

# PARENT HANDBOOK

**St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School**  
**In Faith and Unity We Love, Learn and Lead**  
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Dear Parents,

St. Joseph School is a well established Catholic elementary school in Kelowna. It was first established in 1938 by the Sisters of Charity to serve Catholic parishes in the community. Today St. Joseph School works with approximately 300 students, 30 staff, over 200 families and 8 parishes. There are two classes at each grade level in grades one to seven. This year, we have one kindergarten class. Following Roman Catholic tradition, a Christian atmosphere is created and nurtured to allow a child to grow and develop to the best of his/her potential. If we in Catholic schools can assist each individual child to develop his/her talents and gifts, to have a strong work ethic, to have a love of learning, and to continually build a deeper relationship with God, then our mission as a Catholic community has been successful.

We recognize you, the parents, as the first educators of your children and that you have a vital role in their education. You set the stage for your child's entry into the Catholic school. Your interest and concern for St. Joseph School are important. Parents are encouraged to communicate with the staff just as the staff is encouraged to communicate with you. It is through this two-way communication that your children, our students, will be most successful.

For St. Joseph School to continue to develop, your support is needed. Please become involved and share the load with all parents by giving of your time and talents for the benefit of all the children. Volunteers are always welcome and much appreciated!

This Parent Handbook has been prepared as a guide for you. Please take some time to read through the handbook. We look forward to working with you in helping your child to grow and develop. With Christ as our Centre, and St. Joseph as our guide, may we all continue to reach out to others in faith through love and service.

Sincerely,

Rita Smith  
Principal

## MISSION STATEMENT

**Our mission is to foster the development of the total child in spirit, mind and body. Through Jesus, we encourage the pursuit of excellence in a community of love and respect.**

**“IN FAITH AND UNITY WE LOVE, LEARN AND LEAD”**

The staff of St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School is committed to this mission:

- by working in partnership with home and school.
- by living our faith everyday, we will be able to provide a safe environment in which all children can feel loved, needed and cared for.
- by providing a Christian education in the Roman Catholic tradition.
- by promoting Christian morals and values.
- by recognizing students as individuals and meeting their unique needs within a Christian learning environment.
- by accepting responsibility for setting and maintaining high standards for the spiritual, social, emotional, intellectual, physical and aesthetic development of each student.
- by continuing to achieve the highest possible professional and personal standards while growing in faith.
- by promoting a love for life-long learning in all students.
- by preparing students for the world of tomorrow.

“The special character of the Catholic School – the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils”

Pope Jean-Paul II  
Catechese Tradendae, 1979

### **CHRONOLOGY OF THE SCHOOL**

- 1938 August – The Sisters of Charity arrived in Kelowna
- 1939 May – Kindergarten opened.
- 1940 September – Grades 1 & 2 were started.
- 1941-1946 Grades 3, 4 & 5 were added. The classes were held in the social room of the hall while grades K, 1, 2 & 3 were held in the Convent.
- 1947 Grade 7 was added.
- 1950 The main building of school was built.
- 1958 The primary building was built.
- 1960 Immaculata High School was built.
- 1980 The Basilian Fathers assumed direction of the school. The new gym was built.
- 1992 The last year a Sister of Charity taught at the school.
- 1993 Charity Hall was dedicated in honour of the Sisters of Charity.
- 1995 The high school building on site was renovated and became the grade 5-7 building and the three buildings were named: Anderson Hall (1), Mackenzie Hall (K, 2-4), Doyle Hall (5-7).  
Immaculata High School moved to a new site on KLO Road.

## SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

St. Joseph School – a Catholic elementary school serving the needs of Kelowna Catholic parishes, operated by and governed by.....

- A. Kelowna Catholic Independent Schools Council – consisting of parish representatives and clergy who set policy and determine budgets, and are responsible to:

Catholic Independent Schools of Nelson Diocese (CISND) whose overall role is to govern the schools of the diocese (Kelowna, West Kelowna, Penticton, Cranbrook, Nelson, Trail) through policy development and fiscal planning. The President of C.I.S. (N.D.) is administrator Bishop John Corriveau, OFM Cap.

