

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2020-2021 school year. The staff at Monsignor Castex would like to welcome you and your child to a new year. We look forward to another successful year – filled with new opportunities for learning - spiritually, intellectually, physically and emotionally.

Our focus this year will continue to be social justice, respecting differences, growth mindset, and numeracy as we journey together in faith, literacy and community. We work with the whole child in all that we do. Our faith is infused in everything we do, from our extra-curricular activities to our strong, cutting-edge programming.

In partnership with the staff of St. Margaret's Church, numerous community partners, and you, our parent community, we will continue to provide the best experiences and opportunities for growth for each of our students.

Welcome to a blessed new year. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Yours in Catholic Education,
Mr. M. Melchiorre
Principal
smcdsb.on.ca/mca

FAITH IN OUR COMMUNITY

School Mission Statement

Monsignor Castex Catholic School, with the support of the home, parish and community is dedicated to providing educational and spiritual leadership. We strive for academic, spiritual, physical and social excellence within a Catholic environment.

School Prayer

As we begin a new day, Lord, we ask you to bless us.

Help us to know that each day is special as we share it with everyone that we meet.

Help us to know that we can share the sorrow and happiness of others when we respect and recognize their needs and successes.

We ask you to bring us together, Lord, as a school community where we can learn and find a way to nurture the gifts that each of us has to offer.

Amen

Our Parish Partner

We believe in fostering a strong relationship between your home, our school and St. Margaret's Catholic Church. Our parish works closely with our school community to provide your child with an education rooted in our Catholic faith.

Throughout the year, there will be opportunities for our students to participate in the sacraments, Mass and prayer celebrations. You will see our pastor, Father Roselle Azares, visiting classes within our school and celebrating special events with our community.

Sacramental Preparation

We work closely with our parish community, especially our Youth Minister, Bev Main, to support students as they prepare to receive their sacraments.

Each year, students in Grade 2 have the opportunity to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion. Parents will work with St. Margaret's Parish to prepare for these sacraments. Our school supports and complements what children are learning at the parish through classroom teaching.



Students in Grade 7 and 8 have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Again, arrangements for this sacrament are made through the parish, but the preparation and celebration of the sacrament is an important part of the students' year.

POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

Promoting a Positive School Climate

Maintaining a positive school climate at Monsignor Castex Catholic School is a key priority because it helps students feel safe, welcome and secure. Using our mission and Catholic values as a guide, we have developed procedures and guidelines to ensure that our students and staff learn and work in a positive and productive environment.

Student Behaviour

Monsignor Castex Catholic School has established some key statements to outline expectations around student behaviour. Students at Monsignor Castex Catholic School:

- Will be active, positive and enthusiastic participants within our Catholic

community as we strive towards living the Gospel message.

- Come to school on time and prepared to work with an enthusiastic and positive attitude, while striving to achieve their academic goals.
- Will be familiar with and practise the school procedures as outlined in this school agenda in addition to any policies outlined by administration during the school year.
- Will respect and obey those in authority within our school community. Students will address staff and visitors to our community in a polite and courteous manner.
- Will respect fellow students as they listen actively, speak honestly and respond positively in the classroom, on the schoolyard and as ambassadors of our school in the community.

Dress For Success

Students will be participating in a wide range of activities, both inside and outdoors, at school. It is important that they wear comfortable, durable clothing that is suitable for the weather.

Our school is special because we model ourselves after Jesus Christ. How we present ourselves must reflect our commitment to promoting a safe, positive and respectful learning environment.

Appropriate Dress Guidelines:

Attention to outward appearance is an important part of student's social development. Students are expected to dress appropriately according to the dress code guidelines.

- Only hemmed shorts and walking shorts (must be mid-thigh in length) are permitted. Short skirts/shorts are not permitted.
- Hats, hoods and caps are to be removed when inside the school. Hats, hoods and bandanas are not permitted inside.
- All tops will cover the full midriff and will cover the top of pants. Bare midriffs are not permitted.
- Pants are to cover all underwear. Visible underwear is not permitted.
- All tops will cover the full shoulder (please remember to use the 2 finger wide rule) with appropriate neckline. Spaghetti straps are not permitted.
- All clothing will be free of derogatory or inappropriate print or graphics.

