



St. Francis de Sales Catholic School



Dear Parents/Guardians:

The purpose of this General Information Handbook is to provide you with useful information about our school and school board. Please read this document carefully and keep it in a safe location for future reference. Should you have any questions or concerns about the content of this handbook, or any other school matter, please feel free to call us at the school. As well, in the agenda, you will find an insert at the beginning of the agenda regarding school rules and policies, student expectations and our Progressive Discipline Approach and Guiding Principles. We strive to provide each and every student with an environment that is respectful and safe, as we work toward increasing student achievement.

We hope you will take advantage of every opportunity to be part of this school, bringing to it all of your energy, talents and interests. St. Francis de Sales Catholic School is a very busy place and so we are always in need of many volunteers to help support the various programs and events that take place. If you are available and interested in volunteering at the school, either with CPSC, the nutritional programs, or wherever help is needed, please contact the school at any time. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated.

We are dedicated to developing the best interests of your children. We are looking forward to working in partnership with you to make this a productive and successful year at St. Francis De Sales Catholic School.

Yours in partnership,

Mr. Nick Netta
PRINCIPAL

Ms. Teresa Silva
VICE PRINCIPAL

GENERAL INFORMATION HANDBOOK

1. SCHOOL HOURS

Kindergarten/Main Yard and Bus Supervision	8:15am – 8:30am
General Entry:	8:30am
Morning Session	8:30am – 11:15am
Morning Recess:	10:12am – 10:27am
Lunch:	11:15am – 12:15pm
Afternoon Session:	12:15pm – 3:30pm
Afternoon Recess:	1:40pm – 1:55pm
General Dismissal:	3:30pm

2. SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM - STUDENT ILLNESS OR ABSENTEEISM

If your child is to be absent from school for any reason, **please telephone the school to inform the secretary before 8:45am of the day of absence.** (We also have a voicemail box for your convenience to call at any time to leave a message.) This will reassure the school that your child is safe. If a child is absent, then we will call home if we have not been notified. When a student returns to school after an absence, **he or she must bring a signed and dated parental or medical note to explain the reason.**

If your child has to leave during the day for an appointment, please send a signed and dated note requesting his/her dismissal and the time. For safety reasons, we do not allow children to leave on their own and ask that they be picked up by an adult.

If children are not feeling well, please give them an opportunity to recuperate at home. It is assumed that if children are well enough to be at school, they are also well enough to take part in recess. Children need time to get some fresh air and stretch their muscles. If they are dressed properly, they will be able to do this in comfort, even on our cold Canadian winter days.

3. SAFE DISMISSAL PROGRAM

We have implemented procedures to help our students' safe arrival home after school; this includes students who ride the school bus, who walk home, or who are picked up.

DISMISSAL OF PRIMARY STUDENTS (KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 3)

Please be advised that Primary-aged students will be escorted at the end of the day by a supervising staff member to either the school bus loading zone, or to the YMCA After School Programme, or to the school yard for dismissal.

Primary students who are dismissed into the school yard are not to walk home alone; they must either be accompanied home by an older sibling or parent, or by a pre-arranged older friend, relative or adult. School Staff will not dismiss Primary students at the end of the day unless these arrangements have been made and adhered to. **Students are not to be picked up in the classrooms, in the hallways, or in the main entrance foyer – the school yard is the**

designated area for student pick- up at dismissal.

Parents/Guardians are asked to complete and sign the **Safe Dismissal Program Form** that was sent home indicating who will be picking up your son/daughter from the school yard and accompanying them home after school. This information must be complete, accurate and kept up-to-date. **School Staff will NOT release Primary students to anyone NOT on the list.** Any changes to these arrangements must be preceded by a signed and dated parental note.

Please note that dismissal time is 3:30 pm and the school yard is supervised until 3:45pm; nevertheless, any Primary student not picked up at dismissal will be escorted to the office. **If you are a parent/guardian who normally picks up your child at dismissal, we ask that you contact the school immediately if you will be late in arriving. With minimal staff being available to supervise your child after school hours, we ask that you make every effort to be on time; habitual tardiness creates a serious safety risk for your child and places a severe strain on the safe operation of the school.**

DISMISSAL OF JUNIOR/INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS (GRADES 4-8)

Although *Toronto Public Health - Healthy Schools Toronto* stresses that children under the age of 9 should not be crossing streets and walking home without an adult or older child, we are also strongly encouraging students in this age group (9-14) to not walk home alone. Walking in pairs or in groups greatly reduces the safety risk for your child.

