

SCHOOL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The day-to-day functioning of the school goes more smoothly when everyone- parents, teachers, and students- know what the procedures, policies, and expectations that regulate school life are. We all need to know what to do in certain situations. The following section contains information for parents about various aspects of school life. By following a common set of guidelines, parents and teachers can do much to promote harmony between home and school.

Absences

1. Admission Policy

According to the Constitution of the *Canadian Reformed School Society of Smithville and Surrounding District*, admission of children to **John Calvin School** is limited to members of the Society, which membership in turn is limited to members of a Canadian Reformed Church or a United Reformed Church. Any other applications for admission must be made directly to the Board of the Society and will be considered only after the Board has had opportunity to interview the applicants with at least three (3) of its members present. All admissions are subject to Board approval.

2. Reporting Absences

If a child is to be absent from school, please telephone the school **before 8:10 a.m.** It is also possible to leave a message on the school answering machine. Please provide us with the child's name, grade and teacher, and the reason for the absence. Parental cooperation in observing this practice is not only a matter of common courtesy, but also a necessity - the world is not such a safe place and it is necessary to know that a child is either safely at home or in school. Arrangements for homework can also be made at the same time. We appreciate advance notice about dental or medical appointments so that we can try to avoid conflicts with tests. If no message about a child's absence has been received by 8:30 a.m., the school secretary will telephone the home to make inquiries.

3. Family Emergencies

The staff is well aware that there may be family emergencies or special circumstances which necessitate keeping a child home. In such cases, it makes such a difference if parents call the school to explain and to request opportunity to make up for work missed. Staff members are most willing to cooperate in situations of emergency or special circumstances.

4. Regular School Attendance

The nature of education is such that, in order to benefit from it, a child has to be at school. Many lessons simply cannot be sent for homework -- Bible/Church History stories, teacher-directed lessons of explanation, etc. fall into this category. Regular school attendance shows that we recognize the importance of reformed education. It also teaches children to be punctual and responsible about their tasks as students.

Illness, medical appointments, or family emergencies constitute legitimate reasons for children to be absent. Teachers will try their utmost to help children who fall behind in their school work for these kinds of reasons.

Both staff and board urge parents not to keep children out of school for personal reasons such as working at home, family holidays/excursions, or special occasions. Such practices threaten to undermine a child's perception of the importance of school and the good working relationship we try to maintain between home and school.

Bus Service

With only a few exceptions, our students all come to school by bus. Bus routes are planned by the Transportation Committee to be as time and cost-effective as possible. The Committee also lays down the rules for bus safety and maintains regular contact with the drivers and the principal to keep everything working smoothly.

1. Bus Rules

During the time that children are on the bus, there is little adult supervision. The bus driver has to concentrate on the task of driving safely and cannot enforce discipline effectively while the bus is in motion. As a result, discipline problems can and do occur. Because neither parents nor teachers can be there in person, they have to monitor student behaviour on the buses by "remote control" so to speak. Bus rules are necessary not only to make the bus ride pleasant and safe for everyone, but also to deter children from engaging in wrong behaviour by which others are offended, hurt, or bullied. It is important, therefore, that both parents and teachers know what the bus rules are so that they can remind the children of them from time to time. The rules will also be helpful when there is doubt about what is or is not allowed on the buses.

The behaviour of our children while they are on the bus also speaks a message to the world around us. The name of our school is clearly printed on our buses. If our students attract the attention of motorists or pedestrians through rowdy or disrespectful behaviour, the first thing those people will look at is the name printed on the bus. To

bring shame on the name of our school ultimately means to bring shame on the Name of the LORD. Obedience to the rules, therefore, is more than a matter of maintaining good order and safety in the bus.

The following rules apply to all passengers on John Calvin School buses. Parents whose children attend Guido de Brès High School, but who make use of our buses, should also inform these students about the rules.

- The bus driver is responsible for the safety and discipline of the passengers and, therefore, passengers are expected to obey the driver's instructions. They may not talk back or argue with the driver, but are expected to be respectful and cooperative.
- The bus driver has the authority to deny transportation to a passenger who persistently disobeys or who endangers others by his/her behaviour. The driver informs the Transportation Committee about all suspensions. A committee member will inform parents about the cause and duration of their child's suspension from bus service. **The first offence will result in a one-day suspension. A second offence will be a one-week suspension. Further offences will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.**
- The "**No Smoking**" policy for school grounds applies to the buses also.
- Passenger seating is arranged by the bus driver at the beginning of the school year and is adjusted from time to time to keep problems among passengers to a minimum. Fixed seating also helps the driver keep track of which passengers are littering or damaging the bus.
- All forms of horseplay, throwing things in the bus, or any other type of disruptive behaviour endanger the safety of the driver and passengers. To minimize situations that invite rowdiness, arguments, or vandalism, passengers are not allowed to bring items such as toy weapons, knives, cutting tools, pets or other animals.
- Unchristian behaviour such as bullying or using offensive language may not be tolerated and will result in suspension.
- Parents must request a change in drop-off point **in writing** to avoid requests by children that were not authorized by the parents.
 - A note to the bus driver is sufficient to request a change along the child's regular bus route.
 - A note addressed to the principal a day or two in advance allows time to arrange for drop-offs along a different route.

