

December Newsletter 2020

St. MATTHEW CATHOLIC SCHOOL



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<http://stmatthew.wcdsb.ca>

*Heart of the Community, Success for
Each, A Place for All*

Message from the Principal

As we enter the month of December, during this unprecedented year, it may be difficult to be as excited for the coming of Christ, as in years past. However, this year, it is probably even more important to prepare for His coming and to be thankful for everything we have. Throughout these last few months, I have been thankful for the support of St. Matthew's students, staff and parents in following all protocols, and for being there to uplift each other and take care of each other.

Advent is a season of joyful expectation. Our challenge, especially in this year, is to help our children to look beyond the materialism of Christmas and focus on our spiritual preparation and our blessings.

As a school community, we will be exploring many avenues during Advent such as lighting the candles of our Advent wreath, praying and reflecting on the readings of Advent during our morning prayers, and keeping the less fortunate and the ill in our hearts.

Even though this Christmas will be different, let us be filled with joy and gratitude to be celebrating this special time of year with our family. May all of us be blessed with good health, inner peace and the spirit of joy. On behalf of everyone at St. Matthew Catholic School, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas and many blessings for the New Year!

G. Johnstone



Principal
G. Johnstone

Head Secretary
M. Voisin

Superintendent
J. Merkel

Trustee's
Melanie Van Alphen
Jeanne Gravelle

Parish
St. Agnes Parish
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Together In Faith

UMBRELLA PROJECT: SELF-COMPASSION

Self-Compassion is:

- Being kind to ourselves when we make mistakes, embarrass ourselves, or fail at something
- Accepting that nobody is perfect and everyone makes mistakes sometimes
- Knowing that it is normal and okay to feel all different kinds of feelings, even the hard ones like anger, sadness or jealousy
- Taking ownership for our own actions



Advent: Began November 29th, 2020

Ever loving God, we thank you for the exciting season of Advent. Together we travel on a journey of hope toward greater kindness, peace and joy in our school, our parish and our families. May our Advent journey also bring hope to our sisters and brothers near and far who are in need. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Amen.



Advent Reconciliation

As we cannot celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation this year, all classes from gr. 3-8 will be doing a virtual liturgy on Contrition during the week of Dec. 7-11th.



Advent Liturgy

We will be celebrating Advent as a whole school community during an Advent Liturgy during the week of Dec. 14th -18th.

Safe Schools Initiatives

Early Pick-Up

If you need to pick up your child prior to the end of the school day, 3:20 p.m., please send a note with your child in the agenda, advising the teacher when to send him/her to the office. When you arrive, please call the main office and we will escort your child to the door. Thank you!

Students Leaving School Property

Please make sure to inform your child's teacher of regular lunch arrangements for your child. If there is a change to the regular arrangements a note signed and dated must be given to the classroom teacher. **No students** will be allowed to leave the school property without first being signed out by a parent/guardian. **No Students will** be able to leave school property for lunch to go with a friend, or to the plaza.

No Visitors to the School

Due to COVID-19 protocols, visitors are not permitted in the school. Access will only be permitted to those visitors that have a prearranged meeting. Please call the main office to arrange a meeting/visit at (519)886-9311.

No Lunch Drop Off

Due to Covid-19 Restrictions, parents and guardians will not be granted access to the school to drop off their child's lunch. Please pack your child's lunch each day, including two snacks.

Water Fountains

Students are encouraged to bring their own reusable water bottle to school for water consumption. While water fountains are **closed**, the water filling stations ARE open and students will be able to refill their water bottles throughout the day. Please clearly label your child's water bottle to avoid the chances of accidental cross contamination.

Winter Weather- Extra Clothes

With the approach of the Winter Weather, please provide extra masks for your child, as the masks are getting wet with the snow. As well, extra pair of socks, pants, and mitts are always a good idea.



Student Safety

Covid-19 Pre-Screening Tool

Before heading to school each day, students should be screened by parents/guardians for any COVID-19 symptoms using the Province of Ontario's School Screening Tool found on our website or on the WCDSB website.

Safety Protocols

As we move into the month of December, I would like to continue to acknowledge the work and effort of all of the staff and students at St. Matthew school in following all safety protocols that are in place (masks, sanitizing and social distancing). Let's remember to keep doing what we are doing for everyone's safety!



Peanut and Other Life Threatening Allergies, Sabrina's Law Anaphylaxis Reaction

As we begin the new school year, we would like to inform you that St. Matthew School is an allergen aware school. There are pupils in attendance at our school who suffer from severe and life threatening allergies to certain foods. Exposure to the smallest quantities can cause severe and life threatening reactions. Anaphylaxis is a severe and life threatening allergic reaction. We would appreciate the cooperation of the entire school community by **NOT** sending any lunches or snacks that contain peanuts/nut products. We want St. Matthew Catholic School to be a safe environment for all students. Thank you for your assistance with this initiative.



Please do not send birthday snacks / cakes / treats into the school, that includes pencils, stickers etc. as we cannot hand those out.

We appreciate the cooperation of the entire school community. We want St. Matthew Catholic School to be a safe environment for all students.

Reporting Absences:



All students are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. In the event that your child will be late or absent, please call the school and follow the prompts to leave a message. This can be done 24 hours a day. For students who are absent and for whom a call is not received, we will attempt to contact you.

