



# St Dominic Savio Catholic Elementary School

## Community Handbook 2025 - 2026

**Mission of the Waterloo Catholic District School Board**

"As disciples of Christ, we educate and nurture hope in all learners  
to realize their full potential to transform God's world."

**Our Vision**

"Our Catholic Schools: Heart of the community, success for each, a place for all."



**"Parents are the first and foremost educators of their children. In comparison with the educational role of others, their role is primary; it is also irreplaceable and inalienable."  
Pope John Paul II**

## Message From Administration

On behalf of the Saint Dominic Savio Catholic Elementary School staff, we would like to welcome you and your child(ren) to the 2025-2026 school year and thank you for choosing Catholic education for your child(ren). We are a vibrant school community dedicated to our students' academic and faith development.

Our community handbook is designed to support student learning and is filled with information to help familiarize you and your child(ren) with school routines and procedures. By taking the time to familiarize yourself with our expectations, you can help us maintain a positive learning environment for all students and staff.

We hope you find the information in this handbook informative and useful. If at any time throughout the school year, you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact the school. We know that each child will grow tremendously in learning and faith. We look forward to working with you this year to provide your child(ren) with an enjoyable and fulfilling year.

Sincerely,

Mr. A. Simoes  
Principal

Ms. K. De Jong  
Vice-Principal

## We Are the Voice of Jesus in the Ears of Our Children

We are a faith-filled community rooted in compassion, inclusion and a shared commitment to excellence in learning and living. Inspired by our namesake, Saint Dominic Savio, a messenger of love for others, hope, and courage, we embrace his patronage as a powerful symbol of faith, kindness and the ability to lift ourselves and others.

We believe that our words and actions have the power to make a meaningful difference in our own lives and the lives of those around us. This year, our theme, "**Be Kind**", reminds us that the way we speak and the way we act shape the community we are building together.

At Saint Dominic Savio, every student is encouraged to soar high—to lead with kindness, act with purpose, and live their faith by choosing to **BE KIND**. Together, we create a school where each voice matters, every action counts, and hope soars!

## Achieving Believing Belonging

BELIEVING	BELONGING	ACHIEVING
Our Catholic faith calls us to be models of Christ through our actions of love, forgiveness, compassion and acceptance.	We are committed to creating a safe, inclusive and welcoming learning environment that supports student achievement and well-being in our Catholic school.	We provide opportunities that meet the needs and aspirations of all learners in a supportive, creative and innovative learning environment.

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

*“At St. Dominic Savio Catholic Elementary School, we promise to continue our journey to learn about the history of our lands and embrace all cultures, races, religions and orientations. We will honour others’ differences and abilities to make our classrooms a safe space where all are celebrated and feel loved.”*



## Calendar Highlights

Staying up-to-date on school events is easy.

Parents are encouraged to subscribe to our school's public Google calendar to keep track of key dates and activities. Daily highlights from the calendar are also available on the school website.

[WCDSB School Year Calendar and Professional Activity Days](#)

### Important Dates

October 13, 2025 - Thanksgiving

December 22, 2025 - Christmas Break Begins

January 5, 2026 – Back to School New Year 2026

February 16, 2026 - Family Day

March 16-20, 2026 - March Break

April 3 and 6, 2026 - Good Friday & Easter Monday

May 18, 2026 - Victoria Day

June 25, 2026 - Last Day of School

### Professional Activity Days

September 2, 2025

October 10, 2025

November 17, 2025

January 16, 2026

April 24, 2026

May 29, 2026

June 26, 2026



## Calendar Highlights

### Report Card Dates

November 24, 2025 - Progress Report Card

February 12, 2026 – Term 1 Report Card

June 23, 2026 – Term 2 Report Card

## School Hours

9:15 a.m.	Entrance Bell
10:55 – 11:10 a.m.	Morning Recess
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
2:40 – 2:55 p.m.	Afternoon Recess
3:45 p.m.	Dismissal

## Faith in our School

As a Catholic Elementary School, we believe that Christ's presence must permeate the entire life of the school. Liturgical worship is an essential element to help our students grow in the knowledge, love, and service to God the Father.

[St. Mark Parish](#) celebrates our school Masses. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend our masses.

Saint Dominic Savio School and St. Mark Parish annually invite students and their families to prepare and receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. More information can be provided by contacting **St. Mark Parish at 519-571-9200**. Dates for our Spiritual Celebrations, Sacraments, and Social Justice Initiatives are published on our school calendar and provided in our weekly updates.



St. Mark Roman Catholic Parish  
55 Driftwood Drive, Kitchener Ontario  
N2N 3A2  
519-571-9200  
Pastor: Father Roque Concepcion  
Secretary: Pam Olinski

### Prayer to St Dominic



O Saint Dominic Savio, a model of purity, piety, penance and apostolic zeal for youth; grant that, through your intercession, we may service God in our ordinary duties with fervent devotion, and attain the grace of holy joy on earth, that we may one day love God forever in Heaven. Amen.

... St Dominic Savio, Pray for Us ...

**Religion and Family Life** is taught formally in all classrooms but is also integrated with all aspects of the child's educational experience. This curriculum throughout Ontario is defined by the [Institute for Catholic Education](#). If you have questions about our daily Religion and Family Life programs, please contact your child's teacher directly. Your children value your support in developing their Catholic Faith and we thank you for choosing a Catholic School for your children.

