

HOLY CROSS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Student Handbook

2026-2027



Our school purpose

At Holy Cross School, our students are preparing for a changing world by learning to value, learning to follow Jesus, and learning how to learn. We make a difference for life.

A guide to learning, belonging, safety, respect, faith, and student life at Holy Cross.

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Welcome to Holy Cross

This handbook explains the expectations and routines that help Holy Cross stay safe, caring, faith-filled, and focused on learning. It is written for students, with families and staff working together to help every student succeed.

A simple way to think about our expectations

At Holy Cross, rules are not just about what we cannot do. They help us protect dignity, support learning, build trust, care for one another, and make sure every student is known, loved, and called to grow.

What is in this handbook?

- Our Catholic identity and what it means to belong at Holy Cross
- Coyote Call - Called By God (Student Code of Conduct)
- Learning, assessment, honest work, and asking for help
- Attendance and being ready to learn
- Behaviour, racism, discipline, and repairing harm
- Dress expectations
- Personal devices and social media: Away for the Day
- Emergency drills, weather, recess, lunch, and playground safety
- Field trips and shared spaces
- Student supports, inclusion, Indigenous learning, and student leadership

If you are ever unsure about an expectation, ask your teacher, another trusted staff member, or the office. Asking for help is a responsible choice.

1. Our Catholic Identity and Belonging

Holy Cross is a Catholic school. We place Christ at the centre of our community and try to show faith, hope, charity, humility, forgiveness, and love in the way we learn and treat one another.

We are each called by God

Every person has dignity and value. This means every student deserves to feel safe, respected, included, and cared for. It also means each of us has a responsibility to help build a school where others can learn and belong.

Faith in our daily school life

- Participate respectfully in prayer, liturgies, Mass, Religion learning, and faith celebrations.
- Treat sacred spaces, prayer tables, Bibles, crosses, crucifixes, and faith materials with care.
- Show kindness, forgiveness, compassion, and service in ordinary moments.
- Respect that people may be learning, praying, or participating in ways that are new to you.

Dignity comes first

Even when someone makes a mistake, they still deserve dignity. At Holy Cross, correction should help students learn, repair harm, and return successfully to the community.

2. Coyote Call - Called By God (Student Code of Conduct)

Our school-wide [Called By God - Coyote Call](#) expectations give students and adults common language for respectful behaviour. Expectations apply throughout the school, including classrooms, hallways, washrooms, entrances, assemblies, playgrounds, and other shared spaces.

Our Commitment to One Another

At Holy Cross Elementary School, we believe that every person is created in God's image and deserves to be treated with dignity, kindness, and respect. Guided by the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Lakeland Catholic Charter of Christ-Centered Excellence, we strive to create a safe, caring, inclusive, and faith-filled school community where everyone can learn, belong, and grow. **We are all called by God to reflect Christ's love through our words, choices, and actions.** As Holy Cross Coyotes, we demonstrate courage by doing what is right, caring for others, taking responsibility for our actions, and learning from our mistakes.

Our Coyote Call: Called By God

Our four school-wide expectations guide how we treat ourselves, others, and our environment.

1. We Are Called to LEARN

We approach each day with curiosity, honesty, and a willingness to grow.

- Come to school prepared, ready to participate, and willing to try our best.
- Follow classroom routines and the reasonable directions of school staff.

- Respect the learning of others through our words and actions.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in our schoolwork.
- Ask for help, accept feedback, and learn from our mistakes.

2. We Are Called to BELONG

We recognize that every person is a valued member of our school community.

- Treat everyone with kindness, dignity, compassion, and respect.
- Include others and celebrate differences in culture, identity, abilities, beliefs, and experiences.
- Use respectful language and resolve disagreements peacefully.
- Respect personal boundaries, privacy, and the safety of others.
- Refuse to participate in bullying, harassment, racism, discrimination, intimidation, or hurtful behaviour.
- Seek help from a trusted adult when someone is being harmed or feels unsafe.

3. We Are Called to LEAD

We show courage and responsibility by making choices that contribute to a safe and positive school.