PLEASE CALL: 519-886-9311

Please leave the following information:

- Date of the absence
- Student's full name
- Grade level and teacher
- Reason for absence

All students who arrive after 8:50 a.m. or 12:35 p.m. must report to the office.

***Students are considered late if they do not enter their classroom with their classmates!**



Respect for Self, Respect for Others

As a staff, we continue to work together to provide examples and consistency in modeling Jesus' message to our students. We will assist and remind students of the importance of being respectful and working together to create a safe, caring, inclusive community.

Gathered to Become

This year the WCDSB Pastoral Theme is “Gathered to Become”. St. Matthew School was visited by the Chrysalis and Butterfly, during the week of November 23rd, that have been adopted as the symbol of this Pastoral Theme. Attached are some of the pictures of the activities of the week.



Student Supervision



School yard supervision does not begin until 8:35 a.m. every morning. Please, for the students’ safety, do not drop students off at the school prior to 8:35 a.m. unsupervised.

For student safety, we would like to remind all parents that you are not allowed on school property, this allows us to help maintain social distancing with our students. If you are waiting for a student, please pick a designated spot off of school property to meet them. When dropping off your student, please say goodbye at the sidewalk, on the top of the path, and allow your student to walk onto school property on their own.

Thank you!

LIFETOUCH PICTURES

Lifetouch will be at St. Matthew school for Picture Day on December 15, 2020.

Please see the following video to review all safety protocols that Lifetouch will be implementing that day. After Picture Day, order pictures on mylifetouch.ca using your Portrait ID and Access Code which can be found on your Picture Day order form.

<https://youtu.be/LevtvXI9I2Q>

Parking Lot Procedures

No one would disagree that student safety is the single most important priority for all of our students here at St. Matthew C.E.S. Please review the parking lot procedures, and I ask that you please inform anyone (grandparents, friends, neighbours, etc.) who drop off your child in the parking lot before school or picks him/her/them up after school.

The only vehicles that will be allowed to enter the parking lot at St. Matthew C.E.S. will be: OWL daycare staff, OWL daycare parents, St. Matthew staff, and WCDSB personnel. All of the above mentioned

people will have a parking pass that will hang from their rear view mirror. Staff members from St. Matthew, who are on morning and afterschool duty, will be looking for these passes on vehicles. Those vehicles that do not have passes will be asked to turn around and exit the parking lot. The lot may be monitored by City of Waterloo By-Law officers. Please be respectful of this policy here at St. Matthew C.E.S. and understand that our yard duty teachers, who patrol the lot before and after school, have your child's safety and best interest at heart. It is our moral imperative to provide a safe place for our students each and every day they come to school. Thank You for all that you do to keep our kids safe.



Inclement Weather Procedures/ Bus Cancellations

Now that days of inclement weather are with us, please make sure you check the Board's website at <http://www.wcdsb.ca> where information will be posted regarding bus cancellations. You will be told if our school is open or closed and whether buses are running. You can also check the Waterloo Region Student transportation at www.stswr.ca to see if busses have been cancelled due to inclement weather.

In the past, if busses were cancelled, in most cases schools would remain open. This year that is not possible due to our COVID-19 cohort related restrictions. We cannot pool classes based on the number of staff who fully attend and the number of students.

When busses are cancelled our schools will be closed and we will have a remote learning day. Your teacher will communicate with you in advance so you know where to look for school work. The work will be posted on the google classroom in the morning, no later than 10:00 a.m. and students will work on their own timing in their home. It will allow students to access some learning and we will be continuing to keep one and all safely.



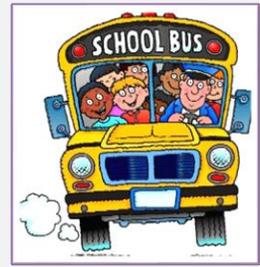
Catholic School Advisory Council (CSAC) Update

"The Catholic School Advisory Committee wishes you and your family a safe, healthy, magical Christmas and Happy New Year! Be kind and help support those around you who need it. If you find yourself in a position of needing support (of any kind), feel free to reach out to us at StMatthewCouncil@outlook.com and we will help direct you to the appropriate organization who can assist you. We are all in this together!

We have exciting plans for a fun outdoor event in February....our kids will love it. More details to come in January!"

**MARK YOUR
CALENDAR!**

November 29	Advent Begins
December 6	Virtual Book Fair Ends
December 14	Christmas PJ Day
December 15	Picture Day!
	Christmas Masks
December 16	Christmas Socks/ Slippers
December 17	Christmas hats/ ears/ antlers
December 18	Christmas Sweater
	Last Day!
December 21-January 2	Christmas Vacation!
January 4	First Day Back!
January 22	PD Day



Transportation

Information pertaining to Transportation can be accessed online at www.stswr.ca. You can also go to the board website www.wcdsb.ca and use the link for student transportation.

Please ensure that for those children who are transported via school bus, they know which bus and which stop is theirs. If you wish to change the bus stop, please make your request in writing. **Parents are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that kindergarten and grade one students are met at the bus.** If the bus driver does not see a parent or sitter at the scheduled stop, the child will be returned to the school.

As well, each bus has a seating plan to ensure minimal contact. Please speak to your child and ensure that they know to sit in their seat every time.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the office.