- Torn/ripped clothing is not permitted.
- Visible chains attached to clothing or wallets are not permitted.
- Facial piercings are not permitted.

The consequences for students who are inappropriately dressed will be as follows:

- Students will be reminded of the school dress code initially and asked to modify their appearance
- Students may be given alternative clothing to remedy the situation.
- Students will be asked to go home to change if the situation repeats itself
- Students may be suspended if the situation becomes chronic.

Footwear

For safety reasons and to maintain cleanliness in the classrooms, students must have shoes to wear inside their class.

Outdoor footwear is not to be worn in teaching areas.

Beach flip-flops are not safe for outdoor play and are not allowed on the playground equipment.

Students must have running shoes for gym classes. Shoes that leave black marks are not allowed in our gym.



SAFE SCHOOLS

Safe Arrival and Attendance

It is critical that your child arrives at school safely and on time. This teaches your child the value of being punctual. Our Safe Arrival Program, which includes communicating with our office when your child is late or absent, helps ensure student safety.

Compulsory School Attendance

Did you know that Ontario law states that children between the ages of 6 and 17 must attend school? We appreciate that sometimes there are circumstances beyond your control, such as illness, that might prevent attendance at school; however, these situations should be rare and the school principal will address prolonged absences.

If your child is away for more than 15 days consecutively due to illness, a medical note will be needed to maintain your child on the school register. There are many supports in place to encourage regular school attendance, including school counsellors, social workers, community agencies and an attendance counsellor. Please

contact the school if you have questions or concerns.

Reporting Your Child Late or Absent

Please follow this simple, but critical process when reporting your child as late or absent.

Step 1 – phone our school at **705-526-2831** at any time, to inform us when your child will be absent or late. There is a voicemail 24 hours per day.

Step 2 – leave your child's full name, teacher's name and the reason for the absence on the school voicemail.

Step 3 – when your child returns to class, provide the teacher with a note explaining the reason for your child's absence.

Step 4 – if your child is late, please direct them to the office where they will check-in and be provided a late slip for admittance to class.

Important Note: If your child regularly walks to school, it is assumed that he/she will attend class when buses are cancelled due to inclement weather. If you decide to keep your child home during an inclement weather day, you must use the process listed above to report your child's absence.

Safe Welcome Program

All of our elementary schools have front door intercom and video technology installed as part of the Ministry of Education's Safe Welcome Program.

The intention of the program is for all elementary schools in Ontario to have doors locked throughout the school day. This means that students who are late for school or return to school after an appointment will need to be buzzed in through the main entrance. This enhanced security measure provides us with one more way to monitor who is visiting our schools and help us ensure that all visitors sign in at the office.



Leaving Early

Students who are leaving school early must bring a note to their teacher or have a note in their agenda book stating the need for the early dismissal. Please avoid any last minute early dismissals. We do not want to interrupt the learning in the classroom. At the time of dismissal, your child will proceed to the office to be signed out by a parent/guardian.

Morning Drop-off Procedures

"Kiss and Ride" – 8:25 to 8:40 a.m.

The "Kiss and Ride" program utilizes the traffic "loop". Parents are asked to pull all the way up to the recycling bins when dropping off their children, keeping the driveway clear. Students can go directly to the supervised yard to wait for the entrance bell. **Between 8:25 and 8:40 a.m., this area is designed for 'dropping off' students only. Please do not park in this 'loop' or leave your car unattended.** Please use one of the parking spots if you wish to come into the school. Do not use the bus route when dropping your child in the morning.

School begins at 8:40 a.m. and supervision in the schoolyard begins at 8:25 a.m. **Please do not drop your child off before 8:25 a.m.**

Students will remain outside until the 8:37 a.m. bell, unless there is inclement weather. On wet mornings or when the temperatures are extremely cold (-25°C or -28°C with the wind chill) students can come inside.

