



St. Mark School Newsletter

December 2023

St. Mark Catholic Elementary School
240 Autumn Hill Cres.
Kitchener, ON, N2N 1K8
Phone: (519) 743-4682

"Growing in skill, wisdom and strength."

Our Mission Statement

St. Mark Catholic Elementary School, with home, Church, and community, is committed to nurturing the growth and future success of faith-centered individuals through the pursuit of academic excellence, Catholic values, and respect for all.

IMPORTANT DATES

**Little Jammerz Guitar Program
at St. Mark School**
Friday, December 1st

First Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 3rd

Advent Liturgy at St. Mark School
Monday, December 4th
9:30 am

**Little Jammerz Guitar Program
at St. Mark School**
Friday, December 8th

**Human Rights Day
Second Sunday of Advent**
Sunday, December 10th

Advent Mass at St. Mark Church
Thursday, December 14th
9:30 am

**Little Jammerz Guitar Program
at St. Mark School**
Friday, December 1st

Third Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 17th

**Advent Liturgy
at St. Mark School**
Tuesday, December 19th
9:30 am

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

It is hard to believe we are [once again] on the doorstep of that wonderful time of the year, 'Christmas'. The English word "Advent" comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means "coming." The season of **Advent** is a time of waiting and anticipation as we prepare to welcome the coming of **Christ** into our lives.

This year our **Advent Mass** is on Thursday, December 14th at 9:30 am at St. Mark Church. In addition, we will be celebrating two Advent Liturgies at the school; our first **Advent Liturgy (Hope)** is on Monday, December 4th at 9:30 am, and our final **Advent Liturgy** is on Tuesday, December 19th at 9:30 am. The Advent Liturgies at the school will be celebrated in the gym. Students and staff are encouraged to wear **purple** on the Monday of the first Advent Liturgy, **green & red** on the Thursday of our Advent Mass at St. Mark Church, and **pink** on the Tuesday of our final Advent Liturgy at the school. Parents/guardians are welcomed and encouraged to attend our Mass at the Church on Thursday, December 14th at 9:30 am; the children will be singing songs at the end of the Mass.

Christmas Craft Activity Day is on Wednesday, December 20th. Students from all classes K-8 will have an opportunity to engage and participate in a fun Christmas craft led by their teachers. More information about the Christmas Craft Activity Day is forthcoming and will come from your child's classroom teacher.

In lieu of a Christmas Concert this year, Student Council will be sharing a variety of activities over the morning announcements each day to help put everyone in the Christmas spirit. Students and staff are invited to wear **red, green** and/or their **Pajamas** on Friday, December 22nd; this is also a Nutritional Free Day and students are permitted to bring and distribute treats at school.

Finally, on behalf of all staff members of St. Mark School, I would like to wish you and your family a very **Merry Christmas!** Sincerely,

Mr. Lankowski

**Christmas Activity Day
at St. Mark School**

Wednesday, December 20th

**Christmas Theme Day
at St. Mark School**

Friday, December 22nd

Nutritional Free Day No. 3

Friday, December 22nd

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 24th

Christmas Holidays Begin

Friday, December 22nd
3:25 pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

Monday, December 25th

JANUARY AT A GLANCE

First Day Back to School

Monday, January 8th

PD Day

Friday, January 19th
Full Day

Bell Let's Talk Day

Friday, January 26th

CSAC Meeting at St. Mark School

Tuesday, January 30th
7:00-8:30 pm

FEBRUARY AT A GLANCE

**Grade 7 Mental Health
Presentations**

Thursday, February 8th
(Details Forthcoming)

**Valentine's Theme Day
Red, Pink & White Day**

Tuesday, February 13th

Nutritional Free Day No. 4

Tuesday, February 13th

**Kindergarten Vision Screening
Program at St. Mark School**

Tuesday, February 13th

Shrove Tuesday

Tuesday, February 13th

CHRISTMAS THEME DAY REMINDER

Christmas Theme Day is on Friday, December 22nd and this day is also one of our **Nutritional Free Days**. Your child/children can bring treats to school from home on this day for their consumption and/or sharing. Since we have students at the school, who have peanut and nut allergies, we ask you to be extra careful in checking labels and avoid sending any holiday treats to school that may contain peanut or nut products. This is a life- threatening situation for these children. Also, as a reminder, please do not send your child to school with treats for distribution. As mentioned, you are welcomed to send in treats for your own child on this fun-filled day of Christmas colours and activities. Thank you once again by showing your care and concern for all children by helping to provide a safe learning environment.

