



**St. Helen's School  
Parent Handbook  
2023 - 2024**

# St. Helen's School

Welcome to a new year at St. Helen's School! We are a learning community working together to ensure the success of our students. We hope that you will take advantage of every opportunity to be part of this school, bringing to it all of your energies, talents and interests.

This handbook has been prepared so that you may become familiar with our school's organization, policies, procedures, expectations and services. More detailed information on this year's events and activities can be found on our school website [www.sthelensparish.ca](http://www.sthelensparish.ca) Our new school APP is also very helpful.

We encourage all our students to become lifelong learners and to take responsibility for their own learning.

Wishing you a successful year, Our Theme for the 2023 – 2024 school year is:

**Living, Celebrating and Proclaiming our Faith**

## SCHOOL BELL SCHEDULE

8:55 a.m.	Morning Bell
10:15 – 10:30 a.m.	Primary Recess
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	Intermediate Recess
12:00 - 12:30 p.m.	Primary Lunch Bell - Students go outside
12:30 - 12:45 p.m.	Bell - Primary Students return to classroom to eat lunch
12:30 - 1:00 p.m.	Intermediate Lunch Bell - Students go outside
1:00 - 1:15 p.m.	Bell - Intermediate Students return to classroom to eat lunch
3:00 p.m.	Dismissal Bell

## SUPERVISION 8:00 A.M. UNTIL 3:20 P.M.

The Staff of St. Helen's is responsible for the safety and conduct of the students at school. Therefore, we ask that students arrive shortly before the morning bell rings at 8:55 a.m. unless they are under the direct supervision of a teacher. At recess and lunch all students are expected to remain outside unless they have a note from home. Supervision ends at 3:20 p.m. please ensure your child is picked up by that time.

## ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

**Be sure to e-mail the school at [secretary@shschool.ca](mailto:secretary@shschool.ca) when your child will be absent or late! You can also do this on our St. Helen's APP! (This notification goes directly to both the teacher and the office).**

Parents are asked to e-mail **before 9:00 a.m.** if their child(ren) will be absent or knowingly late. This is a safety program to help both parents and the school be assured that the child arrived at school safely.

If the school does not receive an e-mail, the secretary will call home to see where the child is. Failing satisfaction, the school may call the work or emergency numbers provided to the school. **CHILDREN MUST REPORT TO THE OFFICE WHEN LATE.**

In fairness to all, please do not send your child to school if there are definite signs of ill health in the morning. We have neither the facilities nor the personnel to care for sick children. If a child becomes ill during the day; it is our practice to get the child picked up. For this reason, it is important that parents inform the school of changes to work and emergency numbers.

## MEDICATION FOR STUDENTS

St. Helen's Staff are not authorized to administer medication to your child unless they have a life-

threatening medical issue that we are aware and have medical documents on site.

## **PICKING UP STUDENTS**

If someone other than a parent or guardian is picking up a primary student, please notify the office of this intent.

## **SCHOOL VISITS**

When visiting the school, parents must check in at the office and obtain a visitors pass. If you have items to drop off for your child, please drop them at the school office – not the classroom. Lunches are to be dropped off at the table across from the office labeled with your child's name and grade.

## **VACATIONS**

Parents withdrawing students for vacation during the school year are required to obtain permission from the Principal prior to making vacation arrangements. Students will be responsible to make up all missed work and assignments. Upon their return, teachers are **NOT** responsible for providing work ahead of time.

## **USE OF THE TELEPHONE**

The school telephones are used for business and in constant demand. Students needing to phone home during school hours must have an office pass from their teacher. If a student is being detained after school and the parent is unaware, that student would be permitted to use the telephone to inform parents.

**BIRTHDAYS & HOLIDAYS**      **LUNCH** – Nutritious food only, no junk food or fast food.

Parents are requested not to distribute or bring food to the classroom. Birthday invitations are not to be distributed during school hours.

## **CELL PHONES/ELECTRONIC DEVICES**

Students who choose to bring cellular phones or other electronic devices to school must secure those devices in their personal locker/cubby from the time they arrive at the school until the end of the instructional day. Any cell phones noticed during the instructional school day will be confiscated.

\*Note: The school is not responsible for the loss or theft of any electronic devices or personal items.