- B. Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Mrs. Beverly Pulyk, who is the Chief Executive Office of the C.I.S.N.D. and whose role is to implement the policies of C.I.S.N.D. and oversee the educational operation of all schools.

- C. Ministry of Education through the Independent Schools Branch who ensures standards are maintained in educational programs, staff qualifications and facilities.

The Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA), of which the Catholic schools are a member, is a liaison group between the government and the various independent school groups. The role of FISA is to lobby government and other groups to promote and support independent schools.

**The Diocesan Handbook is available online at <http://www.cisnd.ca>**

### HAVE A CONCERN? - PROPER PROTOCOL

If you have a concern about some facet of the school, please follow the policy by:

1. contacting the teacher or staff member involved.
2. if a settlement is not reached between the parent and the teacher/staff member, contact the principal.
3. if a settlement is still not reached, contact the Superintendent of Catholic schools.
4. if satisfaction is still not gained after talking to the superintendent then write to the Education Committee of the School Council stating your concern and your actions taken to date.

If the concern is not a personnel issue, please follow the same steps except reverse steps 3 & 4.

## **SCHOOL FUNDING**

The Ministry of Education recognizes St. Joseph School as a Group I Independent School. This means we are able to have the maximum funding available to an independent school, 50% of the per pupil operating costs of the local school district. Other funds are obtained via student tuition fees, parish subsidies, diocesan subsidies, fundraising activities and donations. One of the greatest contributions to our school is the “gift of service” by our staff in that they have chosen to teach at St. Joseph School for a lower salary than in the public school district. We thank them for their dedication and commitment to Catholic education.

## **FUNDRAISING**

There are 3 levels of fundraising that take place in the school.

- Class - student to student mini fundraisers such as popsicle sales, raffles, etc.
- PSG - parent fundraising at the school community level which includes such activities as Entertainment Books, craft fair, family dances, etc.
- Council - council events that involve the Kelowna community at large. Such fundraisers include raffles, charity auctions, etc.

## **PARENTS' RIGHTS**

We believe each parent of a child attending St. Joseph School can be expected to:

- be recognized as the first educators of their own children.
- participate in the spiritual, social, emotional, physical and academic growth of their children.
- elect the school council members (if an election is held) through participation in parishes supporting the school.
- be given the opportunity to participate in parent-teacher-student interviews.
- expect excellence in religious and academic education.
- be properly informed by the school regarding the progress of their children in the school.
- have their views on any aspect of the curriculum and school activities listened to by school personnel.
- have the school and the school council reinforce the Catholic moral and religious guidance and discipline given in the home.



## **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

Five formal reporting sessions are used to communicate with parents. These are in addition to the many other opportunities such as informal conferences, telephone calls, notes, etc. Of the five formal sessions, there are two teacher/parent conferences. Written reports are issued three times a year. The first one is issued in early December, the second is issued in March, and the final report is issued at the close of the school year in June.



## **WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS**

A weekly newsletter is sent via email to each family with a child enrolled at St. Joseph Elementary School. Each newsletter contains pertinent information for the following week. The next month's calendar is included with the last newsletter of the month. If you do not have email access, please notify the office and we will provide a hard copy.


## **DRIVER DECLARATION FORMS and CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS**

As a school community we rely on parents to assist with driving for field trips. Any parents willing to drive must complete a Driver Declaration Form available at the office. Proof of \$2 million coverage for insurance as well as a valid driver's license is required. Should there ever be an accident, your driver's insurance covers the first \$2 million and the diocesan insurance plan picks up the remainder. A satisfactory Criminal Record check is required for all parents volunteering to drive and/or supervise on field trips and in classrooms.

## SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A. Academic 

St. Joseph School follows the curriculum required by the Ministry of Education. All subjects are allocated time according to Ministry standards.

B. Religion 

The purpose of St. Joseph School is to assist with the faith education of the students attending the school. This can only be done through the cooperation of the home, school and parish. We strongly encourage parents to be active in their parish.

We are fortunate to have rich human resources such as parish priests contributing their time, energy and religious guidance in striving to provide the best possible Catholic education for our students. Staff members attend yearly spiritual development retreats and conferences.

C. Music 

Music has a high priority and a positive, well-earned reputation in our school. Music forms an integral part of our Eucharistic celebrations. Students are instructed in concert band at grades 6 & 7.

D. Co-Curricular Programs 

Throughout the year, we are able to take advantage of community programs such as: swimming, skating, the museum, and the art gallery. The cost for these programs is covered by the student activity fee collected in September.



E. **Student Support Services**

Educational services are offered under the direction of the Student Support Services Co-ordinator. These services are designed to support students who have special educational needs.

1. **Special Education**

St. Joseph School has a coordinator of Student Services who oversees programs for students with special medical and/or learning needs, funded by the Ministry of Education, as well as those not funded.

2. **Learning Assistance**

Our learning assistance program is a service designed to assist students with mild to moderate difficulties in learning. The focus is on providing remediation, learning strategies and compensatory skills. Children who are learning English as a second language receive one-to-one or small group instruction in English, in addition to the regular Language Arts Program. This service is not available for short-term International students.

3. **Enrichment**

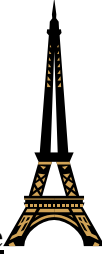
The enrichment program is a service available to all children in need of a challenge beyond the regular BC Ministry of Education school program. Enrichment takes place in the classroom.

4. **Specific Skill Development**

For students in need of basic skills development, we offer short-term direct instruction in a small group setting. This service enables students who are behind in reading, writing or math (for reasons other than a learning difficulty) to get caught up with the regular classroom program.

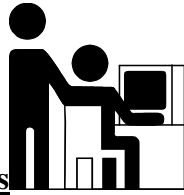
5. **Counseling Services**

A teacher is available for students, parents and teachers to discuss concerns and work towards resolution.



**F. French as a Second Language**

French as a second language is offered to all of our students starting in kindergarten. Through a program of activities, songs, games, reading and writing, we expect students to develop an interest and enthusiasm for the French language and culture. The major focus is on oral language acquisition.



**G. Computers**

All students will have opportunities to enrich their learning through the use of computers. The computer lab hosts 26 stations. All students make use of the lab at least once a week. In addition, there are computers for students' use in some classrooms. The lab computers have internet access and students and their parents must sign an internet agreement before a child is able to use this resource.



**H. Extra-Curricular Activities**

Throughout the year, a variety of activities is available to students including choir, athletics, community service projects, etc.



**I. School Liturgies**

Each month we celebrate the Eucharist as a school community. Each grade level takes a turn in preparing the celebration for us. Parents and community members are invited and most welcome to join us on these special occasions.

**J. Class Priests**

Each year, the parish priests of the area volunteer to associate themselves with a particular class. Through class visits and other activities we hope to establish an encouraging relationship between our students and the priests, and in doing so, deepen the students' faith.



## HOMEWORK

The purpose of homework is to reinforce, practice and apply knowledge and skills.

In the primary grades, homework should consist of **READING, READING, READING**. Make reading an activity of choice in your home. In the primary years, there may be a need to practice basic skills from time to time. Parents and teachers together may determine if extra practice is required. Primary homework, other than family reading time, should not take longer than 10-15 minutes.

In the intermediate grades, students may be asked to complete work not finished in class, to study for upcoming tests, and to practice knowledge and skills in real life settings. If homework for grades four and five takes longer than 30-40 minutes, and in grades six and seven, longer than 60 minutes, please talk to the teacher to determine the reason. Teachers will not assign new homework on Fridays so weekends can be family time.