- In case of a birthday party, the hosting parent is expected to pick up from the school the children attending the party.
- In order to prevent confusion and anxiety at the beginning of the school year, parents are asked to tell their children what both their morning and afternoon bus numbers are. These numbers are published in the Information Edition of **News and Views** each August.
- Passengers are expected to demonstrate care for the appearance and condition of the buses by not littering the floor or damaging the seats of the bus. Consumption of food and drink and gum chewing inevitably cause a mess on the buses and are not permitted. Students who willfully cause damage to the bus face a three-day suspension from bus service and will be fined in order to pay for the repairs.
- Driving a bus during foggy or poor road conditions is tense at best. Please warn your children during the winter months that when weather conditions are hazardous, they should do their utmost to avoid causing distractions inside the bus.
- JCS students are permitted to have electronic listening devices on the buses.

2. Bus Safety

Each bus driver may appoint one or two of our oldest students to act as crossing patrols. The primary responsibility of these student crossing patrols is to help passengers cross busy roads safely:

- The student waits for a signal from the driver before he/she allows the passengers to proceed with crossing.
- Crossing guards must sit on the front seat when on duty. Guards must wear their orange safety vests when they are helping passengers cross streets.

Every September the principal initiates safety presentations for each bus:

- Bus evacuations are part of this presentation. Crossing guards can assist with front evacuations. Older students who sit at the back assist with rear evacuations.
- A review of the bus rules are also part of this presentation.

3. Bus Emergencies/Bus Service Cancellation

In case of inclement weather, the Transportation Committee will authorize the cancellation of school. They will inform the bus-drivers and the principal, and they will phone CHML radio station (900 AM) to request a public announcement over the air.

If the weather becomes inclement during the school day, the principal, in consultation with the Transportation Committee, will cancel school, inform the bus-drivers, and initiate the telephone chain published in the Information Edition of *News and Views*. Parents are requested to keep a copy of the telephone chain near their telephone. Since there are bound to be people along the phone chain who are not at home at the time it is in action, **please try the next number(s) on the list until you reach someone and the chain is not broken.**

An early school emergency closing always invites the possibility that a child comes home to an empty house or to a bus stop where there is no one there to pick him/her up as usual. To prevent this from happening, bus drivers will not drop off children at designated spots when there appears to be no one at home or at the bus stop to drive children home. Instead, they will drop these children off at the next point along the bus route. Phone calls can be made from there until the children's parents can be reached.

Each bus is equipped with a cellular phone by means of which a bus driver can contact the school and the garage to relay important messages. The school can also reach the bus drivers during emergency situations.

Communication Between Home and School

In order for the work of the teachers to build upon and complement that of the parents, open and active communication is necessary. At present, we make use of the following means to promote communication that is instructive and up-building:

1. Telephone calls are a quick and easy way to give or receive an update on a child's progress, to report a problem, to clear up a misunderstanding, or to ask a question. Teachers do appreciate it when parents initiate a call and parents should not allow any fear of wearing out their welcome to prevent or limit their use of this means of communication.
2. Formal and informal interviews keep parents and teachers aligned with respect to a child's academic progress and/or behaviour. Parents may request an interview at any time during the year. Interviews have proven to be the most effective way of dealing with problems that may arise. We strongly encourage parents to make

use of this avenue of communication.

3. Parent-Teacher Evenings provide opportunity for instruction in and discussion about topics related to Reformed Education and which are of mutual interest and concern.
4. Articles in *News and Views* provide parents with information about the activities of the school.
5. The weekly **Chronicle** is sent home on Friday's to inform parents about topics being studied, tests, quizzes and special assignments that are coming up, outings, or other newsworthy items.

Discipline Code

1. Expectations for Student Conduct

Our school was instituted for the instruction of covenant children. It follows, therefore, that the school as well as the home is part of the training ground for life within the covenant. Children have to learn to live what they are taught to confess. This demand to live obediently according to the demands of the covenant brings certain expectations of how children are to conduct themselves. At the **John Calvin School**, pupils are expected to:

- demonstrate respect for and obedience towards the Word of God as it is taught in the school. This means that opinions, decisions, and conduct are submitted to the authority of the Scriptures. This also includes a willingness to be corrected by the Word of God. Students are expected to handle and treat their Bibles with care and to use God's Name reverently in speech and writing.
- demonstrate respect for and obedience to the teachers as those set in authority over them. This respect can be shown by addressing teachers by their proper titles, by speaking politely without backtalk, and by accepting and submitting to their instruction and discipline. Courteous speech and behaviour are expected from students in their interaction with teachers and other adults. Negative body language may, and will, not be tolerated.
- demonstrate respect for fellow pupils who are their fellow heirs in the covenant. This respect can be shown through the way in which they treat the person, property, and feelings of others. Gossip and ridicule break down and destroy.