## Catholic School Graduate Expectations

As a Catholic school, Saint Dominic Savio is committed to providing an education that goes beyond the provincial curriculum by nurturing the whole student, along with their spiritual development. The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs), as outlined by the Institute for Catholic Education (ICE), provide a distinct framework for Catholic education in Ontario. The OCSGEs outline graduate outcomes that integrate knowledge, skills, values, and actions, reflecting the essential connection between learning and believing.

A student within our Catholic schools is learning to be:

- A discerning believer
- An effective communicator
- A reflective, creative and holistic thinker
- A self-directed, responsible, life-long learner
- A collaborative contributor
- A caring family member
- A responsible citizen

## Including Every Student

### Equity and Inclusion

As a publicly funded Catholic education, WCDSB recognizes equity and inclusion as fundamental values within our board, schools, and facilities. We are dedicated to creating environments where students, staff, and families feel welcomed, safe, included, and genuinely represented in all aspects of our educational community.

### Learning for ALL: Our Shared Beliefs

- All students can succeed.
- Each student has their own unique patterns of learning.
- Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience.
- Universal design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students.
- Classroom teachers are the key educators for a student's literacy and numeracy development.
- Classroom teachers need the support of the larger community to create a learning environment that supports all students.
- Fairness is not sameness.

Source: [Learning For All, Ministry of Education of Ontario](#)

## **Indigenous Education**

Saint Dominic Savio is dedicated to supporting Indigenous education and fostering respect for Indigenous cultures. We invite Indigenous knowledge into our learning spaces to create learning experiences that promote understanding and inclusion. Students participate in activities that celebrate Indigenous traditions and help build awareness and respect.

## **Indigenous Territorial Acknowledgement**

*The schools in the Waterloo Catholic District School Board are situated on the Haldimand Tract of land that is the traditional home of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, and Neutral People.*

*We acknowledge the enduring presence and deep traditional knowledge, laws and philosophies of the Indigenous Peoples with whom we share this land today.*

*We seek a new relationship with the Original People of this land, based on honour & deep respect.*

*We are grateful for the opportunity to learn here and reaffirm our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our community.*

## **Special Education**

We support and encourage children with exceptionalities so that they can participate inclusively at school in meaningful ways, designing frameworks to meet the diverse learning needs of students. Schools work collaboratively with families and specialized staff to create Individual Education Plans (IEPs) when needed, which outline personalized goals and accommodations. The goal is to help every student succeed academically, socially, and emotionally within an inclusive environment.

# Safe Schools

## **Safe Arrival and Attendance**

The purpose of our Board's Attendance Check Program is to help ensure your child(ren) arrive safely at school each day. According to the Education Act, all children are legally required to attend school. While occasional absences due to illness are understandable, they should be limited. If your child is away for more than 15 consecutive days due to illness, a medical note is required to keep them on the school register. The school principal will follow up on any prolonged or frequent absences.

## **Absence Reporting**

If your child is not able to attend school, please follow the procedures below to report a late arrival or an absence.

### **Absence notification**

Using your mobile device, download and install the SchoolMessenger app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store (or from the link at [SchoolMessenger](#)). (\*The first time use will prompt to select Sign Up to create your account.)




→ Using the Toll-Free Number

→ Using the mobile App: Select Attendance, then **+** Report an Absence.

→ Using the SafeArrival website [SchoolMessenger](#): Select Attendance, then Report an Absence.

These options are available 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. Future absences can be reported at any time. In addition, we use the SchoolMessenger Communicate automated notification system to contact parents whose child is absent when the absence was not reported in advance. The automated notification system will attempt to contact parents at multiple contact points until a reason is submitted for the absence. If our system is unable to reach the designated contacts, office staff will follow up.

If you report your child's absence in advance using the SafeArrival website or mobile app, you will NOT receive these notifications.

 <b>Toll-Free Number</b> Call toll-free before bell time: <b>1-833-251-3283</b>	 <b>Website</b> Visit the SchoolMessenger website to register and record any absences. <a href="#">Link to SchoolMessenger Website</a>	 <b>Mobile Application</b> Download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store for Android. <a href="#">Apple</a> <a href="#">Android</a>
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### **Late Arrival**

Students who arrive late to school must report to the main office to obtain a late slip before proceeding to class. All late arrivals can still be entered using the Report an Absence procedures.

### **Leaving Early**

Any student leaving school early must be signed out at the main office by a parent or legal guardian. If an early pickup is required for an appointment or family commitment, please inform the main office as early as possible. Last-minute requests—particularly within the last 30 minutes of the school day—can be disruptive to classroom learning and challenging for the school community to accommodate. Whenever possible, we kindly encourage families to schedule pickups after the regular dismissal bell.

### **Extended Absences**

If your child(ren) will be away from school for reasons other than illness (e.g., vacation) for more than 14 consecutive days, the school must be notified. An [Intent to be Absent](#) form must be completed and signed, along with an approved plan for ongoing study during the absence.

Additionally, if parents or guardians will be away for an extended period, it is important to inform the school. Please provide the office with written details outlining the dates, the name of the caregiver responsible for your child during that time, and their contact information.

### **Illness Absence**

If your child is feeling unwell, it's best to keep them home from school to rest and recover. This helps prevent the spread of illness to classmates and staff. Children who are sick may have difficulty focusing and participating fully in learning. Please report any absences and keep us informed if your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness.

### **Inclement Weather Procedure**

The Safety of your child(ren) is paramount. In the event of an emergency or inclement weather, appropriate procedures need to be taken to ensure the safety of the students. Cancellation information is posted on the Boards websites at [www.wcdsb.ca](http://www.wcdsb.ca), via school messenger email and as well as radio announcements.