Parents can provide a positive role model through their own interest in reading. Crucial to good home learning habits is:

- regular homework/study time
- a quiet place
- necessary materials and resources
- appropriate lighting

Your child's Agenda Book should help everyone stay organized and set goals for completing projects by planning time carefully. Please remember, playing outdoors is good exercise for the brain and the body, so be sure to make time for fun! A major homework assignment: turn off the TV and the computer, and play!



## FIRST AID PROCEDURES

The school has well established policies and procedures in regards to the health and safety of the children. Parents are expected to notify school personnel using proper documentation for any health concerns. **It is a parent's responsibility to notify the school if there is a change in their child's health care needs.**

If a child is injured at school the following procedures are in place:

- a minimum of three staff have in-depth first aid training
- all staff have minor level training
- minor injuries are dealt with at the school level
- if a questionable or serious injury takes place, one of the first aid trained staff will assess your child's injury, contact parents and/or medical personnel
- a school written report is completed for any questionable or serious injury



## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Professional Development is a critical area for our teachers as education is continually evolving. To that extent the Diocese allows 8 days per year for professional development in the academic and spiritual areas. When and what these days are used for is at the discretion of the individual school staffs. At times, the whole staff may attend a conference, have someone come to the school to do a workshop, or use a day to do some school-based planning. In addition, staff is encouraged and supported to take advantage of individual professional development opportunities; many do throughout the year and during the summer break.



## **BIRTHDAY INVITATIONS**

Birthdays are special times to celebrate. When your child celebrates a birthday, parents are invited, but not required, to make it a class celebration by providing a nutritional treat for all those in the class. Please check with your child's teacher for the proper time and place. **PARTY INVITATIONS** are **NOT** to be distributed at school, as it makes it very difficult for those students who do not receive an invitation. Your support is appreciated in this matter.

## **PARKING**

Parking for parents and visitors is permitted along the church building, McKenzie Hall and St. Joseph Hall (Clubhouse). The area along the ropes is a drop off and pick up area only. **Cars cannot be left unattended along the ropes at any time.** It is important to observe this regulation for the safety of our students. Please do not leave your engine running.

## **STUDENT ABSENTEEISM**

When a student is to be absent for the day, parents are required to notify the school as soon as possible. This is done as a safety precaution. Should a student be away for **more than one day**, by contacting the school, we can arrange for work to be taken home. If a student is required to be away for an extended period of time, the parent should contact the principal of the school to discuss how the child's education can be least disrupted.

## **BUSSING**

We do not provide bussing. Transportation of children includes:

- parents driving their own children to and from school
- car pooling
- city transit

## **SCHOOL UNIFORMS**

St. Joseph students wear uniforms. The uniform policy is in effect from September through June. Initial uniform purchases are coordinated through the school. You may order online or by phone if you require items at other times.

The uniform includes:

- a white or navy uniform shirt, crested ( an optional red shirt is available for grade 7 only)
- uniform gray pants, shorts, navy tunic or skort
- navy socks/navy knee highs/navy leotards
- black inside shoes
- a sweater is optional, but if a sweater is worn, it **must be** the official school sweater/vest/pullover ordered through the school. No hoodies or jackets to be worn indoors.

PE (for grades 2-7 only) Gym strip ordered through the school

- a crested royal blue gym shirt
- navy crested gym shorts
- light soled runners for indoors only

## DAILY TIME SCHEDULE

Our daily schedule is as follows:

8:25	Staff Prayer
8:45	Assembly Bell for Morning Classes
10:20	Recess Begins
10:35	Assembly Bell
10:40	Classes Begin
12:00	Lunch Begins
12:15	Lunch Recess
12:40	Assembly Bell
12:45	Classes begin
2:45	Dismissal

## EARLY ARRIVAL

It is noted that some students arrive early to school. Students must remember to dress appropriately, especially for the cold or rainy weather as students are expected to be outside. Children should not arrive **before** 8:30 am.