With this in mind, parents/guardians are asked to complete and sign the attached form indicating with whom their son/daughter will be walking home from school. We ask that every effort be made to keep this information accurate and up-to-date. This information will be kept on file and will be very helpful during emergency response situations.

STUDENTS WHO RIDE THE SCHOOL BUS

If your child is eligible to ride the school bus, please note that you must complete and sign the school bus registration form to inform the school that your child will be riding the bus. Copies of the form have been distributed; an additional copy can be obtained at the main office. Your child will not be allowed to ride the school bus without a completed and signed registration form.

If your child is properly registered to ride the school bus, he or she must ride the school bus and not take the liberty to walk home on any given day. Any necessary changes to your child's transportation to and from the school must be preceded by a signed and dated parental note. Students who are registered to ride the school bus but consistently choose not to, will end up forfeiting this privilege. If a student normally rides the school bus, but a parent/guardian comes to pick up the student instead, the parent/guardian must first come to the main office to sign the student out.

Students are expected to behave appropriately while riding the school bus. Standards for appropriate school bus behaviour are strictly enforced with all students. School bus rules and procedures can be found in the St. Francis de Sales School Code of Conduct, a copy of which is

found in your child's agenda planner. Please support us in reminding your child that it is his/her responsibility to adhere to the rules and safety measures outlining appropriate school bus behaviour. **Your child's failure to comply may result in serious consequences, including possible Non-Compliance Letters, Progressive Discipline Incident Reports, removal of school bus privileges, and/or suspensions.**

4. CHANGES OF INFORMATION

Report to our office throughout the school year any changes of home address, telephone number, business telephone, email address, and name and telephone number of the emergency contact person. Accurate information at school could be critical in the event of an emergency. The **Personal Information Update Form** is to be completed and returned to the school as soon as possible.

5. COMMUNICATION

Students require knowledge and skills that will help them compete in a global economy and allow them to lead lives of integrity and satisfaction both as citizens and Catholics. **It is crucial for home and school to communicate effectively on a regular basis to ensure that the students are progressing to the best of their ability.** Regular and effective communication allows the school to keep the parent community informed about children's progress and school events. Parents can expect any form of communication to go home with each child in the family. Communication tools can take the form of newsletters, monthly calendars, student agendas, letters, emails, homework notes and telephone calls.

6. STUDENT AGENDAS

Every student in the school will receive a student agenda. The use of an agenda is intended to promote the life skills of time management, routines, keeping organized and self-directedness. Student agendas are also a useful communication tool between parents and teachers. Although a fee will be involved, all students/parents are strongly encouraged to make use of the agendas. Further information will follow.

7. STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE

Student Accident and Life Insurance information was sent home. If parents choose to enroll, you should send the money directly to the company (NOT TO THE SCHOOL). The insurance is inexpensive and strongly recommended.

8. SCHOOL CALENDAR 2017-2018

To enable families to make advanced plans, doctor or dental appointments and holidays, the calendar for the 2017-2018 school year was sent home in the newsletter. For your convenience, please find it below as well.

School year Calendar 2017-18

Number of school days	194
Number of Professional Activity Days	7
Labour Day	September 4, 2017
First Instructional Day	September 5, 2017
Thanksgiving Day	October 9, 2017
Christmas Break	December 25, 2017–January 5, 2018
Start of second semester for secondary schools	February 5, 2018
Family Day	February 19, 2018
Mid-Winter Break	March 12–16, 2018
Good Friday	March 30, 2018
Easter Monday	April 2, 2018
Victoria Day	May 21, 2018
Last day of classes for elementary students	June 28, 2018

Seven (7) Professional Activity (PA) Days for ELEMENTARY schools:

October 6, 2017	Provincial Education Priorities
November 17, 2017	Parent-Teacher Conferences
December 1, 2017	Provincial Education Priorities/Faith Development
January 19, 2018	Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting
February 16, 2018	Parent-Teacher Conferences
June 8, 2018	Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting
June 29, 2018	Provincial Education Priorities

9. ENROLMENT AND SCHOOL RE-ORGANIZATION

Our enrolment at this time is approximately 430 pupils. If re-organization does become necessary because of a significant change in enrolment, it will be done with the best interest of each pupil in mind. We thank you for your co-operation in advance.