## **EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND FIRE DRILLS**

Regular fire drills and emergency response drills will be held throughout the year to practice

student safety procedures.

## **BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS**

The staff at St. Helen's Elementary School believe that discipline is an integral part of teaching and school climate and, therefore, is committed to a discipline model that encourages children to develop self-awareness and self-discipline while maintaining the dignity and respect of all concerned. Discipline is a learning process which must foster both personal and social responsibility within the student. This process involves the student working collaboratively with adults to commit himself/herself to a program of continued growth. The goal of the program is to learn to make acceptable choices for behaviour and to identify and accept logical consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Our behaviour expectations are set out in our St. Helen's Beatitudes : Be Safe, Be Responsible, Be Respectful, and Be Like Jesus.

## **CONSEQUENCES**

When a student fails to meet the general expectations of behaviour at St. Helen's, a blue slip may be issued by the administration or teacher. The completed blue slip will be given to the student. The student will be dealt with by the teacher in the following ways:

- discussion of the infraction with the teacher and others involved in it
- Student could serve a detention
- The blue slip could be sent home and signed by the parents and then returned to school
- For major infractions and ones that are recurring, the student could be referred to administration for further action
- All blue slips will be kept on file in the office

The following are considered serious infractions of the rules requiring special attention:

1. *Deliberately causing physical harm to another\**
2. *Deliberate destruction of the school or another's property\**
3. *Stealing*
4. *Cheating*
5. *Smoking (including vapors) or using alcohol or drugs\**
6. *Taking dangerous weapons on to school property\**
7. *Showing or distributing pornographic material*
8. *Leaving school property during school hours without permission*
9. *Playing hooky*
10. *Speaking to someone in authority in an offensive manner, particularly if the use of offensive language is involved*

## **GROSS MISCONDUCT**

The following are considered gross misconduct and will result in automatic expulsion

- A) If the intent to injure is obvious and physical harm resulting is serious
- B) If the child/children are selling drugs, tobacco or alcohol
- C) If a dangerous weapon brought to school is used in a threatening manner and/or results in any kind of physical harm to another

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is defined as repeated verbal or physical actions by someone intended to inflict injury or discomfort to another. Bullying will not be tolerated in the classroom or on the school grounds. We encourage all students to report all acts of bullying to an adult, teacher, parent or

principal. \*\* See Discipline Policy

## **INTERNET PROCEDURES**

Students are allowed to use the internet during school hours under the supervision of the teaching staff. With regards to issues of improper usage or social networking at home, parents will be informed and resources will be provided to both the student and the parent.

***Cyber-bullying** is defined as bullying and harassment by use of electronic devices through means of e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, blogs, mobile phones, pagers and websites is strictly prohibited. Consequences are outlined in our discipline policy.*

## **SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION POLICY**

In the case of serious infractions of the rules, the Principal, upon being notified, will give the student a formal letter indicating the infraction. They will receive a reasonable consequence, along with one of the following:

1. Suspension – A student must comply with the school rules authorized by the principal of the school attended by the students, and with the code of conduct and other rules and policies of the board of the C.I. S.V.A.

When a student does not comply with the school rules suspension is necessary. It is an essential stage in the complex problem solving process. Suspension is designed to support the student in changing inappropriate behavior. Suspension has positive effects including:

- Ensuring safety for everyone in the school
- Assigning clear consequences for a range of inappropriate behaviors
- Providing the time for planning support for behavior change
- Promoting collaboration among family, school and other community services to solve problems.

2. The students participate in decisions concerning their education. The students also participate in a follow-up after the suspension, which may involve:

- Instructional activities for teaching appropriate replacement behaviors for the inappropriate behavior.
- Counseling interventions that give the student opportunities to make plans for dealing with problem situations and to practice the required behaviors.

3. Expulsion - The Principal must call the Chairperson of the Education Committee and the Pastor and inform them of the decision to expel. The parents will then be called and the child removed from the school immediately

## **SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

At St. Helen's we use a variety of programs to promote social and academic awareness skills. Second Step, Friends for Life, and Young Entrepreneurs are the programs used to help our students succeed.