- Take responsibility for our behaviour and understand how our choices affect others.
- Follow school rules and safety expectations in classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, buses, field trips, and school activities.
- Care for school property, technology, learning materials, and shared spaces.
- Use technology responsibly and follow our school's *Away for the Day* expectations for personal devices.
- Demonstrate leadership by setting a positive example and making safe, responsible choices.

4. We Are Called to SERVE

We follow the example of Jesus by showing love through our actions.

- Treat others as Jesus would, with compassion, mercy, patience, and kindness.
- Offer help, encouragement, and friendship to those around us.
- Show empathy and seek to understand the feelings and experiences of others.
- Practise forgiveness, take responsibility when we cause harm, and work to make things right.
- Care for God's creation and contribute positively to our school and wider community.

Behaviours That Do Not Reflect Our Code

All students have the right to learn and feel safe. Behaviour that threatens the dignity, safety, or well-being of others is not acceptable at Holy Cross.

This includes harassment, racism, discrimination, physical aggression, threats, intimidation, deliberate damage to property, inappropriate language directed at others, misuse of technology, and repeated behaviour that interferes with learning or safety.

These expectations apply throughout the school day, during school-sponsored activities, and in school-related digital interactions.

When We Make Mistakes: Learning, Accountability, and Restoring Relationships

At Holy Cross, we recognize that children are growing and learning. Mistakes provide opportunities to develop responsibility, strengthen relationships, and make better choices.

Our approach to student behaviour is progressive, restorative, and grounded in dignity. When expectations are not met, staff will consider the student's developmental needs, individual circumstances, the seriousness of the behaviour, and the safety and well-being of everyone involved.

Responses may include:

- Reteaching expectations, reminders, and supportive redirection.
- Opportunities for reflection, restorative conversations, and repairing harm.
- Additional supports, adjustments, or individualized behaviour plans.
- Communication and collaboration with parents or guardians.
- Administrative intervention and disciplinary consequences, including things such as suspension or expulsion when warranted.

Serious incidents involving violence, threats, racism, or other harmful behaviour will be addressed promptly and appropriately, consistent with Lakeland Catholic School Division procedures.

Accountability and compassion go hand in hand. When harm occurs, our goal is to protect those affected, help students understand the impact of their actions, support meaningful change, and restore relationships when appropriate and safe. A student's mistakes do not define who they are. Every child remains a valued member of our Catholic school community.

Our Shared Responsibility

Creating a safe and caring school is everyone's responsibility. Students, staff, and families work together to uphold our expectations, celebrate positive choices, and support students when challenges arise.

Students are encouraged to speak with a trusted adult whenever they need support or have concerns about their safety, learning, relationships, or well-being. Asking for help is an act of courage.

Our Coyote Promise

As a Holy Cross Coyote, I will strive to:

Learn with curiosity, honesty, and perseverance.

Belong by treating everyone with dignity, kindness, and respect.

Lead through courageous, safe, and responsible choices.

Serve by showing compassion, forgiveness, and love to others.

We are courageous. We are Coyotes.

3. Learning at Holy Cross

Every instructional day matters. Students are expected to use learning time well, follow classroom routines, participate, practise, ask questions, and show what they know in different ways.

Learning goals and success criteria

Teachers will help students understand what they are learning and what successful work looks like. You may see learning goals or “I can” statements in your classroom. Use them to understand what you are working toward.

Assessment is part of learning

Assessment is not only tests or marks. Teachers may use conversations, observations, projects, presentations, performance tasks, quizzes, written work, portfolios, screeners, and other evidence to understand your learning. Feedback is meant to help you know what you are doing well and what to work on next.

Becoming an exam-ready learner

- Learn how to study and review.
- Read questions carefully.
- Use your time wisely.
- Explain and check your answers.
- Build stamina for longer tasks.
- Learn from mistakes and feedback.
- Reflect on how you prepared and what you can do differently next time.

Re-writes and reassessment

A re-write is not automatic. A teacher may offer a re-write or another chance to show learning when more learning has taken place. You may be asked to complete corrections, extra practice, re-teaching, a conference, missing prerequisite work, a reflection, or a study plan first.