All students are to enter and exit the building through their designated door (the same door they use for recess). Students should only use the main doors (adjacent to the office) when they are being signed in due to lateness or signed out by a parent/guardian prior to the end of the school day.

Afternoon Pick-up

Our school day ends at 3 p.m. Please do not use the bus route between 2:40 - 3:15 pm.

Bicycles

Students may ride their bicycles to school, but it is important that they are left and locked in the designated bicycle racks. Wearing a bicycle helmet is mandatory and students must walk their bikes when on school property. Please note that the school cannot accept responsibility for damaged or stolen bicycles.

Skateboards, In-line Skates and Scooters

Skateboards, in-line skates, scooters and heeled shoes (shoes with wheels in the heels) are not to be used on school property.

Riding the Bus

We are committed to providing safe and reliable bus transportation for those students whose distance from home to school one way is greater than 1.6 km. Riding the bus should

be an enjoyable and positive experience for all of our students.

In order to ensure the safety of children riding the bus we ask the following:

- Students must take their bus home in the evening unless they have a note from a parent or guardian indicating that they can remain at school or walk home.
- A note from a parent/guardian must be provided to the office if a student plans to get off the bus at a different stop. This note will be approved by the office and then provided to the bus driver

Ensuring Safety on the Bus

It is helpful to periodically remind your child about the rules and regulations of riding a school bus. Although it is very rare, school bus privileges can be suspended temporarily or permanently if a child does not respect the rules and regulations that are in place for the safety of everyone. Here are some basic guidelines to follow:

- Your child must always enter the bus in an orderly manner and immediately find a seat. Once on the bus, he or she must always follow the instructions of the school bus driver.
- All students must remain in their seats while the bus is in motion. With children sitting quietly, the bus driver is free from distractions and able to focus on road safety.
- Parents are financially responsible for any willful damage to the bus caused by their children.
- Keeping in mind the safety of all riders, we ask that your child not bring any objects onto the bus that may hinder safe operation.
- Students must also refrain from eating or drinking on the bus.
- Heads and arms must stay inside the bus at all times and aisles should be kept clear.

Bus Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather

On inclement weather days we urge you to visit simcoecountyschoolbus.ca or listen to a local radio station to find out if buses are cancelled. When buses are cancelled in the morning, they are automatically cancelled in the afternoon. Please keep in mind that our school is open for student learning even when buses are cancelled.

Know Our Weather Zone

Weather zones are used to allow for partial bus cancellations. Monsignor Castex Catholic School is in **the NORTH weather zone**. There are four weather zones and it is possible that buses will run in our zone, but be cancelled in another zone and so it is important for you to know your zone.

Custody

We are always concerned about the safety of your child. In some family situations, there may be custody issues, visitation rights and special instructions – it is critical that we be made aware of any such situation. Please ensure that the office staff and the classroom teacher are aware of legal agreements between separated or divorced parents and copies of current legal documents are on file in the office.

Emergency Situations

At Monsignor Castex Catholic School procedures are in place so that we are fully prepared for an emergency situation. Staff and students routinely practise these procedures. If it is necessary to evacuate the school, our students will be relocated to Bayview Public School. In the case of an emergency, transporting students to this location is the responsibility of the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board. In any emergency situation, our school would work closely with the school board and emergency personnel to provide updates via websites and the media.

In very rare circumstances, for example, a power outage or loss of heat in the winter, we may be required to close the school early. In emergency situations or early school closures, your child may be picked up by you or an authorized designate. If a parent authorizes a designate to pick-up a student, the teacher would appreciate a signed and dated note.

Major Incidents

We know that being proactive and preparing for the potential of a major incident is a key way to keep our students and staff safe. As part of our safe schools initiative, Monsignor Castex Catholic School has worked with the local police service to develop a response plan should a violent incident occur.

This involves immediate contact with the police and a lockdown of the premises. Although it is highly unlikely that something like this would occur, our staff regularly reviews and practises procedures with the

students. Your child may mention to you that they were involved in a “Lock Down” drill because that is what our response plan is referred to within the school.