PARKING REMINDER FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Thank you to all parents, guardians and caregivers who have been following the rules for dropping your children at school and picking them up at the end of classes. The safety of your children remains the priority for everyone at St. Mark School.

A continued reminder to those who are not following our guidelines:

PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE NOT TO BE USING THE SCHOOL PARKING LOTS TO PICK UP THEIR CHILD/CHILDREN BETWEEN 8:40 AM AND 3:40 PM; Parents/Guardians who have a child enrolled in the Extended Day Program can use the parking lot from 7:00 am – 8:40 am and 3:40 pm – 6:00 pm.

Parents/Guardians are not to be parking in the handicapped space unless they have a permit or the principal's permission to do so. Parents/Guardians are not to be parking in the school zone on Autumn Hill Crescent; we encourage parents to park on the school side of Autumn Hill Crescent when dropping their child/children off to school again, not in the school zone; a city Bi-Law Officer will issue tickets to those who do not comply.

PARENT/GUARDIANS ARE ALSO ASKED TO BE RESPECTFUL WHEN PARKING ON AUTUMN HILL CRESCENT; WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT PARK IN FRONT OF A CITIZEN'S DRIVEWAY, DO NOT PARK, OR DROP OFF YOUR CHILD IN A CITIZEN'S DRIVEWAY, OR USE A DRIVEWAY TO MAKE A 3-POINT TURN – THESE ACTIONS ARE UNSAFE FOR OUR STUDENTS AND OUR LOCAL NEIGHBOURS.

When students are dropped-off they are not to be walking through the parking lot on their own – students need to use the sidewalks. **Parents are to stay on the city sidewalks when dropping off/picking up their children.**

Together, let's continue to make our school the safest place for our students.

NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY LEARNING COMMONS

I would like to extend a **HUGE THANK YOU** for your tremendous support for our annual Scholastic Book Fair in November. We sold over \$6000 in books, posters, and novelty items, for which the St Mark

<p>Valentines Day Wednesday, February 14th</p> <p>Ash Wednesday Wednesday, February 14th</p> <p>Ash Wednesday Mass at St. Mark School Wednesday, February 14th 9:00 am</p> <p>Mount Mary Retreat for Grade 8 Students February 14th – 16th</p> <p>Term 1 Report Card Distribution Day Thursday, February 15th</p> <p>National Random Acts of Kindness Day Saturday, February 17th</p> <p>Family Day Monday, February 19th</p> <p>Grade 9 Course Selection Deadline Thursday, February 29th</p>	<p>Library Learning Commons received over \$2800 in book fair credit. Thank you for being such a supportive community once again this year! Wishing everyone the Happiest of Holidays and a Wonderful New Year!</p> <p>Ms. Najjar The Library Learning Commons</p> <p>ST MARK SCHOOL ECO CLUB UPDATE</p> <p>The Eco Club will be running a Clothing and Stuffie Drive for the whole school. Stay tuned for more details. As we head into the Holiday Season, here are a few tips to help you adopt more eco-friendly habits:</p> <p>The Top 9 Environmentally Friendly Tips to Save the Planet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simplify Your Purchasing Habits. Reduce Your Energy Usage. Give Up Your Plastic Habit. Eat Less Meat. Refuse and Reduce Before You Recycle. Make Smart Updates that Last. Compost. Plant a Tree. <p>https://justenergy.com/blog/the-top-9-environmentally-friendly-tips-to-save-the-planet/</p> <p>Happy Holidays, everyone! From the St Mark Eco Club</p>
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THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

We certainly understand that a child needs to stay home if they are ill or as directed by Public Health. We never want a child to attend school if they are feeling sick; they should be home resting and receive care. Any absenteeism has an impact upon the pupil. Chronic absenteeism can be an indicator of academic failure or of other social/emotional factors and can have a direct negative effect on all areas of a child's development and subsequent adjustment in future years. Once a pupil is enrolled in school, regular school attendance is mandatory. The enforcement of school attendance is required for all pupils of compulsory school age up to the age of 18. Non-attendance should be considered serious and detrimental when:

1. The absence is unexplained.
2. A pattern is evident (e.g., late arrivals, skipped classes, and/or absences per week).
3. There is a history of previous attendance concerns with the pupil or siblings.
4. The absences negatively impact upon academic success.
5. The pupil reaches 10 cumulative days per term or 20 cumulative days within a school year.
6. The pupil reaches 5 – 15 consecutive days of absence.