### **Inclement Weather - Reporting Attendance & Lunch**

- ➔ **If your child rides the bus:** You do not need to report their absence through the Safe Arrival Program if buses are cancelled but schools remain open and your child will be staying home.
- ➔ **If your child does not ride the bus:** You must report their absence using the Safe Arrival Program if you choose to keep them home on a day when buses are cancelled but schools remain open.
- ➔ **If schools are closed:** You do not need to report any absences.
- ➔ **Hot Lunch Orders:** All orders are cancelled when buses are cancelled. Pizza orders will be offered the next day. Please make sure to send lunch with your child(ren).

### **Punctuality**

All students are expected to be punctual and to adhere to school hours. They should quickly be seated and then get ready for the morning announcements. Students who are late must have an explanation. They are to report to the office, and their time of arrival and reason for being late will be recorded. Persistent tardiness and absences may result in involvement of parents/guardians, and/or a school board attendance counselor.

Students are marked late if they are not entering the school with their classmates. We encourage students to arrive 5 minutes before the bell rings.

### **Arrival & Dismissal**

Upon arrival, students are expected to go directly to the asphalt or playground area behind the school. They are to remain outside until the bell rings, unless weather conditions are inclement. At dismissal, students are expected to go home promptly. Bused or taxied students will be dropped off either at the

front or side of the school in the morning and proceed directly to the yard. At the end of the day, they will meet their bus or taxi either at the front or back of the school immediately following the dismissal bell. Students are expected to enter and exit the building through their designated doors.

### **Yard Supervision**

Before school supervision is from 9:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.

After-school supervision is from 3:45 p.m. to 3:55 p.m.

### **Parking and Student Drop-Off and Pick-up**

Morning arrival and end-of-day dismissal are the busiest traffic times at Saint Dominic Savio. To ensure the safety of all students, please note that school parking lots are reserved for staff only. The school yard and tarmac area are designated “student-only” zones. We recognize that parking is limited on both Victoria Street and Westforest Trail. Whenever possible, we encourage students who are not bus riders to walk, bike, or scooter to school instead of being driven.

**Please note** drop-off and pick-up loop locations on both sides of the school will be limited to buses only to accommodate special education vehicles during the following times:

8:45 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

3:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

### **Bicycles, Scooters, and Other Wheels**

Bicycles and scooters are allowed but must be walked on school property and locked in the designated area. Helmets are required. Skateboards, rollerblades, and wheeled shoes may be used for travel but are not permitted on school property during the day. We encourage active travel; however, the school may not assume the responsibility and any risk with theft or damage.

### **Drive to 5**

The goal of the Drive to 5 campaign is to reduce traffic congestion near the school and improve safety for all students. Safe street parking is located within a 5-minute walk of the school. Families are encouraged to park slightly farther away and walk the final short distance - helping to create a calmer, safer environment for everyone during busy arrival and dismissal times. [Drive to 5 Saint Dominic Savio](#)

### **Savio**

### **Visitors to the School**

For the safety of our students, all visitors (parents, volunteers, guests etc.) entering Saint Dominic must report to the office. They will be asked to sign in and wear a visitor badge while visiting the school. Students will be called to the office when necessary. Parents are not permitted to be in the hallways or classrooms unannounced, and are not permitted in the schoolyard during school hours.

## **Student Transportation**

### **Bus Transportation**

All bus assignments and routes are managed by Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region ([STSWR](#)). If you have any questions regarding bus transportation, please contact STSWR directly.

### **Bus Expectations**

Students are expected to demonstrate respectful and responsible behaviour while travelling to and from school. Failure to meet these expectations may result in suspension or loss of bus privileges. Parents and guardians are responsible for their child at the bus stop. While older students may serve as trained ‘Bus Safety Patrols’ to assist with safety, they are not responsible for discipline and should still be treated with respect.

### **Rules of Conduct on the School Bus**

- Students must line up and board the bus promptly, without crowding or pushing.
- All students must conduct themselves so as not to endanger the safety or comfort of self or others.

- Students are to obey the directions of the bus driver at all times.
- Students are to sit where directed by the driver/Principal and to remain seated until the end of the trip.
- Talk quietly
- Keep arms and head inside the window
- Cross the street in front of the bus and wait for the driver to signal before crossing
- Leave the bus at the regular stop
- Only students assigned to be on the bus, are eligible to be on the bus.
- All students are responsible to the Principal for their conduct on the school bus.

### **Change in Transportation**

Permanent Change: If your child is eligible for bus transportation but you choose not to have them ride the bus, or if you need to adjust the days and/or times they will ride, please complete the [Do Not Ride/Return to Busing Form](#). This helps us maintain accurate seating plans and ensure a safe and efficient dismissal process.

One-time Change: If there is a change in your child's usual daily transportation plan, please write a note either in the child's agenda or a note to inform the school.

### **Missed Bus Procedures**

Our end-of-day routines are carefully designed to ensure all students board their buses safely and on time. However, there may be occasions when a student misses the bus. In such cases, students are reminded to remain at school and report directly to the main office. The school will contact the parent or guardian. If the parent is unable to pick up their child, the school will work with the family to arrange an alternative plan. Your child's safety remains our top priority.

### **Walking To School**

To support the concepts of healthy, active living and care for our environment, we encourage all students within walking distance to walk to and from, school each day on the sidewalk. At no time are students to be walking across the parking lots. When crossing streets, we expect our students to always obey crosswalk supervisors and guards. In addition, please note that bicycles, skateboards, scooters, and rollerblades are acceptable means of transportation for most students when a helmet is worn. If bringing such equipment to school, students must always walk with their piece of equipment when on school property. Students are responsible for securing their bikes, etc., with locks. The school is not responsible for the storage, loss, or theft of these items.