10. STANDARD RELEASE/MEDIA RELEASE/PERMISSION FORM

Please ensure this form is completed and returned to the school as soon as possible in order for your child to take part in the various local activities at school.

11. SCHOOL SAFETY AND VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL

In an effort to keep our students safe at all times, the following has been implemented:

- All school doors are kept locked.
- **All visitors entering the school grounds and/or building, including parents/guardians, babysitters and siblings, must first report to the office to**

identify themselves and obtain a visitor's badge. THIS IS SCHOOL BOARD POLICY.

- Parents are to drop off their children in the schoolyard when bringing them to school.
- Children are to wait in the yard until their teachers come to pick them up when the bell rings.
- Parents are not to accompany their children inside.
- After school, parents are asked to pick up their children in the schoolyard. Because of the large number of children and lack of supervision, children cannot wait in the main office to be picked up after school. The school yard is supervised until 3:45p.m. Please make sure that all children are picked up before that time.
- When children are to be picked up during school hours, parents are asked to report to the office to sign their children out; at that point, their child will be called out of class.

12. LUNCTIME RULES AND NUTRITIONAL PROGRAMS

To further ensure student safety, **students will not be permitted to leave school property to purchase a lunch at a neighborhood food establishment unless they are picked up, signed out, and accompanied by a responsible adult known to the child. The responsible adult must have previous written consent from the parent, a record of which must be on file in the school office.** For health and safety reasons, students will not be permitted to eat lunch in the schoolyard, as this attracts unwanted seagulls and other creatures.

Children are encouraged to eat lunch at home. Children going home for lunch should leave the school no later than 11:20am and return to the school yard no earlier than 11:40am, but before 12:15pm.

If a child eats lunch at school, please ensure that he/she brings a lunch to school every day. We ask that lunches not be brought to school for the students. **When students do forget their lunches, we ask that lunches brought in are clearly marked and left on the lunch table between the two sets of inside doors. The student name should be clearly marked on the lunch bag, as well as written on the sheet provided on the table. Your child will be called once the bell has rung. Students will pick up their lunches during the lunch period. Parents/Guardians will not be permitted to drop off lunches in the classrooms, nor will students be permitted to pick up their lunches during class time. This is to minimize disruption during important instructional time in the classroom.**

(Please treat your children to treats outside of lunch and school hours; this is fair to all students in the classroom.)

On the rare occasion that you must bring your child's lunch to school, please adhere to the following Lunch Period Schedule, as supervision has been arranged accordingly:

11:15am to 11:35am All Grades eat lunch
11:35am to 12:15pm All Grades have recess

St. Francis de Sales Catholic School offers nutritional programs for our students – morning meal and lunch. For all students participating in the Nutritional Lunch Program, lunch will be served immediately after the 11:15am bell in the regular classrooms; students will be dismissed into the yard for recess once their lunch is complete at 11:35am. **Please note that these times must be followed strictly and latecomers cannot be served.**

13. APPOINTMENTS WITH THE PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

Parents/Guardians are welcome to visit the school. Should you need to meet with the teachers or principals, please arrange for an appointment in advance.

14. INCLEMENT WEATHER

During the winter season, we want to remind the children to make sure that they are dressed appropriately with hats, gloves, boots, etc. so that they are comfortable when they are outside. Generally, students will go outside for recess unless there is a wind chill warning of -18 Degrees Celsius from Environment Canada. A wind chill warning is issued when the combination of cold temperatures and high winds makes it unsafe to be outdoors for a long period of time. The school regularly monitors weather forecasts and conditions so that we have up-to-date information. If there is a warning, the children will be kept indoors. Students will be supervised in their own classrooms in the case of inclement weather.

On days when there is a very heavy snowfall or other severe weather conditions, we ask that parents listen to radio broadcasts to get information on school closures. Please do not call the school for this information because we are often not informed until after school starts in the morning.

15. SCHOOL TELEPHONES

Students are given permission to use the school telephones only in emergency situations. An emergency DOES NOT include:

- Students forgetting a notebook, a project, gym clothes, etc.
- Checking on arrangements to be picked up for an appointment. This should be done well ahead of time and a signed parental note should accompany the student.
- Informing parents that they are making alternate arrangements for getting home. This should be done in advance.