Missing or incomplete work

Students are expected to complete required learning tasks and assessments. If work is missing, your teacher will first work with you to make a plan. If missing work becomes a pattern, your family and school support team may also become involved so that you can re-engage and show your learning.

Academic integrity

Do your own honest work

Submit work that is truly yours. Do not copy another student, plagiarize, use unauthorized resources, cheat during an assessment, submit work completed by someone else, or use artificial intelligence when it has not been approved by your teacher.

If you are unsure whether a tool, website, AI tool, or other support is allowed, ask before you use it.

4. Showing and Sharing Your Learning

Evidence of Learning

Evidence of Learning events are a chance for you to share your learning with your family. You should be ready to explain what you learned, how you know you were successful, what evidence shows your growth, and what you are working on next.

Report cards and progress

Your learning is communicated in several ways, including report cards, PowerSchool updates, Evidence of Learning portfolios, conferences, and conversations with your family. Report cards are shared in January and June.

Growth as a Learner

Learning habits are important and are reported separately from academic achievement. These habits can include:

- effort
- responsibility
- collaboration
- initiative
- organization
- participation
- perseverance
- respectful learning habits
- preparedness for assessments
- using feedback
- independence

Provincial Achievement Tests

Students who write Provincial Achievement Tests should approach them as one more opportunity to demonstrate learning. During testing times, everyone in the school helps by keeping hallways quiet, moving calmly, and avoiding unnecessary interruptions.

5. Attendance and Being Ready to Learn

Being at school regularly helps you learn, build routines, maintain friendships, and stay connected to your class. When you are absent, we notice because you are an important member of our school community.

- Arrive ready to learn and follow classroom start-of-day routines.
- If you miss school, work with your teacher to catch up on important learning and assessments.
- If attendance becomes a concern, the school will work with you and your family to understand what is happening and build a plan for stronger attendance.

Our approach to attendance

Attendance conversations are meant to communicate care, belonging, and partnership. The goal is to help students reconnect with school, not to shame families.

6. Behaviour, Safety, and Repairing Harm

Holy Cross uses a progressive and restorative approach to discipline. This means adults will respond to behaviour in ways that are fair, developmentally appropriate, and focused on learning, safety, responsibility, and repairing harm.

What may happen when expectations are not met

- A reminder or reteaching of the expectation.
- A private conversation or redirection.

- A restorative conversation about what happened, who was affected, and how to make things right.
- A change to a routine, privilege, location, or activity when needed for safety or learning.
- Family contact or a meeting.
- An office referral for serious, repeated, unsafe, or unresolved behaviour.
- A suspension or other significant response for serious incidents such as violence.

A mistake does not define you

You may still be asked to accept a consequence. You will also be given opportunities to learn, repair harm where appropriate, and return to the school community with dignity and clearer expectations.

Harmful behaviour

Everyone has the right to feel safe, seen, and treated with dignity. If you are being hurt, threatened, excluded, intimidated, or repeatedly mistreated, tell a trusted adult. If you see someone else being harmed, get help. Adults will respond and work to protect safety and belonging.

Racism

Racist words, “jokes,” messages, or actions are never acceptable at Holy Cross. Racism will be taken seriously and can result in significant consequences, including suspension or more serious measures depending on the situation and whether it is repeated. Students have a responsibility to act in a way that supports **a safe and caring environment that fosters and maintains respectful and responsible behaviours**. Follow-up will also include learning, reflection, and restorative work so harm can be named and repaired where possible.

In our Catholic school, every person is created by God and deserves to be treated with respect and kindness. Racist words, ‘jokes,’ messages, or actions are never okay here and will always have serious consequences, including suspension or more, depending on what happened and if it is repeated. When racism occurs, we respond firmly and also help students learn: there will be follow-up that includes prayer, reflection, and learning so that harm can be named, hearts can begin to heal, and we can move forward in greater love and respect for one another.

At Lakeland Catholic, every member of our school community has a role in preventing violence. Students are expected to refrain from behaviours that cause or threaten harm and to respond to safety concerns in safe and appropriate ways: by telling a trusted adult, seeking help, following school safety procedures, and caring for one another. Students are never expected to put themselves at risk by physically intervening in a violent situation.