- stand up for what is right in our life before the LORD. This may mean speaking out against wrong doing. It includes encouraging peers in doing good rather than evil.
- demonstrate a responsible work ethic by completing homework, studying for tests, and, in general, putting adequate effort into their school work.
- use language respectfully in service to God and their neighbour. Verbal abuse and swearing are sins that we may, and will, not tolerate.
- dress in a manner that reflects a Christian lifestyle.
- demonstrate respect for school as well as their own property by taking care of the things entrusted to them and leaving alone what does not belong to them.
- obey the school rules without complaining or trying to undermine them. The rules are there for the physical and spiritual well-being of everyone.
- admit and apologize, in the Scriptural sense of the word, for wrongdoings and accept the consequences that may follow without anger or disrespect.

2. Working Together to Promote Good Behaviour

Our children are young and still have far to go on the pathway of sanctification. As adults, we have to be patient with their weaknesses and must be willing to correct them again and again. It should be visible to our students that their parents and teachers are working together to promote their good behaviour. There are many ways in which parents and teachers can be seen to be working together:

- Both teachers and parents have to be good models for the children who are quick to notice when we fail to "practise what we preach".
- Parents and teachers have to be honest in acknowledging the sinful nature of children. Serious misbehaviour may not be passed off as a phase or justified by what others are doing. When there is wrong being done, we have to deal with it.
- Parents find out many things that are going on at school through what their children tell at home. We greatly appreciate a discreet phone call (out of the children's hearing) to alert us to a situation of which we may not be aware. Such working together may help us put an early stop to student misbehaviour and to

prevent possible hurt and grief resulting from a situation that has gone on too long.

- Children should recognize the support of the teachers for the work of parents and *vice versa* in the prayers they hear in the classroom and at home.
- When a child comes home with a grievance about how s/he has been treated at school by a teacher or fellow student, please suspend judgment until you have spoken to the teacher if the nature of the grievance warrants it.
- Both parents and teachers can do untold damage by criticizing each other in front of children. When there is a reason for grievance, we have to talk together without using the children as witnesses.
- Parents can help teachers promote a positive attitude towards school by taking an interest in their children's work and talk about school. Children have to learn that all tasks in life have aspects which they will not enjoy, but which still have to be done in obedience to the LORD. Therefore, let us not tolerate grumbling, negative attitudes, or indifference in our children. Both parents and teachers need to do a lot of encouraging to help children see their own responsibilities in doing their work cheerfully and faithfully.

3. Punishment

Teachers stand in the place of the parents during the school day. When children do wrong at school it falls to the teacher to correct them in love based on a true concern for their spiritual well being.

Because all children are different, it is neither possible nor right to punish them all in exactly the same way. In some cases, a word of reproof or a warning is enough. Keeping children in at recess, taking away a classroom privilege for a certain time, assigning a written task, or having them perform a supervised cleanup task are other means of bringing children back on track. Punishments have to be just and appropriate to the nature of the offence and the character and age of the child. Whenever possible, teachers supervise apologies between pupils who have wronged each other.

When children repeatedly disobey and refuse to heed warnings or when they are involved in pestering or ostracizing others, they may need a more forcible punishment that is less easily forgotten:

- Students in the upper grades may be called in for an evening interview with their parents and teachers to talk about their behaviour.
- If they persist in being uncooperative and refuse to be corrected by admonitions and less severe punishments, older students may be denied participation in a class trip or sports event.

- Corporal punishment and its administration is a matter of some dispute also within our parent community. Whereas the law of the land does not strictly forbid it, school policy is to abstain from it. If a child's behaviour is such that physical correction is warranted, the parents of the child will be contacted, asked to pick him or her up from school, and take their child home to deal with according to their own parental discretion. The child may return to school when he or she recognizes and agrees to abide by the conditions for school attendance. Physical restraint will be applied only when a child is in danger of hurting himself or others.

4. Suspension Policy

When children do not respond to discipline as they should, the school will take stronger measures to correct the ones who persist in disobedience. One of these measures is suspension from classes. Students may be suspended under the following circumstances:

- If they commit a flagrant act of disobedience such as swearing, cursing, fighting, bullying, filthy talk, gestures, or notes, vandalism, or theft.
- If they continually disobey and undermine the rules of the school and the authority of the staff despite repeated warnings.