Discretion is certainly utilized in examining the reasons for non-attendance. For example, the following may be contributing factors: legitimate illness and serious illness or death of a family member. We appreciate when parents or guardians leave the reason for absence on the phone messaging machine; this helps us to understand the nature of the absence.

Please refer to the PDF documents below for more information about the impact absenteeism from school. Let's all work together to ensure that our children are attending school regularly.

Your partner in education.



5 Things You Need to Know - Superior I



Copy of PDF Do the Math Handout.pdf



Copy of PDF Attendance Late Ch

NUTRITIONAL FREE DAYS

We can have ten days throughout the school year when we can lower our nutritional guard to include foods of minimum nutritional value.

Our remaining **Nutritional Free Days for 2023-2024** will include the following:

- Christmas Theme Day Friday, December 22, 2023
- Pancake Tuesday/Valentine's Day Tuesday, February 13, 2024
- School Fundraiser Event Date TBD (May 2024)
- Student Council Freezie Days Friday, June 7, 14, & 21, 2024
- Grade 8 Graduation Celebration Wednesday, June 26, 2024
- Canada Day/Final Day of School Thursday, June 27, 2024

A schedule of monthly Nutritional Free Days will be included in our school newsletters moving forward.

ATHLETICS 2023-2024

The **WCDSB Elementary School Athletics Schedule for 2023-2024** is included below for your reference. We will provide seasonal updates in our newsletters as reminders. The athletics below are the teams our teacher/coaches have signed up for this year.

Winter Schedule

Girls' Volleyball (Small Schools) late Feb – early March 2024
 Boys' Basketball (Small Schools) late Feb – early March 2024

Spring Schedule

Folkdance Festival (KW Schools) May 8, 2024, at Kitchener Auditorium
 Intermediate Co-ed Soccer mid – late May 2024, at RIM Park
 KW Schools Cross Country June 5, 2024, at Bechtel Park, Waterloo
 Regional Track & Field Meet (AA Schools) June 11, 2024, at Resurrection CSS
 Junior Girls' 3-Pitch mid – June 2024, at RIM Park
 Junior Boys' 3-Pitch mid – June 2024, at RIM Park
 Co-ed Ultimate Frisbee (KW Schools) mid – June 2024, at RIM Park

The schedule will be updated and included in future newsletters when dates and locations for certain sports events have been determined. The WCDSB has developed a Code of Conduct for spectators, coaches, and athletes (see below).

WCDSB Athletics Code of Conduct

- Remember that participants play for their own enjoyment.
- Hold realistic expectations. Remember that players are not professionals and cannot be judged by professional standards.
- Respect the decisions of the officials and encourage participants to do the same.
- Understand that mistakes are okay, and that they are an important part of learning.

- Show respect for your team's opponents, because without them, there would be no game.
- Only use positive language with players, coaches, officials, and other spectators.
- Respect the coaches' decisions and encourage open communication with them.



Elementray
Athletics Code of Cc

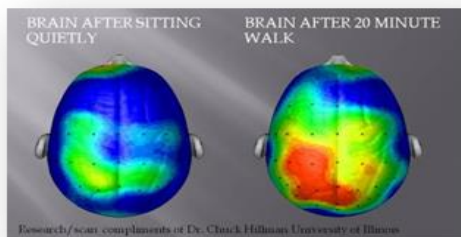
Also, we at the school have developed a Team Commitment Form/Code of Conduct we expect from our student/athletes. We anticipate students, who are trying out for teams, have been completing their schoolwork and behaving in the classroom and on the school yard to the very best of their [individual] ability – students who are not may forfeit the opportunity to play on various teams throughout the year. A sample Team Commitment Form/Code of Conduct has been included for your information. Please make sure to discuss this with your child if he/she is planning to participate on a school team this year.



Team Commitment
Form.doc

Walking or cycling to school is a smart choice

Walking to school can lead to better academic performance. Just 20 minutes of walking in the morning can increase mental focus at school for up to four hours! This can lead to higher test scores, better music practice, or even a better soccer game! Just look at the difference between brain activity in a student who sat quietly in the morning and one who was active for 20 minutes:



St. Mark is working with the city and the school board through School Travel Planning to help make walking and cycling an easier choice for your family. Let us know if you would like to help!