## **Positive School Climate**

### **Creating Collective Responsibility & Accountability**

At Saint Dominic Savio Catholic School, we believe everyone should feel safe, respected, and included. Our staff helps students learn to solve problems peacefully, treat others with kindness, and build a caring school community. We believe everyone deserves to be treated with dignity. When conflict happens, we take a restorative approach—listening, taking responsibility, and working together to make things right and strengthen relationships.

### **Code of Conduct**

Our School Code of Conduct outlines the expectations for respectful, safe, and responsible behaviour that support a positive and inclusive learning environment for all. Our Saint Dominic Savio Code of Conduct will be implemented within the Christian faith life experience of our school community and consistent with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, School Safety provisions, and the Education Act and Regulations.

#### Purpose

- To ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect and dignity.
- To promote responsible citizenship through participation in the life of the school community.
- To maintain an environment where conflict & difference is addressed with respect & civility.

- To encourage the use of non-violent means to resolve conflict.
- To promote the safety of people in the schools.
- To discourage the use of alcohol and illegal drugs.
- To prevent bullying in schools.

### **Key Standards of Behaviour: Respect, Dignity, and Responsible Citizenship**

*All students and school community members must:*

- follow all applicable laws and policies of the school board, school and community
- show honesty and integrity & respect the rights of others
- show care and respect for school property and the property of others
- respect the needs of others to work in an environment that is good for learning and teaching
- seek help from school staff to resolve conflict peacefully, if necessary
- not swear at or verbally abuse anyone
- not use mobile devices (for example, cellphones, tablets, smartwatches) during the school day
- treat others with dignity & respect (in person and online), especially when there is disagreement or difference
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of their: race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, creed (religion), sex, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation, age, family, or disability

Source: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/school-rules-provincial-code-conduct#section-3>

### **Community Conduct and Safety Standards**

At Saint Dominic Savio, everyone has the right to feel safe and respected. Students must not bully, hurt, or intimidate others, bring or share dangerous or illegal items, or use technology in harmful or unsafe ways.

### **Students' Responsibilities**

Students are to be treated with respect and dignity and, in turn, are expected to show respect for themselves, others, and the responsibilities of citizenship through positive behaviour.

Respect and responsibility are demonstrated when a student:

- Arrives at school prepared, on time, and ready to learn
- Treats others and those in positions of authority with kindness and respect
- Avoids bringing anything to school that could compromise the safety of others
- Follows school rules and takes ownership of their actions

### **Parents' Responsibilities**

Parents play a vital role in their child's education and are key partners in creating a safe, inclusive, respectful, and welcoming school environment. When parents and school staff work together, students are better supported in their learning and well-being.

Parents support this partnership when they:

- Show an active interest in their child's learning, academic progress, and regular attendance.
- Communicate respectfully with school staff and cooperate
- Ensure their child is appropriately dressed, prepared for school, and follows school rules and expectations.
- Encourage and support their child in following school rules and behaviour expectations
- Cooperate with school staff in addressing disciplinary actions.
- Model respectful, responsible, and civil behaviour in all interactions

### **Cell Phones and other Mobile Devices**

In alignment with direction from the Ministry of Education—and recognizing the significant challenges mobile devices can present in the classroom, mobile devices at Saint Dominic are also not permitted

during the school day, including instructional time, recess, lunch hour or in the washroom. A mobile device is any personal electronic device that can be used to communicate or access the internet, such as a laptop, cellphone, tablet or smart watch. School administration strongly encourages students not to bring cell phones to school. IF a cellphone, tablet or smart watch must be brought to school, they must do all of the following:

- turn it off — or set it to silent mode
- store it out of view (for example, in a bag)

*\*Saint Dominic Savio school will provide an exception if your child needs to use a mobile device to support, monitor or regulate their health or medical condition*

Sources:

[Ontario Program Memorandum 128](#)  
[Ministry of Education PPM 128.](#)

### **Student Dress**

At Saint Dominic Savio Catholic Elementary School, our dress expectations aim to support a safe, inclusive, and respectful learning environment for all students. All clothing should allow students to participate fully in school activities and reflect our shared commitment to dignity and respect.

#### **Dress Code Guidelines**

- Clothing must not be discriminatory, profane, violent, or drug-, alcohol-, or gang-related content.
- Footwear must be safe and secure; flip-flops and backless shoes are discouraged.
- Clothing must adequately cover the body so that undergarments are not visible.
- All dress code expectations apply to all.

Our goal is to promote a positive school environment where everyone feels comfortable and ready to learn. These guidelines are in alignment with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

#### **Other Dress Notes**

Hats are to be worn outside only. Indoor and outdoor shoes are recommended at all times and are necessary when the playground is wet, muddy, or snowy. Footwear must be secure and protective; the heel and toes should be fully enclosed to ensure safety, particularly when using stairs. Students should arrive at school dressed appropriately for changing weather conditions. The dress code also applies to class trips unless specific instructions are provided otherwise.

#### **Approved Technology Expectations**

Saint Dominic Savio is committed to using digital tools to enhance student learning. All students from JK to Grade 8 have access to technology in their classrooms and in the Learning Commons. At the beginning of each school year, parents and students are required to complete the Responsible Use of Technology and Electronic Data Access form. This confirms that students understand and agree to use all information technology (IT) resources safely, responsibly, and following school board policy.