The school issues two kinds of suspensions:

- An **in-school suspension** means that a student spends an entire day away from his/her peers under supervision as arranged on a case by case basis. There are no recess or lunch-room privileges. The day is spent working through a list of tasks set by the principal or vice-principal and/or the classroom teacher with appropriate breaks for a snack, lunch, and using the washroom. The student will be expected to make up work missed in class by taking it for homework. At the end of the school day, the student must report to the principal or vice-principal to make apologies for the wrongdoing.
- An **out-of-school suspension** means that a student loses the privilege of being at school for one to a maximum of five days. The fact that the student stays home because s/he is not allowed to come to school makes an out-of-school suspension a very serious matter. School books are sent home with the student and all homework will have to be completed under parental supervision. At the conclusion of the suspension, the parents, student, and principal (or vice-principal) meet at a mutually-agreed upon time. The student will have to make an adequate apology in the presence

of his/her parents before being readmitted to the classroom.

The principal (or vice-principal) has the authority to suspend pupils from class. When a situation that calls for a suspension arises, the principal will inform the parents of the cause, type, and duration of the suspension via a telephone call on the day that the suspension is issued. In the case of an out-of-school suspension, arrangements are also made for the supervised apology. The principal has the authority to extend the suspension if proper apologies have not been made. Suspensions are reported to the Education Committee.

Any behaviour that warrants a suspension is serious enough to make parental involvement a necessity. Whether a child receives an in-school or an out-of-school suspension, s/he will need both the admonition and encouragement of his/her parents. Children need to learn the pain of seeking forgiveness and the joy of receiving it from the LORD and from those they have wronged.

Additional involvement is asked of parents whose child receives an out-of-school suspension. Parents can clearly impress upon their child the seriousness of the suspension by seeing to it that the time spent at home does not become a holiday or a reason for boasting to classmates. Parents can help the child obtain homework assignments on a daily basis by supervising contact with a reliable classmate and/or the classroom teacher. During the time that the child spends at home, parents should also help the child formulate the wording of his/her apology so that it is scriptural and sincere. **This is the most crucial part of the suspension procedure and should be carefully prepared and carried out.** At the conclusion of the suspension period, one (or both) of the parents takes the child to school to be present during the apology.

Both the in-school and the out-of-school suspensions have consequences for the pupil. If s/he misses a test or assignment because of a suspension, the student has to take the initiative in making up for work missed by requesting assignments from a classmate and/or the classroom teacher. Failure to make up missed assignments or tests will result in a zero grade. Most importantly, s/he will have to apologize sincerely for the offense which led to the suspension and show amendment of his/her ways afterwards.

5. Expulsion Policy

When a child deliberately and persistently refuses to act covenantally and threatens the spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being of other students and/or teachers, then s/he does not belong at our school. When there is no longer a willingness to accept and respond to correction, then such a child must be removed from the school through a formal expulsion. The purpose of expulsion, like that of suspension, is correction -- an amendment of life and a change of heart -- so that the

student can be received back into the school community at the conclusion of the expulsion period set by the School Board.

The steps for expulsion are as follows:

- **Except for cases of flagrant abuse or crime**, there will be a period of time during which the child will be admonished and perhaps suspended. The staff will consult with the parents about the behaviour or attitude of their child. The principal will inform the Education Committee of any actions taken.
- When the staff deems that a student no longer responds to correction and that his/her presence threatens the well-being of others, then the principal will inform the School Board and Education Committee of the need to proceed with expulsion.
- The School Board will proceed with formal expulsion by visiting the parents and setting the length of time for which a student will be expelled. Normally, an expulsion will last the duration of the current school year.
- Re-entry to school will take place via an interview which includes the parents and student and staff and school board representatives at the conclusion of the set expulsion period. This interview must satisfy all parties concerned of the student's willingness to show amendment of past behaviour and to submit to the demands of covenantal living.

Dress Code

The covenantal distinctiveness of our students has implications for the expectations or standards we set not only for their behaviour but also for their manner of dress. Children of the King should not, by virtue of their dress and/or grooming, be mistaken for children of the world. Furthermore, the reformed, Christian school is open to scrutiny and we make a public statement about the character and purpose of our school through both the behaviour and the manner of dress of our students. And lastly, parental and school standards are also needed to help children resist the pressure to conform to wrong standards set by peer groups. For these reasons, the kind of dress to be worn in school is not a matter that can be left entirely up to personal choice or taste.

At John Calvin School, students are expected to wear clothing that reflects a Christian walk of life; it must be God-pleasing. That means that clothing is not only neat, but also modest and in good taste. The following guidelines are intended to promote uniformity of interpretation about the dress code without specifying certain styles that may be current during a given school year:

- Students may not wear shirts with inappropriate slogans, sayings or pictures.

