

## St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_



# St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School

Student Handbook

15 Silver Birch Court  
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## ST. PETER THE APOSTLE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The staff at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School would like to welcome you and your child to the new school year. We are looking forward to another successful year filled with many opportunities for learning and growth - both academically and spiritually.

We hope that you will find this student agenda helpful. You will find a wealth of information related to how our school operates on a day-to-day basis. We have established guidelines, in consultation with our parents, to ensure the health and safety of your child. By taking the time to familiarize yourself with our expectations, you can help us maintain a positive learning experience for all students and staff.

Please use this agenda as a tool to communicate with your child's teacher throughout the course of this year. The pages of this book provide opportunities to share information between your home, our school, and your child's classroom teacher. If you can't find the information you are looking for in this agenda or on our website at [smcdsb.on.ca/spe](http://smcdsb.on.ca/spe) please feel free to contact any of our staff members. Once again, we are excited about a new year of faith-filled learning.

Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions, ideas, or concerns.

Susan Eccleshall  
Principal

[smcdsb.on.ca/spe](http://smcdsb.on.ca/spe)

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### FAITH IN OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

#### School Mission Statement

The St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School Community is committed to academic excellence in Catholic education, which is rooted in a rich tradition of life-long faith, family and community values.

As servant leaders and active partners, it is the shared responsibility of staff, parents, students, trustees, religious and the clergy to foster:

- An atmosphere that inspires love and service to God as well as the search for wisdom and knowledge.

- A spirit of respect, open communication, inclusion and forgiveness.
- Growth (spiritual, psychological, physical and social) in a Christ-centered environment, where choices are made that reflect a personal conscience formed according to our Catholic faith.
- A just and loving society through service according to Christ's vision of the Kingdom of God.
- Respect and dignity for the uniqueness of each individual who is gifted in Christ.

#### Prayer of St. Peter the Apostle

Lord, as servant leaders and active partners in St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School, help us to foster an atmosphere that inspires love and service to God as well as the search for wisdom and knowledge. Lord, help us to promote a spirit of respect, open communication, inclusion and forgiveness. Guide us to cultivate growth (spiritual, psychological, physical and social) in a Christ-centered environment, where choices are made that reflect a personal conscience formed according to our Catholic faith. Give us strength to build a just and loving society through service according to Christ's vision of the Kingdom of God. Help us always to model respect and dignity for the uniqueness of each individual who is gifted in Christ. Amen.

#### Our Parish Partner

We believe in fostering a strong relationship between your home, our school and St. Peter the Apostle Church. Our parish works closely with our school community to provide your child with an education rooted in the Catholic faith. Throughout the year, there will be opportunities for our students to participate in the sacraments, Mass and prayer celebrations. You will often see our pastor, Father Placid Obijii, visiting classes within our school and celebrating special events with our community. Please join us for these celebrations.



#### Sacramental Preparation

Parents wishing to have their child receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Communion in Grade 2 are asked to contact our school parish St. Peter the Apostle Church at 705-746-5181.

## POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

### Promoting a Positive School Climate

Maintaining a positive school climate at St. Peter the Apostle Catholic School is a key priority because it helps students to 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

Our school has established some key statements to outline expectations around student behaviour.

Students at St. Peter the Apostle 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 school 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, and so 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:

- Slogans or images on t-shirts, hats or any other accessories must not take away from the dignity of any individual or conflict with Christian values. Images portraying alcohol, drugs, sexual connotations, racism and violence are not acceptable.
- Strapless or revealing tops are not permitted. Students from Grades 4 to 8 may not wear tops with spaghetti straps. Shoulder straps must be at least two fingers in width.

- Shorts, skirts, skorts, and dresses must be no shorter than 15 cm (6 inches) below the top of the thigh.
- Pants, skirts, skorts, and shorts must be worn at waist level.
- Clothing must cover the midriff - i.e. tops and bottoms must overlap at all times - sitting, standing, moving, bending, etc.
- Net, sheer, muscle shirts, or racer back shirts are not allowed.
- Undergarments should not be visible at any time.
- Cut-off or torn jeans are not permitted.
- Hats, toques, hoods, and sunglasses must be removed upon entry into the building or classroom.
- No gang-related clothing or accessories are permitted, i.e. bandanas, chains, or colours.

### Footwear

For safety reasons and to maintain cleanliness in the classrooms, students should have indoor shoes.



Non-marking soled running shoes are required for gym class. Outdoor footwear is not to be worn in teaching areas. As flip-flops can cause accidents when children are playing and running, they are not to be worn to school.

## SAFE SCHOOLS

### Safe Arrival

Our Safe Arrival Program, which includes communicating with our office (705-746-7196) when your child is late or absent, helps ensure student safety.

### 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 705-746-7196 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:50 a.m. to inform us that your child will be absent or late.

**Step 2** – if your child is late, a parent or guardian must sign the student in at the office.

**Important Note:** On an inclement weather day where the buses have been cancelled, students who walk or get driven and will not be attending school must be reported absent to the office.

### 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 to ensure that all visitors sign in at the office.

### **Leaving Early**

Students who are leaving school early must bring a note to their teacher stating the need for the early dismissal. At the time of dismissal, your child will proceed to the office to wait for a parent/guardian.

### **Morning Drop Off**

School begins at 8:50 a.m. and supervision in the schoolyard begins at 8:35 a.m. **Please do not drop your child off prior to 8:35 a.m.**

Students will remain outside until the 8:50 a.m. bell, unless there is inclement weather. On wet mornings or when the temperatures are extremely cold (-25°C) students can come inside, put their belongings away and wait in the hallway outside of their classroom.