Students will not be called out of class to come to the phone. The practice of calling students out of class is very disruptive to everyone involved. Please leave a message and we will make sure that it is communicated to your child. You may call at any time to report an absence to the automated answering machine or to leave a message for a particular teacher.

16. CELL PHONES AND OTHER PERSONAL ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The TCDSB Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) governs the proper use of technology and electronic communication in our schools—including CELL PHONES. The purpose of the AUP is to provide students and their parents with a set of guidelines that outline the safe and appropriate use of technology within our Catholic School system. Included in the AUP is a definition of electronic communication to include social media, website publishing, and the use of personal electronic devices (PED's). In addition it addresses expectations surrounding the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy effective as of September 2012. While these devices are not mandatory for classroom activities, they may be included when there is a clear educational purpose that has been identified by the teacher.

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Disciplinary Consequences:

- **In the event that a student violates this policy, the student (and parent, where applicable) will be provided with a notice of violation and will meet with a school administrator/designate.**
- **A school administrator/designate may deny, restrict or suspend a student's access to the Board's network upon any violation of this policy or other rules of the school. Appropriate legal authorities will be contacted if there is any suspicion of illegal activities.**
- **The Board will cooperate fully with legal authorities in any investigation relating to illegal activities conducted through the Board's system.**

Please see the attached TCDSB Acceptable Use Policy for Technology for more details.

17. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The school is not permitted to give out addresses and telephone numbers of students or staff. Student records are also confidential, but may be inspected by the child's parents/guardians upon written request and by appointment with the principal.

18. YARD SUPERVISION

Supervision begins at 8:15a.m. Please do not send children to school, if they walk or are driven, before this time unless they are involved in a teacher-directed activity. Please do not bring your child into the school building to wait for the bell. Students are dismissed at 3:30p.m. Please pick up students promptly at 3:30p.m. in the school yard.

19. BUS PICK UP AND DROP OFF AREA

The driveway at the front entrance of the school has been designated a bus pick up and drop off area, **and has been clearly marked as such. Please do not park in the driveway. Let's work together to ensure the safety of all our children.**

20. PARKING LOT

Please use extreme caution as you drive into our parking lot to pick up your child. Children must not go into the parking lot without adult supervision. Parents are reminded to hold their child's hand while walking through the parking lot.

21. ANAPHYLAXIS ALERT – Allergen-Aware Environment

Please take special note that we have children and staff members in our school who have a very serious, life-threatening allergy to nuts, peanuts and all peanut products, called Anaphylaxis. We are notifying all parents that students not bring peanuts, peanut butter or any food containing nuts or peanut products such as peanut oil, etc. Parents are also asked not to bring any personal baking or other treats to the school to share with the class, including for special occasions such as birthdays. These measures are necessary in order to ensure the safety and welfare of these children.

As well, please be aware that we are also a scent-sensitive school, as there are members of our community who suffer severe reactions to certain scents such as perfumes, hair products, lotions etc. Please respect the need to refrain from using such products at the school.

22. VALUABLES

Students should not bring expensive items to school such as toys, cell phones, pagers, lasers pointers, CD players, iPods, mp3's, game boys, card collections, books, watches, jewelry, etc. or any object of sentimental value to the family. These items invariably are lost, stolen or broken, which causes unnecessary upset to the student, the family and the school, and puts temptation in the path of other students. **Please be advised that School Board insurance does not protect such items, and neither the school nor the Board is obliged to replace them. Such items are brought to school at the owner's risk.**

23. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION/FAMILY LIFE

St. Francis de Sales Catholic School is committed to excellence in education within a Catholic environment. While the school and the parish work co-operatively in this educational process, the role that parents play as the primary educators of their children, especially in faith development, cannot be over-emphasized. We assume that our children attend Mass regularly. Our Catholic faith underlies and permeates all we do in this school. Prayers and sacramental preparation are part of the daily routine. Children and staff endeavor to live out the Gospel values. All students participate in formal religion and family life lessons, using programs designed and approved by the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops.

24. SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Many students in the school will have some parts of their program modified to suit their learning needs, for greater or shorter periods of time. This is organized through our School-Based Support Team, and modification may take place in the regular class, or more through the intervention of our Special Education teachers. If more formal intervention is necessary, parents will be involved at all levels of the process.

