

2010 - 2011

PARENT HANDBOOK

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

**839 Sutherland Avenue
Kelowna, B.C.
(250)763-3371**Fax (250)763-2740
school@stjosephkelowna.ca
www.stjosephkelowna.ca**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Principal's Message	page 3
Mission Statement	page 4
Chronology of the School	page 5
School Governance	page 6
Protocol for Concerns	page 6
School Funding	page 7
Parents' Rights	page 7
Fundraising	page 7
Reporting to Parents	page 8
Weekly Newsletters	page 8
Driver Declarations	page 8
School Programs	
Academic	page 9
Religion	page 9
Music	page 9
Co-Curricular Programs	page 9
Student Support Services	page 10
French as a Second Language	page 10
Computers	page 11
Extra-Curricular Activities	page 11
School Liturgies	page 11
Class Priests	page 11
Homework	page 12
First Aid Procedures	page 12
Professional Activities	page 13
Birthday Invitations	page 13
Parking	page 13
Student Absenteeism	page 14
Bussing	page 14
School Uniforms	page 14
Daily Time Schedule	page 15
Early Arrival	page 15
Departure	page 15
Supervision	page 16
Parent Support Group	page 16
Parents Who Care With Prayer	page 16
Code of Conduct for Students	page 17

Dear Parents,

As the new Principal of St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School, it gives me great pleasure to make an opening comment for the 2010 – 2011 Parent Handbook. I would like to begin your introduction to St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School by officially welcoming you to a well established but young at heart, vibrant, and lively Catholic learning environment! I am so pleased that you and your family are part of our school community.

St. Joseph is an independent elementary school that follows Roman Catholic tradition. The school creates a Christian atmosphere that nurtures each student, allowing the child to grow and develop to the best of his/her potential. Beginning at Kindergarten, we establish certain goals and standards of achievement, participation and faith that are clearly embraced by our staff and by our students.

Our school program follows the B.C. curriculum and provides structure and enrichment opportunities in all academic courses, in athletics, and in fine and performing arts programs. As a Catholic community, religious instruction is integrated into the daily curriculum. We are a school that promotes high academic standards and we encourage each student to develop a strong work ethic as he/she becomes confident, independent learners. We encourage involvement in all aspects of the school, our parish and our local community.

One of the greatest strengths of St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School is our teachers. The open, friendly atmosphere created by the faculty instills in our students the desire to excel and the desire to be the best that they can be. Our teachers form a dedicated faculty who care immensely about providing a Christian education to our young people. On a daily basis, students are provided with opportunities to develop a deeper relationship with God, both inside and outside the classroom. We are blessed with small class sizes which enables our students to work closely with their teachers and their peers as they discover the wonders of learning. This learning environment is paramount in developing a student's talents and gifts and in ensuring their educational success.

St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School students are encouraged not to be just "spectators". Students are supported as they become involved in all aspects of school life and religious service. Extra-curricular programs are offered that help develop personal confidence and relationship building. Activities are provided that enable students to learn about the world around them, to learn about their relationships with other people, and in this magical process, to learn about themselves. St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School is truly a school that fosters the development of the total child in spirit, mind and body.

This year, I encourage each of you to get involved in your child's education. Find out more about opportunities and events that are being hosted by our school. Get involved, volunteer, and together, we can make this educational experience fantastic. "In faith and unity, we love, learn and lead."

With gracious hearts,

Andrew Wallace, 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 every day, 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. The Board of Directors of the Catholic Independent Schools of Nelson Diocese (CISND) - This ten member board governs all Catholic schools in the diocese ((Kelowna, West Kelowna, Penticton, Cranbrook, Nelson, Trail) through policy development and fiscal planning. The Board directs local School Councils to assist them with certain aspects of school governance. The President of CISND is the administrator, Bishop John Corriveau, OFM Cap. The Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Mrs. Beverly Pulyk, is the Chief Executive Officer of the CISND and her role is to implement the policies of CISND and oversee the educational operation of all schools.

B. Kelowna Catholic Independent Schools Council – The Council consists of parish representatives and clergy who set local policy and determine budgets for St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School and Immaculata Regional High School, and are responsible to Catholic Independent Schools of Nelson Diocese (CISND).

C. Ministry of Education through the Independent Schools Branch ensure 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.diocese.nelson.bc.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

St. Joseph Journal – a Parent Update – is our weekly school newsletter. Each week, the newsletter will contain pertinent information about events and activities that are taking place at our school. The monthly school calendar of events is now located on our school website. The link is on our home page. Please refer to this calendar for a list of important upcoming dates. St. Joseph Journal – a Parent Update - will be published each Friday and will be available on our school website. As well, the newsletter will be sent home to each St. Joseph family via email. 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. A satisfactory Criminal Record check is required for all parents volunteering to drive and/or supervise on field trips and in classrooms. As well, any parents willing to drive for field trips must complete a Driver Declaration Form available at the Front Office. Drivers must provide proof of \$2 million coverage for insurance as well as a valid driver's license. Should there ever be an accident, your driver's insurance covers the first \$2 million and the diocesan insurance plan picks up the remainder.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

A. Academic 

St. Joseph School follows the B.C. 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

A Director of Student Support Services oversees the special education programs at St. Joseph School. These services are designed to support students who have special educational needs.