GETTING INVOLVED

Communicating With You

Establishing a positive and open relationship between parents, teachers and students is a critical part of achieving excellence in education. We communicate through ‘e-Blasts’ which are emails sent directly to you. Please ensure we have your current e-mail address.

We always welcome opportunities for parents to have meetings with teachers and other school staff as necessary throughout the school year. This student agenda is also an excellent way to communicate with your child’s classroom teacher. You can share questions or concerns via this agenda on a daily or weekly basis.

Online Payment Using School Day

Our school is excited to offer online payment through a program called School-Day.

The system will enable parents to:

- Approve permission forms and pay online instantly
- Register your child for extracurricular activities
- Order and pay for hot lunches
- Reduce the amount of paper sent home in backpacks

If you haven’t done so already, please obtain your family’s secure key code from the school and visit www.school-day.com to register. Once you have registered you can pay for items and approve permission forms by clicking on the “School Day” quick link on our school website or logging in directly on the school day website www.school-day.com.

Contact Information

Please inform the school office if your address or any other pertinent information such as home or work telephone numbers change throughout the year. We need to make certain that our records are accurate.

Making the Most of the School Day

In order to promote the best learning environment possible, we ask that parents keep school day interruptions to a minimum. Planning in advance and maintaining regular communication through this agenda will help maintain a harmonious and smooth day at school.

- **Dropping off items** – parents are not permitted to go to their child’s classroom to drop off items, check-in, etc. If you need to see your child for some reason or would like to drop something off during the school day, you must check-in at the office.
- **Speaking with the teacher** – if you have questions, we encourage you to speak to your child’s teacher, but we recommend that you arrange discussion for either before or after school hours. If you are making a change to your child’s regular routine, please make these arrangements well in advance and communicate changes with your child’s teacher in writing.
- **Last minute messages** – our office is quite busy during the day and so we urge you not to rely on us to get last minute messages to your child unless it is an emergency.
- **Using the telephone** – students will not be permitted to use the office telephone unless they have permission from their teacher. If a phone call is necessary, it will be made by the teacher or another adult (this includes calls regarding illness or injury).

Catholic School Community Council

Our Catholic School Community Council strives to be composed of parents, a teaching staff representative, a non-teaching staff representative, a parish representative, a representative from the community and the principal. Members are elected each fall and serve as an advisory body to the principal on many school issues throughout the year. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings. Dates will be sent out in our school Remind app. Please join us!



HEALTHY SCHOOLS

We know that parents want us to promote a healthy environment at school. This includes promoting healthy food options, opportunities for physical activity as well as minimizing exposure to illness – all of these contribute to better learning.

Scent-Safe Schools

Please be advised that a Scent-Safe Schools program is now in place for all schools and board office locations. This means that we are asking for the cooperation of students, staff and visitors in not using scented products in our working and learning environments.

We know that allergies and sensitivities to scents can have severe health implications and so we must do everything possible to make sure that all students, staff and visitors with scent allergies and sensitivities are safe and fully included.

A scent is a smell or odour from products and it can be natural such as flowers or synthetic such as perfume. Examples of products that may have scents include shampoos, deodorant, hairspray, soap, detergents, perfumes, lotions, candles, cleaning products and essential oils.

Not using scented products is a simple thing to do and it will help ensure a safe and comfortable environment for all of our students and staff.

Accident or Illness

If your child becomes sick or gets injured while at school, we will contact you as soon as possible. If you are not available, or unable to be contacted, we will call the emergency contacts that you have listed in your child's record. It is essential that parents and guardians notify the school of changes to phone numbers or contacts.

Communicable Diseases

The *Health Promotion and Protection Act* requires that children with certain communicable diseases must remain at home. Unfortunately, we do not have the space or staff supervision for children who are not well enough to go outside at recess.

The following list defines some of the more common childhood diseases and how long your child should stay home if he/she becomes ill with one of these illnesses.

- **Chickenpox** – for 5 days after the rash begins or until all blisters have crusted.
- **Impetigo** - until the antibiotic prescribed by the doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
- **Pink-eye** - until the antibiotic prescribed by the doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
- **Scabies** - until treatment has been given.