## **Progressive Discipline**

Saint Dominic Savio follows a progressive discipline approach to address inappropriate behaviour while supporting student learning and growth. This approach aims to combine accountability with opportunities for students to stay engaged in their education.

Minor infractions will be dealt with by the staff member assigned to supervision duty. While there will always be a learning and reflecting aspect to all infractions, the yard duty supervisor will decide whether to inform the office for infractions. Although we will try to use our school discipline plan to solve as many issues as possible, we recognize the importance of communicating with you when something of a more

serious or repetitive nature occurs. Serious or repeated infractions may be reported to the principal for further, more severe, consequences.

### **School Behaviour/ Playground Success Plan Form**

To improve communication between home, staff, and students we have a system to record any inappropriate behaviour in the schoolyard. When an infraction occurs, staff will discuss the issue with student involved and then may record the incident on the form. The form is then passed on to the principal who will take additional action.

If your child brings home a form, we ask that you discuss and process the issue outlined in the form. You may choose to assign additional consequences to reinforce your disappointment and disapproval. It is important to understand that how you handle your child will determine the success of the process. Students that find these situations uncomfortable because of clear consequences, adult disappointment, and their own feelings of remorse, are very unlikely to have further issues.

### **What is Progressive Discipline?**

Progressive discipline is a framework that helps us respond to inappropriate behaviour in a fair, consistent, and supportive way. It involves a range of interventions, supports, and consequences that may become more serious if the behaviour continues. For example, responses can range from a written reflection, a phone call home, supervised alternative learning space, suspension, and in rare case expulsion. At its core, progressive discipline emphasizes prevention, early intervention, skill-building, and collaboration with students and families to encourage positive behaviour and a safe, respectful learning environment.

### **Building Communities of Respect: Addressing Bullying Together**

Bullying is a concern that touches schools, homes, and communities. At our school, we believe every student has the right to feel safe, respected, and valued. That's why we are deeply committed to fostering a culture of respect and inclusion. Bullying can take many forms—cyberbullying, name-calling, physical aggression, exclusion, or spreading rumours. Students must know they are not alone. If they experience or witness any form of bullying, they should speak up and share with a trusted adult so the situation can be addressed promptly and appropriately. Our caring and professional staff work closely with families to ensure all students feel welcome, supported, and safe—both in the classroom and throughout the school community.

### **Restorative Practices: Building Responsibility and Community**

One of the key approaches our Board uses to promote positive behaviour and address concerns is called *Restorative Practice*. This approach is grounded in the belief that young people can learn from their actions and take responsibility for the impact of their choices. Rather than focusing on blame or punishment, restorative practices invite students into meaningful dialogue. They are encouraged to reflect through questions such as:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you been thinking since?

This process helps students understand the effects of their behaviour, take ownership, and work toward repairing any harm done. Our school staff regularly use this approach to resolve conflicts, rebuild relationships, and support a safe, respectful school environment. Restorative practices have proven effective across our Board, helping to build caring communities, reduce bullying and truancy, and enhance student learning and well-being.

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Students at Saint Dominic Savio Catholic Elementary School are expected to follow school rules and uphold the expectations set by our staff. These expectations are rooted in respect - for self, for others, and for property. Every student plays an important role in creating and maintaining a positive, welcoming, and inclusive school environment.

A safe and respectful school culture is a shared responsibility. While our staff and students work together each day to foster this environment, we also rely on the support and partnership of parents and guardians. Together, we are committed to ensuring that Saint Dominic Savio is free from physical, social, racial, and emotional harm.

**Everyone deserves to feel safe and supported at all times.**

## Healthy Schools

### **Scent-Safe Schools**

To help our schools safe and inclusive, we ask all students, staff, and visitors to avoid using scented products. Scented items can trigger allergic reactions and sensitivities that may lead to serious health concerns. Your cooperation helps create a welcoming and healthy environment for everyone.

### **Anaphylaxis Awareness and Allergy Safety**

At Saint Dominic Savio, the safety and well-being of all students and staff is a top priority. Some members of our school community experience severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) to certain foods and insect stings, in particular peanuts and other nuts. Anaphylaxis can cause life-threatening symptoms such as difficulty breathing, a sudden drop in blood pressure, or shock. To help prevent serious medical emergencies:

- Peanuts, tree nuts, and any products containing them are strictly prohibited at school.
- Peanut butter substitutes (such as Wow Butter) are also not permitted.
- Sharing of snacks or treats is not permitted under any circumstances.

*If your child has a severe allergy: please ensure the school has updated medical information and that an up-to-date EpiPen is supplied to the office.*

### **Medication**

For safety reasons, students should not bring medication to school or self-administer it under any circumstances. Whenever possible, we ask that medication be administered by a parent or guardian at home during non-school hours. If medication must be taken during the school day, the following procedures apply:

- A [Medication Administration Form](#) must be completed by the parent or guardian.
- Medication must be in the original container (pharmaceutical label, child's name & dosage).
- All medications will be stored securely in the office and administered by office staff.

If your child requires special arrangements, please contact the school to discuss their individual needs. Please note: If a student is well enough to attend school, it is expected that they will also be able to participate in outdoor recess and physical education activities

### **Food and Nutrition Policy**

We continue to follow and implement the directions and expectations contained in the WCDSB Food and Nutrition policy. The purpose is to ensure that a variety of nutritious foods and beverages are promoted and provided in our school. This includes 'healthy special food days', 'healthy student rewards', and healthy snacks that are appropriate during instructional time'. We offer school lunch days (e.g., Pizza, etc.) throughout the week and can be purchased through LUNCH BOX School Cash Online. Our school also has a Nutrition for Learning Program, and healthy snacks are always available if needed.

