forms.

It is important to let the school know when parents/guardians will be away for an extended time. Please provide the office with information explaining the time frame, in whose care your child will be, and how that person can be contacted.

Students Leaving School Early

If your child needs to leave school early, please notify the office in advance. Our office staff need permission from a parent/guardian before a student may leave the school. If you are picking up your child from school early, please come to the front door and ring the bell. Our office staff will contact the classroom teacher to have your child meet you at the front door.

If your child normally stays for lunch and you are giving them special permission to leave school property for lunch on a given day, please send a signed and dated note informing us of your permission for that day.

SCHOOL CASH ONLINE

All September start-up forms, health/medication forms, field trip forms, permission forms, sports team consents, fundraising donations, library notices, etc. can be completed on School Cash Online. Cash should not be sent to the school.

INCLEMENT WEATHER, SCHOOL CLOSURE, BUS CANCELLATIONS/DELAYS

If schools are closed due to inclement weather or other reasons, our Board and school will communicate with you via NewsWire. Please be sure to subscribe at the bottom of the homepage of our school website: <https://js.wcdsb.ca/>. Closure information is also posted on our Board's website: <https://www.wcdsb.ca/> and communication by our local radio stations. Bus cancellations and delays are communicated by Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region and WCDSB NewsWire.

TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL

To support the concepts of healthy, active living and care for our environment, we encourage all students who are deemed to be within walking distance of our school to walk to and from school each day. At no time, however, should students walk across the ring road and/or through the parking lot. When crossing Activa Avenue, all pedestrians should always cross with our crossing guard and remain on sidewalks. If it is necessary for you to drive your child to school, there are some very important procedures that must be followed for the safety of all students.

- If visiting our school for an appointment with a staff member or if volunteering, parents/guardians are permitted to park their vehicle in the parking lot if there are spaces available. If no spaces are available, please park your vehicle on Activa Avenue, past the "no stopping" signs, or on one of the side streets. Please do not park in the Rising Oaks Child Care lot.
- The one-way bus ring road is a fire truck and ambulance route for emergencies. However, you are permitted to use this road to drop off your child in the designated "Kiss and Drop" bay, remain in the vehicle, and let your child depart the vehicle on the passenger side only. This will ensure safety as the child will be stepping directly onto the sidewalk.
- Parking is not permitted on any part of the ring road at any time during transition times (i.e., before school, during lunch, and after school). However, if picking up a child during school hours and outside of transition times, you may pull up in the "Kiss and Drop" bay and park, ring the bell at the front door, and have your child called to meet you at the front door.
- To ensure safety for all, please adhere to the posted parking restrictions.

Bicycles, inline skates, scooters, and skateboards are permitted, with the use of a helmet, but students are reminded that they must walk them on school property and lock them in the designated area. Please be aware that the school is not responsible for loss of or damage to these items.

BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL

In the morning, students should say goodbye to their caregivers at the front of the school and walk to the blacktop at the back of the school independently, where they will be met by staff supervisors. Visitors are not permitted to enter the blacktop at the back of the school between 8:35 a.m. and 3:35 p.m. By only allowing staff members and students on the yard, our staff supervisors can ensure that only authorized adults are on the yard and that potential student behaviour is managed by our staff members in a manner that is consistent with school and board policy. Caregivers should determine a meeting place if you are picking up your child at the end of the day. Please note the school is well supervised 15 minutes before school starts but we do not have supervision after 3:20 p.m.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Cell phones are permitted at school. However, it is understood that these devices must be turned off at all times while at school. Personal devices may be used at school with teacher permission and under teacher supervision for educational purposes. Photos/videos of students or staff are not allowed at any time, unless under direct teacher supervision for specific projects. Our staff will support students to use technology responsibly. Please be aware that the school is not responsible for loss of or damage to personal devices.

DRESS CODE

At John Sweeney Catholic Elementary School, our goal is for all students to experience a sense of belonging. Several students, parents, and staff collaborated to create a dress code that is rooted in our goal of inclusion and respect for everyone in our school community.

We recognize:

- Students need to be comfortable to learn
- Clothing is an expression of individuality
- Fashion trends are constantly changing
- Opinions on clothing are often subjective
- Clothing choices belong to students and their caregivers

Students should wear clothing that:

- Is safe and suitable for learning
- Makes you feel comfortable
- Expresses your individuality

Students may not wear items that:

- Are unsafe
- Promote discrimination, hate, violence, illegal substances or acts, and/or profanity
- Leave private parts uncovered

We recommend:

- Having a change of clothes at school for Physical Education (more likely for higher grades)
- Having a change of clothes at school in case of accidents
- Footwear that is safe for recess activities, Physical Education, and stairs
- Having a pair of running shoes that can stay at school for indoor use only

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

Religion is taught formally in all classrooms but is also integrated with all aspects of the child's educational experience. All students must take part in Religious and Family Life instruction and celebrations. Non-Catholic children may not receive the Sacraments but will participate in sacramental preparation with their classmates. Sacraments celebrated with students include Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. A spiritual retreat is available to Grade 8 students. School masses and liturgies will be celebrated throughout the year. Our school belongs to Blessed Sacrament Parish. Please see their website for more information: <http://www.blessed-sacrament.ca/>.

