# ST. MARY
## CATHOLIC SCHOOL

**20 Portugal Square  Toronto, Ontario  M6J 3P2**

School Telephone:
**416-393-5205**

**SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2026**

## WELCOME BACK!

Welcome to the 2026 - 2027 School Year!
I hope you had a wonderful, restful, and memorable summer!
Looking forward to a great year!

A. Cianchetti
Principal

## PRAYER TO BEGIN THE SCHOOL YEAR

Almighty and ever-loving God,
we give you thanks for the blessings of our Families, where the seed of faith is planted for the Body of Christ, the Church, where faith is celebrated;
and for our Schools, where faith is nurtured.

Lord, we believe that Catholic Education is at its best
when Families, Parishes and Schools play, pray and work together
to spread the Good News to all.
Help us to imitate the unity of the Trinity
as we continue to grow in our faith and love towards you,
and to one another.

Through the guidance of the Holy Family,
the model of all Christian families,
and the intercession of all the Saints,
may our Families, Parishes and Schools
remain places where the Gospel is shared
with joy, courage and love.

We pray through Christ our Lord, Amen

## YEAR ONE OF THE NEW PASTORAL PLAN

TCDSB introduced a new three-year pastoral plan:
In God's Image: Growing in Knowledge, with Justice and Hope.
The 2024 – 2025 school year emphasis will be "Growing in Knowledge".
The 2025 – 2026 school year emphasis will be "Growing in Knowledge with Justice".
**The 2026 – 2027 school year emphasis will be "Growing in Knowledge with Justice and hope".**

## OCTOBER VIRTUE OF THE MONTH: GRATITUDE

We have much for which to be thankful at St. Mary Catholic School. The virtue of gratitude is the channel through which we become aware of the sacred, and the many blessings of our lives.

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|---|
| A. Cianchetti |
| PRINCIPAL |
| Flora Cifelli 416-222-8282 x 5371 |
| SUPERINTENDENT |
| |
| TRUSTEE |
| St. Mary's Parish |
| 588 Adelaide St. W. 416-703-2326 |
| PARISH |
| |
| CSPC CHAIR |
| www.tcdsb.org/cpic |
| CPIC (PARENT ENGAGEMENT - TCDSB) |
| www.tcdsb.org/oapce-toronto |
| OAPCE TORONTO (PROVINCIAL VOICE FOR PARENTS) |
| 135 |
| ENROLLMENT |
| 8:30 am – 3:00 pm |
| HOURS OF OPERATION |
| 11:15 – 12:15 |
| LUNCH HOUR |

### NEW REGISTRANTS WELCOME

Apply online: **soar.tcdsb.org**
or the
**TCDSB Admissions Department**
at 416-222-8282, ext. 2383.

For general information about the Toronto Catholic District School Board, please visit the website at **www.tcdsb.org**

Stay in touch with the latest news throughout the school year:
Follow **@TCDSB** on Twitter.

During the month, students are encouraged to say, “thank you” and show appreciation for those around them.

Gratitude allows us to appreciate and accept our lives and to accept and be grateful for what we have rather than wanting more. It allows us the opportunity to reflect on the many blessings in our lives.

At this time, we would like to extend a Happy Thanksgiving to everyone.

## SCHOOL STAFF

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mr. N. Ferreira | ELP/1 | Mr. J. Sala | Spec Ed. |
| Ms. M. Uncao | ELP/1 DECE | Ms. C. Veneracion | Empower/Special Ed. AM<br>ELL/ESL PM |
| Mr. Farley | Grade 1/2 | Mr. T. Di Marco | Core French |
| Ms. S. Kostiak | Grade 2/3 | Ms. Mironenko | Phys. Ed. |
| Mr. B. Palic | Grade 4/5 | Ms. S. Power | Vocal Music – ELP to Grade 6 |
| Mr. M. Terreri | Grade 6/7 | Ms. S. Power | Instrumental Music |
| Mr. D. Lopes | Grade 7/8 | Ms. M. Pimentel | Education Assistant |
| Ms. G. De Melo | Spec Ed (LI) | Ms. C. Rao | Education Assistant |
| Ms. R. Mirhassani-Vahed | Secretary | Ms. J. Miles | Library Technician |
| Mr. Y. Chowdhury | Head Caretaker | | |
| Mr. Wes Krygier | Evening Caretaker | | |

Please Note: Due to fluctuating enrolment, class assignments and teacher placements may change throughout the month of September, school re-organization may be a possibility.

## SAFE ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

If your child is unable to attend school, the parent/guardian is asked to report your child’s absence using our Safe Arrival System. You can either download the Safe Arrival App, use the Safe Arrival website (https://go.schoolmessenger.ca) or call the toll-free number 1-(833)-251-3286.