- Full-length shirts must be worn. No spaghetti-strap shirts or tank tops may be worn. In other words, tops must keep shoulders and midriffs/**midsection** adequately covered.
- Students need to wear clothing that avoids the extremes of tightness and looseness in fit.
- Pants/shorts must cover undergarments.
- Shorts (other than gym shorts worn in gym class) must be of an appropriate length.
- Hair styles and/or accessories that are clearly identifiable with an anti-Christian group or world view do not belong at our school.
- Students should not wear their hats or caps indoors.
- Socks and closed shoes are necessary for all play and sports activities to protect against foot injuries. For sanitary reasons, children may not go barefoot inside the school building. Indoor running shoes or sandals are needed year round for indoor wear. Indoor running shoes can be the same as those worn for gym class. Students must wear shoes that do not leave scuff marks when participating in Physical Education classes and intramural activities in the gym.
- All students (**Kindergarten excepted**) are expected to be dressed in a school supplied gym shirt and shorts for their physical education classes as well as for certain outings, e.g. year-end school trip. For students new to the school, or those that have out-grown their uniform, this can be ordered at the beginning of the school year via the school office. The necessary order forms will be supplied.
- For special events such as Graduation and School Concerts, students need to wear clothing that fits the occasion, e.g. Sunday or second-best.
- If a staff member feels that a student does not meet the dress code requirements as outlined above, the following procedure will be followed:
 - 1) First infraction: There will be a three teacher review- the teacher who notices the event and two colleagues. If the majority agrees that there is an infraction, the parents will be contacted by the principal/vice-principal so that they can address the infraction with their child.
 - 2) Second infraction by the same student: There will be a three teacher review (as in #1). If there is agreement on the infraction, the student will be brought in to the principal's office. The student will be informed by the principal/vice-principal how they have not met the dress code and will be asked to change, e.g. change into another shirt or a JCS P.E. shirt. The parents will once again be informed.

- 3) Third infraction with the same student: There will be a three teacher review (as in #1 and #2). If there is agreement, the principal/vice-principal will call the parents. They will pick-up the child from school as soon as possible so that he/she can change at home. The student will wait in the principal's office until he/she is picked up. At that time, the principal/vice-principal will again discuss the matter with the parents.

As community, we need to continue to work together as home and school to consistently promote appropriate, Christian dress and appearance at John Calvin School.

Emergencies (Medical)

On occasion it happens that a child is involved in an accident at school or at a school-related activity and requires medical treatment. Such treatment will not be administered without parental consent. For this reason, we immediately call the injured child's home. The child's parent either comes to school and brings the child in for treatment him/herself or proceeds straight to the medical clinic where the child has already been brought by a staff member.

Under normal circumstances, this procedure works fine. However, the procedure goes awry when we cannot reach either of the child's parents. When this happens, the child is left waiting for treatment for what could be a very long time if no alternative way of getting parental consent is found. In order to prevent the possibility that children have to wait too long for medical treatment because their parents cannot be reached, we now use **medical consent forms**. On these forms parents give advance consent to emergency medical treatment in the event that they cannot be reached.

During the first week of school in September, parents will receive **medical consent forms**. On these forms we would like you to fill in the required family information and whatever medical information about your children that you think is important for us to know (e.g. allergies: bee stings, penicillin, Tylenol). It should be well understood that these forms will only be used if parents cannot be reached at the time of an emergency.

The question of medication comes up from time to time, as in a child having a headache and asking for Tylenol. Legally, we are not allowed to dispense any medication without written parental permission. Therefore, if your child has a chronic condition requiring regular medication (such as migraine headaches, for instance) please include that on the medical form as a blanket permission to administer

medication as necessary for that particular child. Failing such permission, we MAY NOT legally hand out medication.

Fire Drills

Government legislation requires all schools to practise fire drills on a regular basis. The first time we have a fire drill everyone is warned. Subsequent drills, however, are carried out without any warning. If your child is not wearing proper footwear, s/he may balk at the door when s/he notices that the gravel, grass, or pavement is wet. This could cause a lot of confusion and trouble. Please help us by making sure that your children have proper footwear.

Local fire officials make regular, annual inspections to ensure that the school meets the required safety standards. Subsequently an official report is issued to the Board via the school principal.

Compliance with the Building Code and Health Protection Act is also maintained and may, without prior notification, be inspected by officials from these departments.

Fund-raising Events

1. Student Fund

Children in Grades 4 through 8 sell chocolate bars each September to replenish the Student Fund. The money in this account pays for class trips as much as possible.

2. Community Service

Each school year we raise money for a worthy cause in our local community. Our students have participated in various events to support the work of a variety of agencies. In recent years, we have supported the work of McNally House, a palliative care institution located in Grimsby, and also made use of by members of our church community.

3. Anchor Home

Each school year, students in Grades 7 and 8 find part-time jobs for Anchor Work Day and contribute their earnings to the Anchor Home Association. This normally coincides with the professional development days of the teaching staff at the end of October (Teachers' Convention days), when students are excused from school.