- **Scarlet Fever** - until the antibiotic prescribed by the doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
- **Strep Throat**- until the antibiotic prescribed by the doctor has been taken for at least one full day.
- **Fifth Disease** - even though this is not a communicable disease, it should be reported to the office because there is a risk posed to pregnant women.

Visit simcoemuskokahealth.org for more information.

Head Lice

Any situation related to head lice will be dealt with in a discreet manner, which protects the dignity of the children and privacy of families. We will educate students about preventative measures and send current information from the Health Unit home to parents.

We are asking parents and guardians to help us prevent incidents or the spread of head lice by doing the following:

- Examine your child's head for possible infestations at regular intervals.
- Notify the school of any infestations.
- Ensure that proper and full de-infestation takes place within a reasonable length of time.

The major signs and symptoms of head lice are: intense itching, frequent and persistent head scratching with scratch marks, or an apparent rash on the neck and scalp. Information regarding head lice is available through the school office or by visiting the Health Unit's website at simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Immunizations

In Ontario, under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*, you must provide proof that your child's vaccinations are current. When you register your child for school for the first time, you will be asked for a record of your child's immunization.

Students who don't have up-to-date immunization or a valid exemption on file at the Health Unit, may be suspended from school. You can find out more about immunization programs on the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's website at simcoemuskokahealth.org.

Administering Medication

There are some students who require regular or special medication. We all want to be sure that your child receives any medication he or

she needs. Our board has a medication administration policy, which states that no medication can be administered by staff without written permission from parents. Students may not carry medication with them at any time, with the exception of an EpiPen and/or inhaler. Informed consent must be provided from parents should a child be required to carry it with them. If a child requires medication we will gladly administer it, but only by assigned staff.

For medication to be administered, a consent and instruction form must be filled out. These forms and our board's policy are available at our office or on the board's website at smcgsb.on.ca.

HEALTHY EATING

1st Lunch 10:40 – 11 a.m.
2nd Lunch 1:20 – 1:40 p.m.

Students will eat their lunch at their desk and will remain on school property, unless special permission has been granted. Students who walk to school may go home for lunch if they have written permission from a parent. For the safety of your child, we ask that a consistent routine be established with regards to staying at school or walking home during lunch.

Snacks

Students will be provided with time in the classroom to have snacks and drinks. All food and beverage must be eaten in the classroom and are not to be consumed in the hallway, gym, washrooms or outside at recess. We discourage students from using glass bottles and containers for their drinks and snacks.



Chewing Gum

Our school also has a no gum policy, which means that absolutely no gum will be allowed inside the school or outside on school property.

Allergies: We strive to be Allergen Free

Many children have allergies, but for some students an allergy can be life threatening. For example, even minimal exposure to peanuts can prove fatal within minutes. Some other common allergens include tree nuts, shellfish, eggs, milk and latex – all of these can cause severe reactions.

If your child has a severe allergy, it is absolutely critical that you let us know. With your help, we will do our best to reduce risk and make sure all our students are safe, healthy, and able to concentrate on learning.

Our staff is instructed on how to deal with anaphylactic shock. However, our best course of action is to prevent exposure to potentially life-threatening allergies. As a school community, we must work together to ensure the safety of our students.

Here is what we are doing to reduce the risk of allergic exposure:

- All food and beverage must be consumed inside the classroom – under no circumstances are students allowed to have snacks in the schoolyard.
- Our school is a peanut and tree nut free zone. Please ensure that all food sent to school with your child meets the nut-free standard. This includes “pea butter” products. On request, we would be happy to provide you with a list of nut-free snacks and lunch ideas.
- Your child's teacher will inform you if there are other allergies in your child's classroom. We ask that you please understand and appreciate the health and safety of every student by not sending food and beverage items that may be a cause for concern.
- Please check with your child's classroom teacher before providing treats for the classroom for special occasions.
- There are many students with a variety of food allergies and so we err on the side of caution to make sure all of our students are safe.
- We also have many students on gluten free diets, so the importance of communicating with the classroom teacher when sending in snacks or treats is critical.