In the event that your child needs to leave the school before the regular dismissal time, please provide a signed and dated note to the classroom teacher who will then send it to the office. We ask that you please not request to pick up your child after 2:15pm. The office is very busy during the last hour of school and cannot accommodate those requests.

All students are expected to leave the school yard upon dismissal at 3:00 pm and go directly home.

Please take a few minutes to review basic safety rules with your child. This will reinforce the lessons taught by teachers during the school year.

## SCHOOL HOURS



| | |
|---|---|
| 8:30 am | Morning bell |
| 10:12 am to 10:27 am | Morning recess |
| 11:15 am to 12:15 pm | Lunch |
| 1:40 pm to 1:55 pm | Afternoon recess |
| 3:00 pm | Dismissal |

## RESPECT

Parents, please remember to model respectful behaviour and language in the school yard/school property. If there is an issue/concern, please come to the office to address it in a respectful manner.

## AGENDAS HAVE ARRIVED

Agenda books have arrived and have been distributed to students. The school is paying for the agendas for each student.

## SCHOOL SAFETY

Our safety procedures remain the same. All pick up and drop off will happen in the appropriate school yards.

- Students in Grades 1 through 8 will enter through the Gates/Pathways;
- Students in Grades 1 to 8 will be dismissed through their assigned doors;
- ELP (JK/SK) will enter and be dismissed through the outside doors (in the School Yard) where the kindergarten play structure is located.

**Students will not be allowed in the yard until 8:25am. Students who are left prior to 8:25 or after 3:00 will NOT be supervised and are their parents'/caregivers' responsibility. Parents are reminded to make arrangements for punctual drop off and pick up of their child(ren).**

During inclement weather, students can enter through the gym doors no earlier than 8:25 am., and they will then proceed directly to their classrooms once the school bell rings. Please do not come through the front doors of the school.

For the safety of all the students, parents are reminded to drop off their children at the school yard and not follow them into the school yard.

## PARKING

**The parking lot is for school staff only**. Please do not use the parking lot to drop off or pick up children. It causes much congestion and is very unsafe for students. Parking enforcement will be tagging vehicles in the school parking lot.

## BIRTHDAYS AND OTHER CELEBRATIONS



Due to increasing allergies to nuts, peanuts, and/or eggs, etc., we will not celebrate birthdays, Halloween and special occasions with **edible treats**. This includes Halloween candy. The risks associated with sharing food far outweigh the benefits. We cannot guarantee that the products are safe for all our students and do not wish to exclude any child from celebrations. Should you elect to send in treats, they will not be distributed and will be sent back home. In lieu of edible treats, you are welcome to donate a book to the school or classroom library.

## APPROPRIATE DRESS CODE POLICY

St. Mary Catholic School continues to follow appropriate navy and white dress code. The Dress Code consists of any combination of navy blue and white garments:

Plain **white** or **navy-blue** top – no Graphics, no stripes, no polka dots
Plain **navy-blue** bottoms – no denim and **no white** bottoms

The responsibility for meeting the expectations of the Local Dress Code is primarily that of the parents/guardians of the students. The success of the dress code depends on full participation from all our student body. Should students continue to come to school in clothes other than appropriate dress code, progressive discipline will apply.

Please ensure that students leave a pair of indoor shoes at school as the weather gets cooler. Students' footwear should be appropriate for engaging in all school activities, as such, flip flops, crocs and open sandals are not recommended. In addition, only non-marking running shoes should be worn during gym time. Please also ensure that students have extra clothes/socks in case of emergency.

## LUNCH – BEGINS AT 11:15 AND ENDS AT 12:15

St. Mary is an allergy aware school. Due to increasing allergies and anaphylaxis, we encourage nut free lunches and snacks. Though we cannot guarantee a nut-free environment, we will make every effort to create a safe place for all our students. Some of our students have severe peanut and nut allergies. Please do not pack your child's lunch or snack with any peanut or nut related items. (Nutella and peanut butter sandwiches are not permissible.)

**In addition, we encourage parents to pack healthy lunches, inclusive of all the food groups in reusable containers.**

Please ensure your child has a lunch and snacks packed in their bag before leaving home. The school will not accept Ubber Eats or any other kind of food delivery service to bring lunch/food for your child(ren). Parents/caregivers are welcome to drop off lunches at the front entrance on the counter by the stairs for their child(ren). Labels are provided for you to put your child's name on the lunch so that they know which lunch is theirs. Please do not bring the food to the main office.

Students are not allowed to leave school premises during the lunch period. If you give permission for your child to leave the school during lunch, you will be required to physically come into the school to sign them out at 11:15 and drop them off at the end of the lunch period at 12:15. Notes and/or email or phone requests cannot be accommodated.

## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION

Please be advised that as soon as information becomes available from the church regarding the Sacraments, we will inform the parent community.

## SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR

A copy of the 2026-2027 school year calendar was included in the information packages sent home this week, but you can also access the school year calendar, including PA days and exam dates, at:
https://www.tcdsb.org/page/school-year-calendar

## CURRICULUM NIGHT

Information will follow regarding format of delivery. The tentative date is October 8, 2026, starting at 5:00 pm.

## CSPC

AGM & Elections will be held at the school on September 29, 2026, from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

## DISCLAIMER

The school will send home information from nonprofit organizations from time to time. Please exercise caution any time you allow your child to participate in or enroll your child in an outside organization's event after school hours.

The school and the TCDSB are not liable for the quality of service these organizations provide or for the safety of the participants. We forward this information to keep our parent community informed of the wide variety of opportunities available in our local community.

## FIRE DRILLS/LOCKDOWN

During the course of the year, we will be practicing fire drills and lockdown drills. In total we will have 6 fire drills and 3 lockdowns/hold and secure drills. Teachers will review and practice the protocol to be practiced for each drill.

## HALLOWEEN – DANCE-A-THON

All students are invited to participate in Halloween festivities by coming to school in costume on Friday, October 30, 2026. Please do not send children with weapons as part of their costume. More information regarding our Halloween Dance-A-Thon will follow in a separate email.

As Halloween approaches, we would like to remind you of our policy around distribution of treats and celebrations.

We have several students with allergies, who cannot participate in the consumption of edible treats. The risks associated with sharing treats are too severe. We have once again asked parents to not bring in any cakes, cupcakes, ice cream, etc., so as not to exclude anyone from celebrating. There will be times during the year, when as a school community, we will celebrate special occasions with treats.



In addition, please do not send loot bags for Halloween, Valentine's Day, birthdays, Christmas. After much consultation in the past with our CSPC and teaching staff, this too has become somewhat excessive, adds extra pressure to parents and students, takes time, and is costly. Many times, the loot bags end up in the trash and this does not hold well with our commitment to the environment.

If you feel compelled to give at these special times during the year, we ask that you make a donation, however small, in the way of a book or monetary contribution for a larger classroom purchase to be determined by the teacher/school.

Please be reminded:

- **Any treats, loot bags, candy, lollipops will be sent back home with the child and not distributed**.
- Cards are a great way for children to demonstrate their good wishes. Please be sure there are no treats attached to the card and remember to include everyone in the class.

## KIDS AND FLU

The flu germs spread when people cough, sneeze or talk. The flu germs can also live on surfaces like toys, countertops, and door handles for up to eight hours.

Students can pass the flu germs to each other, to school staff and to family members before they show symptoms. Children under five, seniors and people in poor health are at greater risk of complications from flu.

Vaccination is the best protection against flu. It takes 2 weeks for the vaccine to be fully effective so get it early.

Tips on staying healthy this flu Season:

1. Get your flu shot early
2. Wash your hands often
3. Avoid touching face and eyes
4. Cover your cough or sneeze
5. Do not share drinking cups and utensils
6. Disinfect common surfaces like door handles, hand railings, keyboards, cell phones and tablets.

For more information, visit **toronto.ca/health/flu**

**ANNUAL REORGANIZATION UPDATE**

This is a copy of the letter sent out by the Communications department. I am including it here in case it was not received by all families:

Dear Toronto Catholic Community:

As we embark on the 2026-2027 academic year, I trust that your children have started their educational journey with renewed excitement. Witnessing the warm reunions of staff and students throughout Toronto's vibrant and varied communities is a truly enriching experience for me.

**Annual Reorganization Update**

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you about the adjustments that might take place in some schools and classrooms this year.

- **Why Reorganization Occurs**: Annually, a reorganization of staff is conducted after confirming student enrolments at each school. Typically, enrolment stabilizes within the first few weeks, allowing us to align staffing effectively with the student numbers in each elementary school.
- **Implementation Timeline**: This necessary yearly reorganization in our elementary schools might require some time to fully implement. Over the next few weeks, adjustments may be observed in certain schools and classrooms.

**Potential Adjustments**

To manage local fluctuations in student numbers effectively, it may be necessary to reassign students and staff. Changes may include:

- Modifications to teacher assignments.
- Adjustments to class configurations.

We are thankful for the diligent efforts of our Principals in managing these adjustments and for the invaluable cooperation and understanding from our families during this process.

**Our Commitment During Changes**

We acknowledge that such changes can be challenging, but they are essential to provide equitable support to all our students.

- **Ensuring Stability**: Rest assured, any required reorganization will be conducted with careful consideration for the well-being of our students and staff, reinforcing our dedication to ensuring stability throughout the school year.

Thank you for your understanding and patience as we move forward together.

**2026 – 2027**
**School Year**
**"Growing in Knowledge with Justice and Hope"**