### **Sickness or Injury at School**

We do not have facilities at school to accommodate children who are ill. Whenever a child becomes ill, In the event of illness or injury parents/guardians will be contacted, as per the Student Information Sheet by office staff or a teacher. In the case of a serious injury a staff member may take the child to the hospital, or an ambulance may be called. In all cases we will do our best to contact you or the emergency contact you have indicated on the Student Information Sheet. It is critical that the information

provided on the Student Information Sheet, including emergency contact and medical needs, be kept up to date.

### **Student Medical Information Update**

Please be advised that parents/guardians are obligated to notify the school of any potential risk of injury to their child(ren). Please help us care for your child(ren) by keeping us informed of any of the following conditions: severe allergic reaction(s), previous concussion(s), other conditions which might affect safe participation in school programs, recess activity and/or extra-curricular activity, and any other conditions which might affect the provision of first aid.

### **Concussion**

In response to Ministry of Education requirements and in support of our existing school safety procedures, schools are required to follow certain steps whenever a student suffers a concussion or whenever a concussion is suspected. Parents can access Concussion Policies and Procedures through the board website or by contacting the school and requesting a copy. As with any potential injury, our first goal is prevention; concussion awareness and prevention are part of ongoing professional training for staff and is integrated into students' Health and Physical Education curriculum.

Since a concussion can affect a student's ability to learn or to participate in activities, schools will work with parents and medical contacts to assist any student who has suffered a concussion. If any injury occurs on a weekend or after school, parents are asked to inform the school so that appropriate accommodations and support can be provided.

### **PPM 158 Rowan's Law**

In response to the growing concern regarding concussions, all students and parents will be required to read and sign a variety of appendices that communicate Rowan's Law regarding concussions and the WCDSB policy. No student will be allowed to try out for a team until this paperwork is returned to school.

In addition, in cases where staff suspect a concussion has occurred during the school day an accident report is filled out and we require calling a parent and a mandatory medical assessment form will be provided for you when your child is picked up.

### **Clean Air Policy**

In accordance with our Board's policy, a strict no smoking of cigarettes including e-cigarettes, vaporizers and/or chewing tobacco are not allowed on school property. Parents' and guardians' recognition of this policy while on school property is greatly appreciated.

### **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 during 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.

## **Vaccinations**

In Ontario, under the Immunization of School Pupils Act, parents are required to provide proof that their child's vaccinations are up to date or submit a valid exemption form. In the Region of Waterloo, these records can be submitted online through Immunization Connect Ontario (ICON). Ensuring your child's immunizations are reported helps support a safe and healthy school environment for everyone.

# **Emergency Planning and Procedures**

## **Fire Drills:**

To help students learn proper evacuation procedures, regular fire drills are held throughout the school year. The Ontario Fire Code requires three total evacuation drills in both the fall and spring. During each drill, students exit the building quietly and calmly with their teacher, following posted signs and assigned routes. Everyone in the building, including visitors, must evacuate when the alarm sounds.

## **Lockdown Drills**

The purpose of a lockdown is to safely secure all students and staff in designated areas in the event of a potential danger inside the school. It is a requirement of the Ontario government that 'each school shall conduct a minimum of two lockdown drills during each school year. A lockdown may be initiated by police, the principal or a staff member, depending on the situation. To ensure preparedness, the school community practices the lockdown protocol at least twice a year.

## **Tornado Awareness**

Each school year, time is spent to help everyone learn what to do in case of a tornado. We practice these safety steps twice a year—once in September so new students can learn the routine, and again in April, just before the season when tornadoes are more common in southern Ontario.

# **Parents As Partners**

## **Home/School Communication**

The Saint Dominic Savio student planners are a valuable tool for daily communication between home and school about homework, important dates, and activities. Used consistently, they help prevent surprises and support timely assignment completion. Many students also use a digital planner alongside the paper one to build routines and strong time-management skills.

In Kindergarten and Grade 1, students use communication books instead of planners. These books serve a similar purpose and help foster strong home-school connections right from the start. The organizational habits you develop—whether through a planner or communication book—will benefit you well beyond this school year, setting you up for success now and in the future.

For general inquiries or messages, please contact the office at 519-576-5503. If you have questions, comments, or concerns regarding your child's learning, please contact your child's teacher first. If they are unavailable when you call, your call will be returned as soon as possible.

Note: Unscheduled, "off the cuff" type of interviews is discouraged, particularly at the beginning of the day, as teachers are involved in classroom readiness activities. Currently, we ask parents, guardians to refrain from coming into the school without an appointment, thus maximizing the best possible start to the school day for our students.

## **Communication Guidelines**

At Saint Dominic Savio, we believe that open and transparent communication, whether in person, online, or in writing—should always be respectful, kind, and thoughtful. Speaking and listening with respect helps build a safe, caring school community where everyone feels valued and heard. Our WCDSB communication policy provides clear and concise procedures for dealing with questions or concerns that may arise from time to time in schools.

### **STEP 1**

- *Speak to the teacher*

- *Issue resolved*

## STEP 2

- *Speak to the principal*
- *If you have not spoken to the teacher, the principal will ask you to do so*
- *The principal will involve the teacher in the discussions*

### ***Please follow the steps above to address all the problems that may arise***

The Principal may involve, at any time in the process, others who may help resolve the concern. support from the school board, employee group representatives, the local parish, and community agencies.

If the issue deals with transportation, the individual should contact the Transportation Consortium at 519-744-7575.