Homework Guidelines

Homework at the elementary school level can become a contentious issue, especially if it is perceived to be excessive. The policies regarding homework at **John Calvin School** are as follows:

Grades K - 3: At these grade levels there is no formal homework. That is not the same as saying that pupils are not expected to do anything at home. Traditionally parents are encouraged to help their children memorize their psalms/texts for the week, to practise their number facts as they are assigned weekly, similarly with a list of words. When a particular book of the reading series is finished children are permitted to take these home and are encouraged to read them to parents. In each case, these skills are practised repeatedly at school during the day, but the reinforcement at home is good for home/school contact and parental involvement with students' daily activities.

Grades 4 - 6: In these, the Junior grades, similar activities as outlined above are encouraged and for many that will be the extent of it. For some students though, with the increase in volume of work, they sometimes have to take something home to complete it for the next class. Also, as they go from the lower to the higher end of this grade group, some assignment of work will also occur. However, even at the higher end, the work should not exceed 30 - 45 minutes per night, ON AVERAGE. If it does, something is wrong and contact should be taken up with the teacher concerned.

Grades 7 - 8: At this, the Intermediate grades level, at which students are being prepared for high school, formal homework is assigned. This is above and beyond assignments that could, but may not have been, completed in class. A student who makes a practice of not applying him/herself in class, may have a lot of homework by virtue of such lack of application. However, given a good effort during the school day, homework should not normally take up more than 60 - 75 minutes of time at home. Saying that, means that it is understood that such is time on task - which is different from just having books open in front of oneself.

2. Too Much/Not Enough Homework

In every grade there are children who do not get the best use out of class time for completing assignments. Invariably, these children end up with more homework than their peers. Children who need more time to complete a task may also need to do more homework than others even though he/she worked well at school. On the other hand, there are children who are very quick and who manage to do almost all their work at school.

Parents should be alert for the two extremes. If a child consistently has a heavy load of homework or if he/she never seems to have any, then contact with the teacher should be made. Although pupils in Grades 1-6 may be able, if they are among the

quick ones, to complete regular assignments at school, they still need to study for tests at home. Students in Grades 7 and 8 may have the odd evening with little homework, but night after night with no homework is not a good sign either. Similarly, a student may have more than the average amount of homework once in a while, but if this is the case night after night, then something is wrong. A problem with the time spent on homework should be discussed with the teacher to determine the cause and to find a possible solution.

3. Incomplete Homework

If a homework assignment was reasonable, then the teacher may expect students to come to school with their work completed. It is understandable that there may be unforeseen circumstances such as illness to prevent a child from finishing his work. A note from the parents will help to explain these circumstances. Parents are asked to help children plan around social activities so that they do not interfere with the homework assignments. Birthday parties, family excursions, boys and girls' clubs, part-time jobs, etc. should not be listed as excuses for incomplete homework.

Students with legitimate reasons may be given extra time to complete assignments. Those who do not, however, receive a detention during which they complete their assignments. Persistent late assignments do result in loss of marks. In the intermediate grades, incomplete homework interferes with the instruction of that day. Furthermore, there is little time in the busy school day to keep students in to make up for incomplete work. The noon hour is reduced to a mere 25 minutes of work time. The proper place for homework, therefore, is at home.

The issue of catechism classes often comes up as well. While we try to be sensitive to the students' other obligations, with four different churches to consider we also have three different catechism evenings.....you can see how little time would be left for homework if all of these evenings were accommodated. The use of agendas and proper planning again becomes an issue here.

4. Suggestions for Homework

Many parents have found the following ideas to work well:

- Have a set time in the day for homework.
- Provide a suitable place for children to do their homework. Good lighting, a flat working surface, and a straight chair are advisable.
- Take an interest in their work by discussing an aspect of their work with them from time to time.
- Create a quiet environment for concentrated work and study.

- If your child has trouble organizing his/her time, help him/her to set up a work schedule.
- Check your child's agenda frequently to see that s/he is writing down and keeping track of assignments.
- Although it sounds very nice in theory that a child has a desk in his/her room for doing homework, in practice this arrangement is often disappointing if a child does not have disciplined work habits. Such children are far better off doing homework at the kitchen or dining room table under the watchful eye of parents.

5. Use of Agendas

In order to plan their work effectively, students are being introduced to agendas already at the kindergarten level. At that point the teacher still makes the most entries, but as the students rise through the grades they are expected to be more and more self-reliant in that regard. Effective use of those agendas should help eliminate a lot of conflict issues between obligations and the time to complete them. Right up to the Gr. 8 level teachers assist students in this by reminders and daily checks especially for those who are slow in acquiring that skill. Parents are urged to monitor this use of agendas as well, since it is a skill that will have life-long benefits.

Interviews

Interviews by request (teacher or parent) are scheduled for after the interim report cards which go home at the mid-point of the first term (mid-October). These interviews are fifteen minutes in length.