## ST. HELEN'S SCHOOL UNIFORM

Girls:	St. Helen's kilt, navy blue knee socks or tights. Navy blue cotton twill pants (optional) Navy blue skort, navy blue (above ankle) socks, (Optional Summer Uniform)
Boys:	Navy blue cotton twills pants Navy blue walking shorts, navy blue (above ankle) socks, (Optional Summer uniform)
Girls & Boys:	Light yellow polo shirt Navy blue St. Helen's sweater Black or navy dress type shoes or runners, preferably soft soled <b>(no stripes, logo's etc.)</b>
P.E. Uniform	St. Helen's Gym shorts and T-shirt and running shoes.

Sweaters are worn daily at the discretion of the child, BUT the child must bring it to school every day so that it is available to be put on for school gatherings, masses, field trips etc. In the event of loss or damage to your child's uniform, you will have a **7-day grace period**, in which to replace the uniform. **Uniforms must be purchased at Neat Uniforms.**

**Girls:** No extreme haircuts or styles, no coloring or bleaching of hair, no makeup, maximum one earring/earlobe—studs or sleepers only, no other body piercing or tattoos, no nail polish, skirts to be a modest length (e.g.: not higher than a palm width above the knee), shoe heel height not to exceed 1-1/2" or 3 centimeters.

**Boys:** No extreme haircuts or styles, no coloring or bleach

## UNIFORM VIOLATION NOTICE

Forms are warning that a child is missing part of the school uniform. After the 3<sup>rd</sup> notice, a blue letter will be issued.

## LOST AND FOUND

Frequently, items such as gym strips or binders are mislaid. If these items are labeled with names, it greatly assists in their speedy return. A lost and found box is kept in the garage for mislaid items and we encourage students and parents to check this box if something has been misplaced. Smaller items, such as keys, are normally kept in the office. Unclaimed items will be sent to the Missions regularly.

## BUS, FIELD TRIPS & COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Throughout the year teachers at our school attempt to extend and enrich the educational experience of students by going out into the community and also inviting resource people into the school.

**BUS:** One way \$35.00 per month/ Round trip \$40.00 (per family).

## **PARENTAL PERMISSION**

Written permission is required for all fieldtrips. It is expected that children will attend fieldtrips with their class or remain at school under the supervision of another teacher. Staying at home for the day is not considered an alternative to a fieldtrip.

## **THE FIELDTRIP AS A PRIVILEGE**

The fieldtrip is carefully planned by the classroom teacher to support the school curriculum through an alternate to the classroom experience. Students are expected to abide by the same behaviour guidelines as they would in their classroom. Further, students represent the school when they are in the larger community and are therefore expected to conduct themselves appropriately, and in a manner, which brings pride to the school. Students unable to follow behaviour guidelines at school or on fieldtrips may lose the privilege of participating in future field experiences and will instead remain under supervision at school. Parents will be informed if this situation occurs.

## **ALL VOLUNTEERS**

All volunteers (parents, grandparents, others etc.) are required to submit a Criminal Record check to the school. Parent drivers are sometimes required to provide transportation when students go on a field trip. Parents are asked to make sure they have seat belts for the number of students they are taking. Vehicle inspections may be carried out by a staff member.

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION PROGRAM**

The Participation Program plays an integral part in the successful operation of St. Helen's School. All of us benefit directly from it. This program also provides the extra services that benefit the children. Because of the lower government funding to Independent Schools, it is necessary that parents take on some of the responsibilities. Once your child has been admitted to the school, as an active school community member, you will be required to participate in the various activities of the school. If you do not fulfill these requirements of participation, you will be assessed a penalty fee or fine per missed participation in relation to the number of hours missed. This cheque must be made payable to the school.

## **PARKING PATROL**

Parents are asked to observe all the parking regulations around the school when picking up and dropping off students. Volunteers wearing red vests will be monitoring all the areas around the school and will be directing traffic, reminding parents about proper school traffic regulations.

Note: The license plates of those people who violate the parking regulations will be submitted to the property authorities and the owners of the vehicles will be issued tickets. In case of injury or accident caused by illegal parking, the vehicle owner will be deemed negligent.



## **HOMEWORK POLICY**

St. Helen's School believes that homework provides the opportunity to reinforce and enrich concepts previously taught in the classroom.

It is expected that by encouraging self-discipline in homework, the students will learn good study habits and research skills, which will prepare them for higher education.