### **School Messenger: Direct Email to Parents**

At Saint Dominic Savio, we use *SchoolMessenger* to communicate important school information directly to parents and guardians by email. This includes information about school events, reminders, emergency alerts, and other timely notices. To ensure you receive all communications, please keep your contact details current with the school office. Staying connected helps us work together to support your child's success and safety

### **Saint Dominic Savio Catholic School Advisory Committee (CSAC)**

Our Catholic School Advisory Committee (CSAC) is composed of parents, a teaching staff representative, a non-teaching staff representative, a parish representative, a community representative, and the school principal. Members are elected each fall and serve as an advisory body to the principal on key school matters throughout the year. The Committee represents the wider school community and works closely with school staff to communicate and respond to community needs. Everyone is welcome to attend meetings, with dates regularly shared through our school communications. The Committee believes school goals are most successful when supported by families, and parents are encouraged to get involved in events, discussions, and fundraising initiatives that directly benefit students.

### **Fundraising**

Each year, the school plans several fundraising initiatives. There are several times students and parents are asked to support the school, but you must understand the purpose for each request:

- Some of the fundraising done at the school is done for the school and monies go to support our students such as graduation, presentations, etc.
- Some of the money goes to support charities or agencies.

### **Ontario Student Record**

The Ontario Student Record (OSR) is a confidential, continuing record of a student's educational progress through schools in Ontario. The information in the OSR is available only to the Board's Supervisory Officers, the Principal, and teachers for the purposes of improvement of instruction. Students over 18 and parents of students under the age of 18, may examine the OSR by scheduling an appointment with the principal.

### **Motorized Vehicles**

Recreational motorized vehicles are not permitted on school property during school hours due to safety concerns. The community is welcome to enjoy our property after hours but please use it in a respectful manner. Community members are encouraged to report either to the police or to the principal if they see anyone vandalizing our property.

### **Dogs On the School Site**

Dogs are not permitted on any part of our school property. We know that excited children can be unpredictable and impulsive in their movement in the school area. Dogs' behavior can also be less predictable under the conditions of a school environment. We want to ensure that no child is at risk of a

bite or an attack from a dog brought onto the school site.

### **Volunteers** ([SDOM Volunteer Information](#))

Volunteers are welcome and encouraged to participate in a wide range of opportunities at Saint Dominic Savio School. In order to ensure the safety of our students, the WCDSB requires all volunteers to complete a complete and Vulnerable Sector and must complete a volunteer application form before they can begin their placement. Volunteers must also adhere to the Ontario Freedom of Information and Right to Privacy legislation. Parents and caregivers who transport students for school-related activities, such as athletic events and excursions, must complete the [Volunteer Driver Form](#) each year.

[SDOM Volunteer Information](#)

### **SchoolCash Online**

SchoolCash Online (SCO) is a secure online platform where we collect signed forms and payments from parents. This is where parents can pay for class trips and other optional activities at the school. Parents never need to pay for something that is a required part of our curriculum, and if there is ever a time when your family would like to purchase something, but you are hesitant because of financial reasons, please contact [albert.simoes@wcdsb.ca](mailto:albert.simoes@wcdsb.ca) directly to work out alternative arrangements.

### **Custody**

Your child's safety is always our top priority. In some family situations, there may be custody arrangements, visitation rights, or special instructions we need to be aware of. Any such information must be shared with us in writing. Please ensure that both the office staff and your child's teacher are informed of any legal agreements between separated or divorced parents, and that current legal documentation is on file at the school.

Please note: We can only accommodate requests that are supported by official legal documents

### **Freedom of Information**

Please be advised that, in compliance with the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, the school cannot give out names, addresses or phone numbers of families without their knowledge and consent. Please do not ask school staff to provide this information for birthday parties, babysitters, tutors, or other social engagements.

### **Inclement Weather**

During severe weather, your best sources of information about possible school closings or school bus cancellations, is the Student Transportation Website at: [www.stswr.ca](http://www.stswr.ca), or a local radio station. Please do not call the school.

It is important to remember that when transportation is cancelled in the morning and you elect to personally drive your child(ren) to school, getting the child(ren) home is also your responsibility. Even if conditions improve, buses will not resume operation.

When transportation is cancelled, the school may remain open to students who can safely walk to school. It is the responsibility of the parents to determine whether it is safe to come to school or not. The inclement weather information requested by the school and provided by the parents will be followed for each child. Parents are requested to also ensure that students know what to do on these days and to make sure the school has updated emergency information.

## **Academics**

### **Classroom Portals: Brightlink by D2L**

Your child's classroom teacher will share their contact information with you at the start of the school year, and all teachers can be easily reached via email. Each classroom also uses Brightspace by D2L, an online Learning Management System (LMS), where students can access important assignments and class information. While the most meaningful learning takes place in the classroom each day, the LMS serves

as a helpful tool to stay informed about key activities and expectations. It is not a complete record of daily learning, but it is a reliable place to find essential updates about your child's class.

### **Assessment and Evaluation and Reporting Student Progress**

In Ontario, all assessment and evaluation practices are designed to foster hope and growth for students by providing meaningful feedback that supports their learning journey. Assessment is ongoing and helps guide instruction. Evaluation and assessment of student progress is an ongoing process requiring effective communication between home and school. Teachers assess and evaluate students based on how the child independently demonstrates the skills and knowledge in the school setting. Parents are encouraged to contact their child's teacher throughout the year to keep informed of their child's progress. We at Saint Dominic Savio Catholic Elementary School believe that a balance between school, homework, family time and outside interests is very important to the cognitive, social, spiritual, and affective development of each of our students. We look forward to continuing to work with you in a partnership which provides the best learning environment for all students.