Skills that last outside of the classroom

Children who bike and walk to school learn skills that can be applied to situations beyond their daily school travel. These skills include safe riding, navigating pedestrian crosswalks and awareness of traffic and others on the road.

By participating in conversations with your child around safe walking and riding, your children will gain confidence in navigating neighbourhood streets during their time outside of school. In addition, children will be able to practice these skills in a supportive environment. Setting children up with safe riding and walking habits will ensure they are confident every time they walk and bike in their communities. Start with STSWR's [Sidewalk Smarts Passport](#) that outlines various pedestrian skills needed by students in

Waterloo region. You can track your child's progress by noting whether they can explain the skill, is capable of the skill, or always practices the skill. When they always practice the skill, you can feel more confident that they will do these things even when you are not with them.

Sidewalk Smarts Passport: <https://www.stswr.ca/wp-content/uploads/Sidewalk-Smarts-Passport-Printable.pdf>

Leslie Maxwell, MAPW (she/her)
School Travel Planning Supervisor
Student Transportation Services of Waterloo Region
p. 519 744 7575 x224
leslie_maxwell@stswr.ca



BWR Results
2023.docx

MILKOVAC: INCREASING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT VACCINATIONS

The MILKOVAC service is based on a successful Quebec public health program called, 'Maternity Motivational Interviewing for Child Immunization', aka the EMMIE program. The EMMIE program is an educational intervention in maternity wards using the motivational interviewing approach, which has already demonstrated its ability to increase parents' knowledge of vaccination and reinforce their motivation to vaccinate their children. MILKOVAC offers parents the opportunity to consult a vaccination counsellor free of charge to answer any questions they may have.

MILKOVAC counsellors understand the concerns and questions parents may have regarding vaccinations for their elementary school-aged children. Using a humanistic, non-judgmental approach, MILKOVAC is designed to provide parents with accurate information, guidance, and support to help them make informed decisions in accordance with recommended vaccination schedules.

MILKOVAC offers free online one-on-one consultations tailored to parents' specific needs. Interested parents can access the MILKOVAC website, as indicated in the pamphlet accompanying this correspondence and proceed to schedule an appointment with an immunization counsellor by following the outlined instructions (*see flyer for details*).



MILKOVAC.pdf

COUNCIL'S CORNER

Fundraising Made Easy this holiday season!

We are making it so easy to help raise the funds our school needs to support all our students! Below you will find various options to help raise much needed funds for our school and students with things you might already be buying!

FLIPGIVE:

FlipGive helps non-profit organizations by allowing them to earn cash rebates every time you

shop online at select stores (hotels, restaurants, building supply & clothing stores -- there are 100's of stores!). You can also invite family members and friends to join and help support out school!

What does this mean for you?

- NO selling of any products!
- NO cost to you at all. It is a rebate program.
- Earn cash for the school on the things you are already buying!
- Just download the app and log in before you make online purchases. It is that simple!

SIGN UP TODAY!

go to :

https://app.flipgive.com/teams/join?branch_match_id=705531803515950135&branch_referrer=H4sIAAAAAAAAAA8soKSkottLXT8vJLEjPLEvVSywo0MvJzMyWL0INzC3Wz8rPzLMHEcn5Kam2Xm6BIU7uAMfmMvw0AAAA&joincode=JFQTBG&utm_medium=marketing

and enter Team Invite Code: JFQTBG

FlipGive is a free funding app that makes raising money a breeze. Families can earn cash back for St. Mark by buying the things they already need. Funds will be raised whenever you shop, dine out, book hotels or activities!

For more details please visit <https://www.flipgive.com/how-it-works>

MABEL'S LABELS:

go here: https://mabelslabels.ca/en_CA/fundraising/support/

and select "St. Mark Catholic Elementary School (Kitchener)" from the drop down list to support the school when you buy labels through Mabel's Labels!

OLIVERS LABELS:

go here: <https://www.oliverslabels.com/>
support the school when
you buy labels through Oliver's Labels!

Thank you for your support!

You can help support the school ALL YEAR long using the links above!
All funds raised help support the students at St. Mark School.

WE WOULD LOVE TO SEE YOU!!!

Please consider joining upcoming council meetings, all are at 7:00pm at St. Mark School dates below:

Tuesday, January 30, 2024

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

Tuesday, May 14, 2024

Thank you
School Council