The playgrounds are supervised starting at 8:30 a.m. Out of school care is available at The Clubhouse before 8:30 am. Please contact Caroline Noga at 860-4393 (daycare) for further information.

## DEPARTURE

After school, a staff member is on supervision in the parking area from 2:45-3:00 pm. The playgrounds are not supervised after 3:00 pm. The grade 1 playground and the field for grade 5-7 are off limits after school. All students may play/congregate in and near the grades 2-4 playground while waiting for their rides. Students should not be at school past 3:00 unless they are taking part in extra-curricular activities or receiving extra help from a staff member. The staff member on supervision duty will blow a whistle at 3:00 pm. and bring all unattended students into Doyle Hall to wait for their ride.

## **SUPERVISION**

Students are supervised by staff and/or paid supervisors before and after school as well as during lunch and recess breaks.

## **PARENT GROUPS**

1. The **Parent Support Group (PSG)** is responsible for the coordination of particular school activities. Our PSG is very active and meets once a month. All parents are encouraged to be active in the work of the PSG. Input from parents is often requested on various school issues and/or topics. A representative from this committee serves as a parent liaison with the school council.
2. Each 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Tuesday mornings of the month parents gather at 9:00 a.m. to pray for our school community and that of Immaculata High School. Entitled *Parents Who Care*, this opportunity is open to all parents and friends on a “come when you can” basis. *Parents Who Care* gather in Charity Hall and the chapel at Immaculata. Please check the school newsletter for the place of prayer on any given week.

## CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENTS

### Introduction

At St. Joseph School, we believe all students make choices and are responsible for their own behavior, successes and failures. Students should not blame the environment, parents, peers or teachers for the choices they make. We strive to help and support the children to make the best choices possible.

When a student requires disciplining, four guiding principles will be followed. Students will be helped to:

- know what they have done wrong
- understand and take ownership of the problem
- solve the problem they created
- keep their dignity intact while being disciplined

### Rights and Responsibilities

At St. Joseph School each child has rights and responsibilities. Each student in our school deserves to learn and work in the best environment that can be provided. Accordingly, all students will make every effort to observe the following.

*Students in our school have the right to:*

**Learn and work in a disruption-free environment.**

**Be protected from physical harm.**

**Be protected from verbal abuse.**

**Have their positive behaviour recognized.**

**Have their personal property protected.**

**Have their concerns heard.**

**Be treated with kindness and caring.**

*Each student, therefore, has the responsibility to:*

**Listen, ask questions, and learn and work without disrupting others.**

**Not to physically harm themselves or others.**

**Treat others with dignity, worth and respect by not calling other people names.**

**Praise and acknowledge others for appropriate behaviour.**

**Respect the personal property of others and accept others' right to privacy.**

**Listen when others talk and speak the truth always.**

**Treat others with kindness and caring.**

**In order for academic success students are expected to:**

- be on time for school
- listen to the teachers
- complete all assignments and hand them in on time
- ask for help when in difficulty
- try their best

**Fighting**

If students choose to fight they choose to have an in-school suspension. Students must resolve conflict in a non-aggressive manner, stop fighting and apologize for their misbehavior, and attempt to improve in their behavior.

**Bullying**

There is a bully-proofing program implemented in the school. The focus is on prevention but if need be students and their parents are communicated with in bullying situations. Please contact the school counselor or principal if you, as a parent, feel your child is being bullied.

**Uniforms**

Students are expected to wear the school uniform (grey pants or shorts; navy tunic or skort; school shirt; optional navy cardigan, pullover or vest; navy socks, knee-highs or tights; black shoes). Earrings, if worn, must be small studs. Makeup is not acceptable, other than clear lip gloss and clear nail polish.

**Conclusion**

The code of conduct for students is not intended to be all-inclusive, rather it serves as a basis for dealing with students who are choosing inappropriate behavior.