Selling Food and Beverage

We know that making healthy food choices while in school supports learning. The Government of Ontario has a school food and beverage policy, which has impacted the kinds of food and beverages we can sell at our school. The policy encourages selling lunches, snacks and drinks that follow the principles of healthy eating in *Canada's Food Guide*.

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Recess

Getting some fresh air and participating in physical activity at recess is important. Unless the weather is unsuitable, students are expected to be outside during recess.

Dressing for the Weather

We ask that students dress in clothing that is suitable for the weather – this is especially important during the winter months. Durable and warm clothing will help ensure that your child's outdoor experiences are enjoyable. It is also advisable to label clothing, i.e., mitts, hats and indoor shoes with your child's first and last name.

Yard Safety

While outside at recess, we expect students to play safely and respect the rules of the schoolyard at all times. During the winter months, it is essential to leave all snow on the ground. Throwing snowballs or kicking snow is not acceptable.

Bringing Personal Property to School

We request students not bring valued personal property to school including cell phones, mobile devices, trading cards, etc. These items can easily be lost or damaged. **Please note that the school is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged items.**

Students should not bring money to school. If your child is required to bring money for school events or activities, i.e., pizza day or field trips, please ensure it remains in your child's school bag until the teacher collects it first thing in the morning.

Lost and Found

We encourage our students to check the lost and found for any misplaced items. If you know your child is missing something, you are welcome to check the lost and found yourself (please check-in at the office first). Unclaimed items will eventually be donated to a local charity.

Field Trips

Students enjoy going on trips outside of the school. Field trips are a fun and informative way of providing your child with a new learning experience. All field trips are curriculum related and mandatory for students. Our board has a field trip policy, which you can find in the policy and

procedures section of the website at smcgsb.on.ca.

The classroom teacher will inform parent volunteers of responsibilities and expectations as well as appropriate strategies for dealing with misbehaviour. Prior to the field trip, the teacher will discuss the purpose of the field trip and learning outcomes for students.

Co-Curricular Activities

There are various clubs and sport teams offered at the school. Many take place during lunch hour, as well as before or after school. These co-curricular activities provide opportunities for students to learn new skills and form friendships. They help to teach teamwork, co-operation and demonstrate school spirit.

In order to participate in co-curricular activities, students must make a sincere effort in their academic endeavors, and demonstrate acceptable levels of trust-worthiness. Students must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner both in and out of the school. It is important for students to represent our school community by showing sportsmanlike qualities and by dressing appropriately for the event.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING

Homework

Homework is an integral part of a student's learning experience. In order to get the most out of school, students will be required, at times, to finish or continue their studies outside of the classroom. Research clearly shows that students who successfully complete homework achieve greater academic success in school.



On occasion, parents become concerned with the amount or content of homework assigned by the classroom teacher. If this is the case, please take the time to contact your child's teacher. It is recommended that all students take the time to read each night, and if possible, be read to by a parent or older sibling.

Notebooks

Our school often provides students with notebooks for certain subject areas or projects to support them in their learning. The notebooks provided to our students for school use are to be kept neat and organized. Only

items pertaining to your child's learning should be written in the books. Drawing or marking of notebooks is not acceptable.

Your Child's School Supplies

During the course of the year, students will need a variety of items to ensure that they are able to complete their work and to support their learning. At the beginning of the school year, we send home a list of items that your child should be bringing to school for their own use. We greatly appreciate your support by providing these items.

Library Resources

Our school is fortunate to have a library resource centre and a teacher to help students develop, refine and master research, computer and reading skills.

Students will have the opportunity to sign out books. These items must be returned the next time they visit the library. Students will not be able to sign out new material until their previous items have been returned. If a book is lost or damaged, it is expected that the student or parent will replace it.

Once your child has signed an Internet agreement, they will be able to access the Internet. All time spent on the Internet will be closely supervised.

Wishing You a Successful Year

We hope you found the information in this agenda informative and useful. If at any time throughout the school year, you have questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or our office staff. We know that each child will grow tremendously – both in learning and in faith. We look forward to working with you to provide your child with a fulfilling year.