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 late, or being picked up early by a parent/guardian prior to the end of the school day.

### **Afternoon Pick-up**

Our school day ends at 3:10 p.m. After buses have departed, students who are picked up will exit the front doors and get picked up outside the school.

We understand that plans can change during the day. Please be sure to call the office with changes regarding pick-up **prior to 2:45 p.m.** The office is very busy at the end of the day and we may not be able to deliver a change in schedule prior to the dismissal bell. Please limit those called in changes to emergencies only.

Please note that JK/SK students are to be picked up outside of the JK door at dismissal.

### **Bicycles, Skateboards and Scooters**

Students may ride bicycles, skateboards and scooters to school. Bicycles are to be locked up in the bike racks upon arrival. Skateboards and scooters can be brought into the school for safe keeping during school hours. Students will not be allowed to use the equipment during school hours. Wearing a bicycle helmet is mandatory and

students must walk their equipment when on school property.

Please note that the school cannot accept responsibility for damaged or stolen equipment.

### **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 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 are being picked up or can walk home.
- Students are not allowed to ride a different bus in order to visit a friend's house.

### **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 doesn't 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 wilful 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 [en.npssts.ca](http://en.npssts.ca) (West Parry Sound weather zone), 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. Also note that students need to bring a lunch on inclement weather days.

### **Custody**

We are always concerned about the safety of your child. In some family situations, there may be custody issues, visiting 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 St. Peter the Apostle 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 Hammond Transportation, Mill Lake Road. 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 parent must contact the office.

### **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, St. Peter the Apostle 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.

The Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board uses the SchoolMessenger



Communicate Tool to send messages and updates to our staff and families. These messages can be sent via email, text message or phone. Our school will use this tool to send regular updates to families throughout the year and it will also be used by the Board or the school to communicate information during crisis or emergency situations. It is important that the school office has your most current email address and phone number on file so that you receive the messages in a timely manner.

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](http://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](http://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 and up to date.

## 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. In addition, 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 are permitted to use the office telephone as long as they have permission from their teacher.

## Catholic School Community Council

Our Catholic School Community Council is 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 significant school issues throughout the year. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings. Dates will be sent out in our school newsletter and are available on our website at [smcdsb.on.ca/spe](http://smcdsb.on.ca/spe). Please join us!

## HEALTHY SCHOOLS

We know that it is important 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 and cleaning products.

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.

### 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.

For more information we encourage you to contact the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit or visit their website [www.myhealthunit.ca](http://www.myhealthunit.ca).

### **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. Our school will educate students about preventative measures and we will also 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.

### **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. This information is sent to our Health Unit. If students don't have an up-to-date immunization or a valid exemption on file at the Health Unit, they may be suspended from school.

### **Administering Medication**

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.

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 [smcdsb.on.ca](http://smcdsb.on.ca).

### **INDIVIDUAL MEDICAL PLANS**

If your child has a severe allergy or a medical condition, it is absolutely critical that you let us know. An individual medical plan will be created

for your child explaining step-by-step procedures in the event of an occurrence.

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 – no students are allowed to take food to the schoolyard.
- Our school strives to be 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” and “Wow butter” products.
- Your child's teacher will inform you if there are allergies in the classroom. We ask that you please refrain from 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.

## **HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE**

### **Lunch**

As our school is on a balanced day schedule, we have two twenty minute nutrition breaks - at 10:50 and 1:10. Each nutrition break is immediately followed by a twenty minute recess. Please pack lunches with these two nutrition breaks in mind.

### **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. We cannot leave children unsupervised inside the classroom and so they must go out to the yard where supervision is provided.

### **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 that students not bring valued personal property to school including mobile devices, trading cards, etc. If a student is found using a cell phone, he/she will be asked to bring the phone to the office to be picked up at the end of the day. 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, ensure it remains in your child's school bag until needed.

### **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. Our board has a field trip policy, which you can find in the policy and procedures section of the website at [smcdsb.on.ca](http://smcdsb.on.ca).

Parents often volunteer to assist us with the supervision of students on field trips. In order to volunteer, a parent must have a valid Criminal Background Check with a Vulnerable Sector Screening – you can get the forms and information about this from the school office administrator. Any health and safety training obtained by the volunteer is considered beneficial.

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 our lunch periods, 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 endeavours, and demonstrate acceptable levels of trustworthiness. Students must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner both in and out of the school. We also expect students to be courteous, respectful and show appreciation to the people organizing the events and activities. It is important for students to represent our school community by showing good 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.

### **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. Some examples of these items are pencils, pens,

paper and notebooks. At the beginning of the school year, we send home a list of items that your child should be bringing to school for his/her own use. We greatly appreciate your support by providing these items to your child.

### **Library Resources**

Our school is fortunate to have a library resource centre. Your child will be visiting the library resource centre in our school this year. Materials available to the students include picture books, magazines, novels, and easy to read chapter books.

Once your child signs out a book, he/she must return the book on his/her next visit. Students will not be able to sign out a new book unless the previous one has been returned.

If a book is lost or damaged, it is expected that the student or parent will replace it. It is the students' responsibility to take care of books after they have signed them out.

Once your child has signed an Internet agreement, he/she will be able to access the Internet. All time spent on the Internet will be closely supervised. Students will have the opportunity to learn about software provided by the Ministry of Education.

### **Wishing You a Successful Year**

We hope that 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 celebrate a fulfilling year with your child.