SCHOOL BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS

Code of Conduct:

Policy Statement: The Waterloo Catholic District School system exists to provide a Catholic education whereby the graduate is expected to be:

1. A *discerning believer* formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living.
2. An *effective communicator*, who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively responding critically in light of gospel values.
3. A *self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner* who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.
4. A *collaborative contributor* who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.
5. A *caring family member* who attends to family, school, parish, and the wider community.
6. A *responsible citizen* who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of the individual. All individuals within the school system (trustees, staff, students, parents and visitors to the school) are subject to the following code of conduct; a code of conduct that will be implemented within the Christian faith life experience of our school community and which is consistent with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, and the School Safety provisions of the Education Act and Regulations.

Standards of Behaviour:

Respect, civility and responsible citizenship

All School members must:

- Respect and comply with all applicable federal, provincial, and municipal laws.
- Refrain from any behaviour that could be construed as bullying (Bullying is: a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or individuals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.)
- Demonstrate honesty, integrity, and healthy lifestyle.
- 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 the dignity, rights and fair treatment of others, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability.
- Demonstrate citizenship and acceptable strategies for resolving conflict.
- Respect the rights of others and the sacredness of human life.
- Show proper care and regard for school property and the property of others.
- Demonstrate honesty in achieving academic expectations.
- Take appropriate measures to help those in need by witnessing to Catholic social teaching.
- Respect persons who are in a position of authority.
- Demonstrate regular attendance.
- Respect the need of others to work in an environment of learning and teaching.
- Respect and honor the appropriate dress specified in the school community.
- Demonstrate appropriate and ethical use of technology.
- Respect guidelines regarding use of personal items (e.g., cell phones, pagers).

Physical Safety

Weapons

All school members must:

- Not be in possession of any weapon, including but not limited to firearms.
- Not use any object to threaten or intimidate another person.
- Not cause injury to any person with an object.

Alcohol and Drugs

All school members must:

- Not be in possession of, or under the influence of, or provide others with, alcohol, prohibited substances or illegal drugs.

Physical Aggression

All school members must:

- Not inflict or encourage others to inflict bodily harm on another person.
- Seek staff assistance, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully.

Dissemination/Publication of Material (electronic or otherwise)

Dissemination or Publication in any form (electronic or otherwise) which may come to the attention of students, staff or teachers (via the Internet or otherwise) of material which attacks an individual or individuals on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, color, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability, or which causes concern for the mental well-being of students, staff or teachers, shows disrespect for staff, teachers, or other persons in positions of authority within the school or Board which amounts to a breach of the Provincial, Board or School Code of conduct, regardless of the time, location or frequency of such dissemination or publication.

Proactive Strategies Used at John Sweeney Catholic Elementary School

- As a school community we will focus on proactive strategies that encourage the prevention of bullying and other infractions against individuals.
- Teachers and school personnel will work with students to develop positive attitudes and behaviours. Problems on the yard or classroom will be resolved by the supervising staff member(s).
- The strategies below are examples of preventive measures that will be used by the school:
 - Restorative practices to resolve conflict and promote empathy
 - Conferences with peers or staff to encourage student responsibility for behaviour
 - Weekly class meetings that include agendas developed by staff and students to deal with issues that may arise in the school
 - Communication with parents that include phone calls or meetings
- Our home-school partnership is important to us, and we will strive to collaborate with families to support our students.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH STAFF

Step One

Speak to the Individual:

Issue resolved

Step Two

Speak to Administration:

If you have not spoken to the individual, the principal will ask you to do so first. Administration will involve the individual in the discussions.

Administration may request, at any time in the process, that you put your concerns in writing.

Administration may involve, at any time in the process, others who may be helpful in resolving the concern: supports from the school, employee group representatives, the local parish, community agencies.

NOTES:

- 1) The role of the Trustee: You may contact the trustee at any time. The trustee will direct you to follow the process outlined above.
- 2) The role of the Catholic School Advisory Council: Catholic School Advisory Councils were established to advise the principal on matters such as the school curriculum and the school code of behaviour. Catholic School Advisory Councils are not forums to discuss parent-teacher-student issues. If there is a concern, it is to be referred immediately to the principal.
- 3) Issues with non-teaching staff are to be discussed with administration only. Any concern brought forward by non-teaching staff or parents regarding non-teaching staff is to be communicated to administration. Administration will then bring the concern forward to the appropriate party.