

Getting Ready for

Kindergarten

A Guide for Parents



**Welcome to
Catholic
Education**



LONDON DISTRICT
Catholic School
BOARD

Starting Kindergarten is the beginning of a wonderful learning journey. We are excited to welcome you to our community.

We are honoured that you are choosing one of our Catholic schools for your child's education. You will find that there is something unique and truly special about education that has faith and spiritual growth at the heart of academic and social learning. The distinct faith-filled experiences offered to our children on their learning journeys will help prepare them for a positive future. We believe in our schools as well as the benefit and gift of Catholic education – we hope you will share this belief with us.



Introducing Parents to Kindergarten

You are your child's first teacher and, whether you know it or not, you have already been working to get your child ready for the next stage in learning. By encouraging independence, fostering responsibility, instilling Gospel values and nurturing self-esteem, you have created the foundation for a positive and healthy step into Kindergarten.

We know that all children arrive at school with different backgrounds and experiences as well as at different stages of development – that is why our teachers celebrate each student's different learning style, special gifts and faith journey. We respect diversity and teach students in ways that recognize their individual potential as uniquely gifted by God.

Our team of professional teachers, support staff and school principals/ vice-principals will focus on all aspects of your child's education. We teach the "whole" child which means that we are concerned with the spiritual, academic, social, emotional and physical growth in children – we believe each of these components is inseparable from the others.

Throughout this booklet, we make reference to parents and children, without referring to guardians. We have done this to make our information easier to read. Please be assured that all references to parents equally apply to the role that guardians play in the care of our students.

Your Child's Faith-filled Journey

We believe in fostering a strong relationship between your home, our school and your parish. You will find our teachers supporting your child's ongoing growth in faith through Mass, prayers, religious education, Catholic social teachings and a curriculum that is infused with Gospel values. Your child will likely have opportunities to see your priest and other members of your parish community while at school.

One of the things that makes Catholic education truly unique is that we integrate Catholic beliefs and values into the required subject areas provided by the Ministry of Education. Whether your child is exploring literacy or learning about science, what we teach reflects our Catholic beliefs.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

"It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground is the smallest of all the seeds on the earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Mark 4: 30-32



In God's Image

While in our school, your child will benefit from religious education in every grade. In both Junior and Senior Kindergarten, the program is called *In God's Image*. Developed by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, this program involves children in songs, activities, and prayers related to topics such as me, community, church times, special days, plants and animals, and changes.

Get Ready

Let's start by telling you a bit about our Kindergarten program so that you can get ready for school.

The Kindergarten Experience

We know that a strong and comprehensive Kindergarten program is important for the long-term success of students. We offer a two-year Kindergarten experience (Junior and Senior) that builds community and provides rich and inclusive learning for all children. We introduce school routines and concepts/skills in Junior Kindergarten and reinforce and expand on them in Senior Kindergarten. The concepts and skills learned in Kindergarten will help prepare children for Grade One and beyond.

Learning

Students will learn to develop knowledge and skills in language, mathematics, science and technology, personal and social growth, health and physical education, and the arts. Your child will have many opportunities to plan and choose activities and learn through exploration, inquiry and purposeful play.

The role of the teacher is to help your child develop:

- independence and initiative
- spirituality
- creativity
- the ability to make decisions
- early literacy and math skills
- the ability to learn and relate to others

Programming that is Right for Every Child

We know that all children learn differently and so our teachers will create a program for your child based on the curriculum and your child's readiness, interests and learning style. Teachers pay particular attention to offering experiences that help your child learn skills, understand concepts and make connections.

Kindergarten provides your child with a good balance of effective learning strategies that are used by the teacher to instruct your child. These include:

- activities led by the teacher
- active and quiet work/play
- large and small group work/play
- independent work/play
- targeted lessons for individuals, small groups and large groups
- indoor and outdoor play



Active and Healthy Children

Being active is vital to all aspects of normal growth and development and that is why daily physical activity will be a part of your child's routine at school. Through games and activities, your child will develop coordinated movement, balance and stability. Daily physical activity also promotes positive attitudes, wellness and healthy lifestyles.

Set

Once you have registered your child for Kindergarten, you can turn your attention to getting set for the big day. There are many things you can do over the next few months to prepare your child for a smooth transition to school. Consider some of these "ABCs" and "123s" of getting set for a positive and exciting Kindergarten experience:

Oral Language Activities

- Surround your children with language – talk to them often and respond to their questions.
- Read nursery rhymes or sing songs and chants.
- Talk about shapes, colours, letters and movements – solve problems together.

Reading Activities

- Read to your child daily and talk about the story or pictures.
- Let your child hold the book and turn the pages.
- Let children use pictures to help them read words in a book – this is a proven way to begin teaching children how to read.



Writing Activities

- Talk about things that are printed all around us, e.g., road signs.
- Provide a place and materials for writing.
- Write lists, messages and notes in front of your child – talk about what you are doing.



Go!

Your Child's Big Day

On the first day of school, try to keep things as normal as possible and stick to your regular routines. You may find it helpful to wake up a little earlier than normal so that your child can get ready in a calm and unhurried way. Consistency and routine are so essential to children, especially once they start school.

Now the hard part! When you say goodbye to your child on the first day, make it quick, light and reassuring. Give a hug and remind your child that you or the usual caregiver will see your child after school. As difficult as it may be, try not to let your feelings of anxiety and separation known to your child.



For more information regarding attendance days and school entry procedures, please contact your child's school.

"Let the children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of heaven belongs."

Matthew 19: 14



The Spirit is Alive

Chair – Philip Squire

Director – Wilma de Rond