Formal interviews are scheduled twice a year following the first and second term report cards. A timetable is prepared to give parents ten-minute interviews for each of their children. These interviews offer a very limited time for discussion. Both parents and teachers should give some thought prior to the interview about what should be said.

It has been our experience over many years that the set of interviews following the second report is often thought of by parents as redundant - as in, "My child is doing fine, what are we here to talk about.?" That being the case, the decision was reached to make the second term interview **'by request'** - that is, either the teacher or the parents request an interview, or perhaps both. In that we avoid interviews that are deemed unnecessary and the time saved can be invested in stretching the necessary interviews to 15 minutes instead of the hardly adequate 10. Let that not be perceived as discouraging home/school contact - it is not. Even if there is no specific reason parents are encouraged to request an interview if they just wish to keep personal contact with the staff. It is simply meant to lift the sense of obligation for those who do not see a reason for it.

Parents who cannot come for an interview at the time scheduled for them are asked to call the school. An alternative time can readily be arranged.

Unscheduled interviews can be held at any time during the year. Not only teachers, but also parents, can and should request an interview whenever the need arises. Many problems have been minimized or overcome through timely interviews between parents and teachers.

Mission and Mercy Efforts

Ever since our school began, our students have helped to support a number of mission or works of mercy projects. Every child is encouraged to bring a small amount of money (once a week, for example) which is used to support a mission project.

Besides the support of several individual children in mission situations on an on-going basis, the fund also contributes to organizations such as CRWRF (Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund) and Word and Deed, which provides support for Adoration School in Haiti. Once a year, the staff decides on how to allocate the funds available on a perceived needs basis. (Included also are the educational efforts of the Children of Light and Femmie Dethan on our mission field in Timor.)

Parents can help children learn good habits in giving for others by making sure that their children contribute regularly according to the means possible for each family. Older students still very much need parental supervision and encouragement in this regard.

School Rules

We maintain order and consistency at school by establishing rules and routines that teachers are expected to enforce and students to follow. Rules are there for the well-being of every one. Some serve a safety purpose, others an organizational purpose, and still others serve to maintain order and good behaviour. Since children often come home with stories about what they are allowed or not allowed to do at school, we are publishing some of the basic school rules to which parents can refer when there is need.

- Pupils should come inside **immediately upon arriving at school**. Buses arrive just before starting time giving children an opportunity to get ready for the day without loss of class time. This policy greatly reduces the possibility of discipline problems before school because all eight grades go straight inside the building.

- Pupils who arrive by bicycle can park the bicycle in the designated area. All pupils must leave bicycles strictly alone during the day.
- We do not allow pupils to leave the school grounds during the day except when they are being picked up by a parent for an appointment or in case of illness.
- There are certain items that we cannot permit at school or on the buses because they are dangerous or are used for wrong purposes. Toy weapons, knives and electronic devices will automatically be confiscated if children have them at school. We do not permit any buying, selling, or trading activities at school. Because students sometimes slip forbidden objects into pockets or book bags, we ask parents to check from time to time that their children are not bringing them to school.
- The school telephone is generally off limits for students. If there is an emergency or important message to be conveyed to the home, a teacher or the school secretary will telephone on the child's behalf. Students in the upper grades may make these calls themselves, with permission.
- Pupils are required to remove footwear when entering the school. Indoor shoes or slippers with soles are needed not only for warmth and protection, but also for readiness at all times for a fire drill.
- Accidents will happen at school and things may get damaged or broken. However, when something is destroyed or damaged as the result of deliberate vandalism or disobedience, students will be required to make monetary restitution and/or perform cleanup tasks around the school.
- We do not permit gum chewing in school, on the playground, and on the buses. It looks unsightly and invariably lands up under desks, tables and bus seats or gets trampled into the carpet and pavement. Pupils should not bring gum on days when there are bus trips planned either. Most places that offer school tours insist on a "NO GUM" policy just like we do.
- We do not allow snowball fights or play fighting during recesses. These actions often result in injuries or turn into serious conflicts.
- We observe a "No Smoking" policy in and around the school.

School Times

School bell times are as follows:

8:10.....	School starts
9:55 - 10:15.....	Morning recess
11:45 - 12:40.....	Lunch and recess break
3:00.....	Dismissal
3:10.....	Buses leave

Special Education

Parents are always notified by the school when one of their children should be placed in one of our special education programs (see section on Special Education in Part II). If specialized testing needs to be done, parental consent has to be given before we proceed.

Conversely, parents should inquire if they perceive a justifiable need for some form of remediation for their child.