### **Homework**

Homework may be assigned to reinforce learning, develop responsibility, and encourage independent study habits. It is typically work not completed in class or a complement to the classroom instruction and helps students practice skills or prepare for upcoming lessons. The amount and type of homework vary by grade level and subject. It is recommended that all students take the time to read each night, and if possible, in the case of younger students, be read to by a parent or older sibling. Communication between teachers, students, and parents is encouraged to support students' success with homework.

### **Combined Grades**

Combined grades may become more common. How do combined grades differ from a regular grade? A straight grade may have within two, three, four or even five groups of varying ability. Children in each grade do not reach levels of physical, emotional, social, or cognitive development simultaneously. In essence, all grades are combined grades, given many levels of learning.

Academic, social, and disciplinary considerations are considered when placing children in classrooms. Previous grade placement, number of boys and girls, individual ability and work habits are always factors in deciding student placement. Many factors are taken into consideration when placing children in classroom – combined grade placement is no exception.

## **Beyond The Classroom**

### **Co-Curricular Activities**

Saint Dominic Savio offers a variety of extra-curricular activities to enrich students' school experience. We truly appreciate your support and encouragement as your child explores these opportunities. A signed permission form is required for participation in clubs, and additional forms are needed for team involvement. Students are encouraged to take pride in their school and make the most of learning experiences beyond the classroom. However, those who struggle to meet school expectations may have their extracurricular privileges suspended until they demonstrate responsible behaviour. School jerseys are loaned for team use, and students are responsible for replacing any lost items. Written parental consent is required for any activities that take place before or after school hours.

### **Excursions**

We are very fortunate to live in an area which has an interesting history and varied places of interest in our immediate surroundings. Please notify the principal or your child's teacher should you require financial assistance for an excursion. We ask for your co-operation and support in completing the required permission forms for excursions promptly.

### **The Learning Commons**

Our Learning Commons is open to all students throughout the year. To ensure a wide selection for everyone, books must be returned within two weeks and treated with care during use and transport.

Some in-library resources are limited and cannot be checked out. Lost or damaged materials must be replaced by the student, and borrowing privileges are suspended until items are returned or fees are paid.

### **Hot Lunches**

Throughout the school year we will be offering pizza and other food items for lunch ordering. This takes the hassle of packing lunches by providing a variety of delicious options while supporting our school at the same time. Every order helps raise funds for student activities and events.

Reminder – All pizza orders are cancelled when buses are cancelled. It would be offered the next day.

### **Yard Expectations**

- Be kind & be respectful.
- Play in your designated areas of the school property.
- Do not play rough, aggressive games. “play fighting” usually leads to “real fighting”.
- Equipment that may be unsafe for students is not allowed (e.g., bats, hard balls, hee-ees).
- Scooters and bikes must be walked on school property, and helmets should be worn.
- Report any injuries or incidents of harassment to the teachers or supervisors on duty.
- Ask permission from the staff on yard duty before entering the school during recess and lunch.
- Objects such as stones, sand, ice, sticks, and snowballs are not to be thrown.
- Inappropriate verbal and body language are not acceptable in a school environment.
- Always play with safety in mind.

### **School Property**

Books, computers, tools, equipment, and other items are made available for student use during the year. These items remain the property of the school and must be used in a proper manner. Students will be expected to pay for lost or damaged items.

### **Accident Insurance**

Optional student accident insurance provides a very economical way of insuring against the cost of expensive dental or medical treatment should your child(ren) suffer an accident either at school or at home. An independent insurance provider selected by the Board will provide coverage at a nominal fee. You are encouraged to consider the benefits of registering your child(ren) in the plan. Applications are sent out in September and are available at the office.

### **Family of Schools**

The Family of Schools concept reflects a Junior Kindergarten – Grade 12 system in which staff, from both elementary and secondary schools, work together to meet the instructional and community needs in their area. Saint Dominic Savio School is in the Resurrection Family of schools.

### **Family and Children Services**

All staff and adults working with children have a direct responsibility to report a suspected child in need of protection. This can happen for a variety of reasons. Referrals are made in confidence with the agency and follow specific protocols. Information regarding this can be requested from the principal.

### **Recess and Lunch**

It is expected that all students will go outside during the recess breaks and the lunch hour. Students who are well enough to attend school are expected to participate in all activities and to go outside for recess and lunch breaks. Our yard is “food free” and therefore students are not allowed to take food or drinks into the yard during breaks.

Students who need to stay for lunch will eat lunch in their designated areas. They are expected to clean up their garbage when finished with their meal. Students have from 12:00 – 12:20 p.m. to eat. Students who remain at school for lunch will:

- Remain seated while eating.
- Place all garbage in reusable containers that are taken home every day.

- Use a normal speaking voice.
- Use respectful language when talking to one another.
- Be cooperative and courteous to all supervisors.

Students who normally stay at school for lunch can only leave school property during the lunch hour if they present a dated and signed message from their parent/guardian in the morning of the day the student is to leave. The message is to be presented to the classroom teacher in the student's agenda or paper note.

Please be aware that once your child(ren) leaves school property we cannot ensure their safety. We respectfully request that you consider leaving your child(ren) at school during the lunch hour where we can ensure their safety.

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It is with your support that we will have a very successful school year. We appreciate your support to this point and we look forward to working with you in the coming year to make your child's experience at Saint Dominic Savio a positive one.