1. **Special Education**

St. Joseph School's Director of Student Support Services 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**

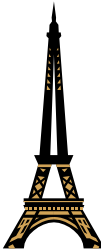
Enrichment activities are available to all students who need extra challenge beyond the regular B.C. Ministry of Education school program. Enrichment activities take place within the classroom setting, during regular class time.

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.

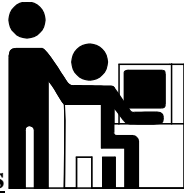
5. **Counselling Services**

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. French is taught by a specialist teacher to students in Grades 4-7. 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 twice 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 are available to students including choir, athletics, community service projects, etc. Team sports begin at the intermediate level. As well, students are able to participate in intramurals during lunch time.



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, and 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.

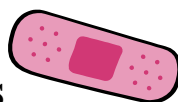
In the intermediate grades, students may be asked to complete work not finished in class, to study for upcoming tests, and to practice knowledge and skills in real life settings. If homework for grades four and five takes longer than 30-40 minutes, and in grades six and seven, longer than 60 minutes, 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 Nelson Diocese allows 8 days per school calendar year for professional development in the areas of academic and spiritual growth. These days are determined by administration. School staff may attend local or regional conferences, have someone come to the school to do a workshop, or use the professional development day to do school-based planning. In addition, staff are encouraged and supported to take advantage of individual professional development opportunities that are available 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). As traffic congestion is a concern immediately before and after school, we encourage parents to park along Sutherland Avenue and walk on designated pathways to pick up their child(ren). A 5km/hr speed limit is posted. Please drive slowly when on school property and observe our designated crosswalk areas. Please note that the area along the ropes is designated as a "Drop Off and Pick Up" area only. **Cars cannot be left unattended along the ropes at any time.** When accessing the "Drop Off and Pick Up" area, please do not leave your engine running. It is important to observe these regulations for the safety of our students.

STUDENT ABSENTEEISM

When a student is to be absent for the day, we ask that parents notify the school as soon as possible. This is done as a safety precaution. In the event that a student is away for **more than one day**, the school can arrange for work to be available to be taken home. If a student is required to be away from school for an extended period of time, the parent *must* contact the Principal to discuss how the child's education can be least disrupted.

BUSSING

At this time, we do not provide student bussing. Transportation of children includes:

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

SCHOOL UNIFORMS

St. Joseph Elementary School students wear school uniforms. These uniforms are expected to fit properly, to be kept clean and to be in a state of good repair. The uniform policy is in effect from September through June. Initial uniform purchases are coordinated through the school. Additional items may be ordered online or by phone throughout the school year.

The St. Joseph Elementary School uniform includes:

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

PE / Gym strip (for grades 2-7 only) is ordered through the school and includes:

- crested royal blue gym shirt
- crested navy gym shorts
- crested navy track suit (optional)
- light soled runners (for indoors only)

Please note: as all uniforms look alike, it is important to **label** each uniform piece with the student's name and phone number. In this way, lost or misplaced articles can be easily identified and claimed.

DAILY TIME SCHEDULE

Our daily schedule is as follows:

8:20	Staff Prayer
8:35	Assembly Bell
8:40	Attendance / Homeroom
8:50	Classes Begin
10:10	Recess Begins
10:25	Assembly Bell
10:30	Classes Begin
11:50	Lunch Begins
12:10	Lunch Recess
12:40	Assembly Bell
12:45	Classes begin
2:45	Dismissal

EARLY ARRIVAL

Parents are reminded that students *should not arrive to school **before** 8:20 AM.*

The playgrounds are supervised, starting at 8:20 AM. Students will be expected to wait outside until the assembly bell rings at 8:35 AM. Students must remember to dress appropriately, especially for the cold or rainy weather.

Please note that out of school care is available at The Clubhouse before 8:20 AM. Please contact Caroline Noga at 860-4393 (daycare) for further information.

DEPARTURE

At the end of the school day, a staff member is on supervision duty in the parking area from 2:45-3:00 PM. Students may play/congregate in and near the Grades 2–4 playground while waiting for their rides. The Grade 1 playground and the field for Grade 5-7 are off limits after school.

The playgrounds are not supervised after 3:00 PM. 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. Students should not be at school past 3:00 PM, unless they are taking part in extra-curricular activities or receiving extra help from a staff member.

SUPERVISION

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

PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

The **Parent Support Group (PSG)** is made up of an executive, administration members (Principal and teachers) and our St. Joseph parent body who work together as a team to fundraise for our school, organize social events to bring our families together, maintain communication with the Kelowna Catholic Independent Schools Council and provide feedback on issues presented. The PSG is also responsible for the coordination of certain school activities that take place throughout the school year.

Our PSG is very active and meets once a month. All parents are encouraged to become part of the PSG by attending the monthly meetings and finding out about the various volunteer opportunities that exist in our school. 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.

PARENTS WHO CARE WITH PRAYER

The *Parents Who Care With Prayer* is an informal group of parents who meet each Tuesday morning from early October until the end of May. The group meets to pray on behalf of all students, staff, clergy and families of our Catholic schools. This prayer group is open to all parents and friends on a “come when you can” basis. The *Parents Who Care with Prayer* group alternate their meetings between St. Joseph School (Charity Hall) and Immaculata Regional High School (School Chapel). Please check the school website calendar for designated prayer site each 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 crested 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.