St. Helen's School also believes that homework is a valuable means of communication between family and the school.

## **AREAS OF HOMEWORK**

**Unfinished Work**—Having provided ample time in class for a particular task, those students who do not complete the task may be given the work as additional homework.

**Reinforcement**—Upon completion of a lesson taught in class, homework is assigned which provides reinforcement for the subject area or practice of a particular skill.

**Projects**—Projects are a good educational opportunity for students to learn organizational and research skills while at the same time providing enrichment of a particular subject area.

## **TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the responsibility of the teacher:

1. When issuing a project, to provide the students with a clear and concise outline of the project, his/her expectations, the due date, as well as mark expectations.
2. When issuing a project, to teach the necessary research skills and make sure that all students are able to acquire the research materials needed.
3. When issuing a project, to be aware of the homework being issued by all of the teachers of these students and in the case of a major project, to reduce the amount of everyday homework.

**Note:** During the school year teachers may issue one major project and three minor projects per term.

4. When issuing any homework, to be aware of extra-curricular events, club responsibilities etc. so as not to make unreasonable demands upon the students.

## **TIME GUIDELINES**

The amount of homework issued will be consistent with the child's grade level. At St. Helen's the average amount of homework will follow the guidelines listed below:

Grade K	Based on child's ability
Grade 1 - 3	Half an hour
Grade 4 & 5	Forty-five minutes
Grade 6 & 7	One hour

The above time guidelines are for assigned homework and are over and above any unfinished classroom work. The above is a guideline and it is understood that on some days there may be little if any homework while on other days the homework may exceed the time limit.

## **GROUP PROJECTS**

It is the policy of St. Helen's that "Out-Of-Class" group projects are unacceptable and may not be issued. It is, however, acceptable to issue individual parts of a group project as homework. "In-Class" group projects are an excellent opportunity to learn to work together and are a valuable learning experience for students.

## **AGENDA BOOKS**

All students from Grades One through Seven have an agenda book. These books must be filled out in class on a daily basis with consideration given to the ability of the individual student. Homework is posted daily on the school website:

[www.sthelensschool.ca](http://www.sthelensschool.ca)

## **STUDENT REPORTING POLICY**

1. During the school year, St. Helen's School will provide the parents of students with reports describing students' school progress. Three of the reports will be formal written reports and other informal reports will be as required.

2. Formal written reports must, for Kindergarten to Grade 7 describe:

- what students are able to do;
- the areas in which students require further attention or development; and ways to support students in their learning.

3. Informal reports to parents may include:

- telephone calls;
- student-led conferences;
- parent-teacher conferences; and
- the use of journals.

4. Parents of students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 must be provided with oral or written comments on student's school progress. Comments should relate progress to the expected development of students in a similar age range.

5. In Grades 4 to 7 letter grades will be used to indicate students' levels of performance in relation to the learning outcomes for each course or subject and grade.

6. Teacher/Parent Communication: 24 Hour Rule –Phone calls 48 Hour Rule – E-mail

Please do not expect teachers to respond to emails during the school day. If you need to send an email regarding pickups/late drop offs, please notify the office so that they can relay the message to our teachers.

Letter grades and structured written comments will appear on the formal report cards for Grades 4 to 7.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM - MASS HOMEWORK**

St. Helen's Admission Policy requires Catholic Families to be practicing in regards to regular Saturday/Sunday mass attendance. The children will be asked to complete a weekly journal following attendance at Mass. They will receive homework which they will have to fill out and return each week. Your child will be asking you to help him/her fulfill this obligation by taking them to mass each Saturday or Sunday.

## **PARENTS RESPONSIBILITY INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK**

Parent/Guardian Statement of Commitment (C.I.S.V.A. Policy) Item #2 states:  
"Parents/Guardians are expected to support the Religious Education Program and participate in it as required."

If any of these conditions are not met, homework not completed or Parent/Guardian not taking student to Sunday Mass (after being contacted), the Pastor reserves the right to:

- Not allow the students to receive the sacraments (Baptism, Reconciliation, Communion, Confirmation)
- Tuition Fees, changed from Registered Parishioner to Non-Active/Registered or Non Parishioner

## **INCOMPLETE HOMEWORK**

Parents will be contacted, by the Teacher and/or the Principal, if your child is consistently forgetting to do their homework. If homework assignments are not completed for the week, the child will be responsible for making sure that previous homework is completed and handed in the following week. If the problem persists, the school reserves the right to remove the student from the school.