25. HOMEWORK

The assignment of homework will vary according to grade level, student achievement and teacher expectations. For all grade levels, students are required to complete at home any work that they did not finish in class. We would strongly encourage that parents motivate children to read on a nightly basis. Activities, such as reading, playing, outings, hobbies, games and family discussions provide children with the foundation and background necessary to facilitate learning in the classroom. We would recommend that all students review the day's work to promote learning. Following are suggested daily homework timelines:

Grade One – 5 to 10 min.
Grade Two – 10 to 20 min.
Grade Three – 20 to 30 min.
Grade Four – 30 to 40 min.

Grade Five – 40 to 50 min.
Grade Six – 50 to 60 min.
Grade Seven – 60 to 70 min.
Grade Eight – 70 to 80 min.

Homework is the responsibility of the students. Parents are asked to provide a supportive environment in which to work. Organizational and time management skills are learned in the elementary grades. Agendas are strongly recommended to help students improve their organizational skills.

26. EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students have access to a wide variety of activities at St. Francis de Sales. Education excursions that enhance the regular school curriculum are planned throughout the year. Older students play on school teams such as basketball, volleyball, cross country and track and field. Other activities include swimming, W5H, music festival, junior achievement, school choir, student ambassadors, and Student Council. Students are also reminded that participating in these activities is a privilege. Further, membership on a team entails representing the school at multi-school tournaments. As such, Students are encouraged to live up to their academic commitments and school expectations. **Students who are unable to live up to their commitments at school may have this privilege to represent the school revoked by school staff.**

27. CATHOLIC SCHOOL PARENT COUNCIL

We strongly encourage all parents to attend **Catholic School Parent Council** meetings. The dates will be published in monthly newsletters. Your input is extremely important. Our CSPC also has a mailbox in the main office. If you wish to pass on information through your child, we would be happy to put it in their mailbox.

28. ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

Principals, teachers and support staff of the TCDSB are not permitted to administer any type of prescription medication during the school day, unless we have written signed authorization signed by you, the parent, and the prescribing physician. **Please do not send any prescription medication to school with your child without contacting the school first.** The forms to dispense any medication must be updated on a regular basis and are available from the school. Also, we will **not** dispense non-prescription medications to students under any circumstances as per board policy.

29. SURF RIGHT – ACCESSING SCHOOL COMPUTERS AND INTERNET

Once again, permission will be needed for your child to access the school's networked computer system. **Students will be reviewing board/school policies**, rules and procedures with regards to the Internet. A copy of TCDSB Policy Register along with a permission form will be sent home to parents of Kindergarten students and new registrants. Only after signing and returning the permission form will your child have access to our networked computers. If your child has one on file, additional forms will not be necessary at this time.

30. SCHOOL BUSES

For children who use the bus, parents may want to make a note of the phone number. When parents

are calling the bus company, it is important that they know their child's route number. School bus provider phone numbers are as follows:

Attridge Transportation -	416-255-5199
McCluskey Transportation -	416-246-1422
Stock West -	416-244-5341
Switzer Carty Transportation -	905-361-1084
Wheelchair Accessible Transit -	416-884-9898

Please keep for future reference. We will arrange a seating plan and begin taking attendance for children who take the bus home.

31. CODE OF CONDUCT AND PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE

At St. Francis de Sales Catholic School, students are expected to demonstrate a commitment to learning and to achieving success. The school has guidelines for appropriate student behaviour which reflect the school's dedication to respect for oneself and for others. These guidelines will be shared with students on a regular basis in class, at student assemblies, via public announcements, and through newsletters. The code of behaviour has been written so that students are fully informed of their responsibilities at St. Francis de Sales Catholic School. The school has a consistent approach to school discipline; thus, rules will be applied as the situation and cumulative behaviour warrants.

32. APPROPRIATE DRESS CODE AND STUDENT UNIFORM

Students of St. Francis de Sales School are to dress in the school's appropriate dress code or uniform, which consists of the following: navy blue pants, or skirt; a white or navy collared polo-shirt, oxford dress shirt, or blouse. Crests are available in the school office at a cost of \$8.00.

Parents may choose to purchase regular navy blue bottoms and a white collared shirt at any location.

Kindly remind your children that the Appropriate Dress Code or uniform is mandatory and will be strictly and consistently enforced. It is part of their responsibility to come to school appropriately dressed.