The procedure for placing a student in a **Special Education program** (see Part II for definition of terms) is as follows:

- When a student is struggling within the regular classroom, the classroom teacher will seek out different teaching methods or resources, and spend additional time with the struggling student.
- If the student continues to struggle, the classroom teacher should consult with the SERT to obtain additional techniques, resources, or advice. With the classroom teacher's permission the SERT should speak with the student and observe the student in the classroom.
- If the student continues to struggle, the student should receive an individualized learning plan within the Learning Assistance program. This temporary plan should be developed to address a specific unit or a specific topic within a unit.
- After a sufficient amount of time, the student's progress and program should be reviewed by the SERT, the educational assistant (as necessary), the classroom teacher, the student's parents and the Special

Education coordinator. If insufficient progress has been made, the student should receive a modified program within one or more subject areas. At this point, it would also be prudent to consult with the relevant professionals to assist in the development of programming, e.g. a Speech and Language Pathologist or a special education consultant for an initial screening/assessment. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) will be developed and the student will enter the Special Education program.

- After sufficient amount of time, the SERT, classroom teacher, student's parents and coordinator/principal may decide to seek further advice from or additional testing by relevant professionals, e.g. educational psychologist.

Most children with special learning disabilities and needs are identified as early as kindergarten in consultation with the parents and kindergarten teachers. Some are discovered later because skillful coping strategies on the part of the student may mask the true nature of a problem for several years. When either the parents or the teachers suspect a learning disability, there is contact between home and school to initiate whatever kind of testing or assessment that is needed to identify the problem. In some cases, we make use of outside services and parents enlist the help of the family doctor in obtaining access to these services.

The assessment, reporting, and evaluation procedure for special education students is as follows:

- In September, the Special Education teacher, as necessary, tests or retests (e.g., Gates-MacGinitie, Brigance, Canadian Test of Basic Skills) each previously identified special needs student to decide on program placement for the new school year. Based on the findings, the Special Education teacher will write for each student, in cooperation with the classroom teacher, an Individualized Education Plan (I.E.P.) and an anecdotal report stating the child's strengths and weaknesses and the reasons for placement in a specific program. This initial report is communicated to the parents.
- Reporting at the end of each term should take the form of a separate anecdotal report which is inserted into the report card. Marks may be placed on the actual report, but should be qualified with a comment to see the attached document.
- A new I.E.P. needs to be written only if the child has achieved all the goals and objectives set out for him/her OR if the goals, objectives, and strategies are not meeting his/her needs.

- In specific situations, the special education teacher may call upon an outside consultant to offer suggestions about a child. This course of action requires special funding and must therefore first be cleared with the principal.

Student Accident Insurance

Each year the Board buys a minimum blanket policy which provides accident insurance for all the students during the time that they are at school and at any school-related activity. Additional insurance is available but would have to be supplemented by individual families. Information regarding this matter is made available to parents every year in September. Please read carefully to ensure that you have the coverage that you wish to have for your children.

Student Supplies

Parents are asked to supply their children with the following items:

Grades K-3: pencil crayons

pencil case

sturdy book bag/case

indoor shoes*

Phys. Ed. Uniform (Grades 1-3)

Grades 4-6: School T-shirt*

pens (blue or black ink)

red pen

erasers

book bag/case

pencil crayons

pencil case

recorder for Grade 5 (to be purchased through the school)

calculator (basic functions only)

indoor shoes*

Phys. Ed. Uniform

Grades 7-8: 30-cm ruler (including millimetre divisions)

math set (with a good quality compass)

calculator

gym clothes (school shirt & shorts)
pencil crayons
pens (blue or black ink)
red pen
erasers
pencil case
indoor shoes*
Phys. Ed. Uniform

* Cross-reference Dress code

Agendas have been provided free of charge over the last several years. We no longer enjoy that privilege, but will continue to provide them to students as it is a very useful training tool.

Order forms for any required purchases will be made available early in the school year. Any charges for deliberate damage to school books/equipment will show up there as well.

Trips and Outings

1. Class Trips

Every grade makes **at least** one class trip per year in connection with its program of study. All class trips are paid for out of the Student Fund. Parents are kept informed about class trips by means of the **Chronicle**. Students are asked to bring a “loonie” when they go on a class trip to help offset the cost of transportation.

2. School Trips

Every June, day-long school trips are arranged for all the grades. School trips are primarily intended to be “just for fun”. Grade Eight students do not participate in the regular school trips because a special camping trip to Ottawa is planned for them each year during the last week of classes in June. The costs for school trips is partially covered by a fee - currently \$6.00 per child, with a maximum of \$18.00 per family. The student fund and Ladies’ Auxiliary subsidize these trips.

Volunteers

Many activities and programs at school would not function well if we did not have willing volunteers who help us in so many respects: library, marking assistance, copying, making visual aids, assistance for field events and trips, etc.

The Board of the PTA finds a classroom helper for each teacher to provide assistance with non-teaching tasks and in finding volunteers for other activities. Volunteers receive a set of guidelines which help maintain uniformity between what volunteers do and the standards and policies of the school.