## **PROGRAMS**

### **Communion, Reconciliation, and Confirmation**

Three important Sacraments are celebrated during a child's school years: First Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation. These Sacramental programs are integrated into the school and parish programs. The children prepare for these Sacraments with the help and guidance of priests, principal, teachers and parents.

### **Computers**

Computer classes are incorporated into the curriculum from Kindergarten to Grade 7. Students also have the opportunity to use ipads, Google Chromes and PC's within the classroom.

## **Library**

The Library Program has a double goal - firstly, to instill in the students a love for books and literature and - secondly, to teach the students library and research skills that will enable them to be independent library users and life-long learners.

## **Science**

The program is dedicated to providing students with the opportunity to become active participants in science activities. "Hands on Science" and "Experimental Learning Goals" ensure the students develop positive and enriching science attitudes. Students are also active participants in an annual Science Fair/Science Challenge hosted by the school.

## **French**

The French program at St. Helen's is offered to students in all grades with students using the Rosetta Stone Program.

## **Fine Arts Program**

- Art, Music, Drama and Speech Arts are integrated into the curriculum. Each student is able to develop his or her own personal artistic gift.
- Orff Music Program is offered at all levels.
- Intermediate and Primary choirs performs for school activities and community events.
- Christmas Concerts and Spring Musical provide experience in the production and performance of quality drama.

## **Outdoor Education**

Every September students from Grades 4 to 7 learn about the environment and nature with God during a week of Outdoor School.

## **Athletic Program**

The Athletics Program at St. Helen's School is a comprehensive program which combines a variety of extra-curricular activities with a well-balanced physical education program. The Physical Education Program offers students a variety of learning experiences in the area of games, gymnastics and dances. This program also offers a wide range of recreational activities which includes a swimming, skating, skiing, snowshoeing and hiking.

The extra-curricular programs at St. Helen's give the students an opportunity to participate in the following sporting activities throughout the year; cross country running, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, track and field, and soccer.

## **Spelling Bee**

St. Helen's participates in the CISVA Spelling Bee competition. Students from grades 4 to 7 participate in the program. Once the words have been assigned, a preliminary Written Bee is given. From there the top three students from each grade participate in an in-house Oral Bee in front of their peers. The winner of the Oral Bee is then sent to represent St. Helen's at the CISVA Spelling Bee where up to 25 schools compete.

## **Readers are Leaders**

Readers Are Leaders is a club that is meant to promote the love of reading and provide an opportunity for students who have the gift of remembering details to shine. Each year six books are chosen by the teacher librarians of the CISVA from the Red Cedar Awards nominations list for students to read and know. Students are able to make their own teams of six or seven students to compete. The competition consists of the zonal competition with up to 5 other schools; and the CISVA championships.

## **Student Council**

St. Helen's offers a Student Council program and its aim is to provide the students with knowledge on their respective roles and responsibilities within the council, to nurture leadership skills and to prepare them spiritually, mentally and physically in facing the challenges and obstacles in order to promote community leadership in the future.

Student Council members demonstrate positive leadership and are elected to represent the student body, attend Student Council meetings, lead prayer before lunch time and at monthly assemblies, and organize student-led fundraisers and Out-of-Uniform Days for the community of St. Helen's.

In February of last year St. Helen's hosted the first ever Student Council Leadership Conference with other Councils from CISVA Schools.

## **Learning Assistance**

The Learning Assistance/Special Education Co-ordinators work on an individual or small group basis with students requiring more direct focus on skill development in various areas of the curriculum. This support is provided through referral and is either done in pull out or in-class format. They work collaboratively with the classroom teachers, Educational Aides (EA's) and parents to facilitate identification, development and implementation of appropriate learning goals for students with exceptionalities. Support services required outside of school are also part of this collaborative process.

All students receiving support from the Learning Resource Centre have an Individual Education Plan (I.E.P.) that guides staff in working towards planned goals and objectives. The Learning Resource Centre supports all grades from Kindergarten to Grade 7.