Suspension and returning to school

When a serious incident happens, school administration will gather information and give the student an opportunity to explain what happened before making a decision. If a suspension occurs, the student and family will be told the reason and length. Before the student returns, a reintegration meeting will be held to review expectations, identify supports, and plan for a successful return.

7. Student Dress Expectations

Clothing should support a safe, respectful, and focused learning environment. Students should be able to participate safely in recess, Physical Education, classroom learning, assemblies, liturgies, and faith activities.

General expectations

- Wear clean, school-appropriate clothing.
- Choose clothing that reflects respect for self and others and supports our Catholic values.
- Bring safe indoor footwear and weather-appropriate outdoor clothing.
- Hats and hoods are not worn inside unless for religious, cultural, medical, or an approved special purpose.

Not permitted

- Clothing with offensive, violent, sexual, discriminatory, or inappropriate language or images.
- Crop tops, low-cut tops, see-through clothing, or clothing that exposes the midriff.
- Extremely short shorts or skirts.
- Costumes unless it is an approved spirit or theme day.
- Flip-flops or other unsafe footwear when safety is a concern.
- Other items determined by administration to be inappropriate for the school setting.

If there is a concern, an adult will speak with you privately and respectfully and help find a practical solution.

8. Personal Devices and Social Media: Away for the Day

Away for the day

Personal devices must be silent or powered off, stored out of sight, and kept in your locker or another approved location for the entire school day. The goal is learning, safety, privacy, respect, and being fully present to one another.

What counts as a personal communication device?

- cell phones and smartphones
- smart watches
- tablets and personal laptops
- wireless earbuds or headphones
- gaming devices
- other personal electronic devices that can communicate, access the internet, message, take photos, record video, or record audio

During the school day

Students may not use personal devices during instructional time, recess, lunch, transitions, assemblies, field trips, or school events unless the principal or designate has approved an exception. If you need to contact home, speak with your teacher or the front office.

Social media, privacy, and recording

- Do not access social media during school hours, on school devices, or through school networks unless specifically approved.
- Do not take photos, videos, or audio recordings of students, staff, or visitors without explicit staff permission.
- Never use a device in a way that violates another person's privacy, dignity, or safety.
- Personal devices are not permitted in washrooms, change rooms, private counselling spaces, or similar areas where privacy is expected.

If the rule is not followed

1. First instance: the device is turned over to the principal or vice-principal, stored safely in the office, and returned to the student at the end of the day. A parent or guardian is contacted.
2. Second instance: the device is stored in the office and returned only to a parent or guardian.
3. Repeated instances: further steps may include a meeting, a written device plan, loss of the privilege to bring a device to school, or other consequences connected to the School Code of Conduct.

Approved exceptions

Exceptions may be approved for medical or health needs, safety plans, documented learning needs or accommodations, a specific educational purpose, or another exceptional circumstance. Families should contact the principal to request an exception.

Responsibility for devices

Students who bring personal devices to school do so at their own risk. The school and Division are not responsible for loss, damage, repair, replacement, or security of personal devices.

9. Emergency Drills, Safety, and Weather

Holy Cross practises emergency procedures so everyone knows what to do. Drills may include fire drills, lockdowns, hold and secure, and shelter in place.

- Stay calm and listen carefully.
- Follow staff directions right away.
- Move quietly and safely.
- Do not use a personal device unless staff or administration tells you it is allowed.
- After a drill or emergency, tell an adult if you have a safety concern or question.

Inclement weather

Administration may move recess indoors or modify outdoor activities when weather conditions create a safety concern. Students should come to school with clothing suitable for the weather. During indoor recess, follow calm activity and supervision expectations.

10. Lunch, Recess, Playground, and Field Trips

Lunch

- Use calm routines while eating.
- Keep your eating area clean.
- Eat safely and follow allergy-related directions.
- Use respectful language and behaviour.
- Ask an adult for help if there is a problem.

Recess and playground

- Play safely and include others.
- Use playground equipment for its intended purpose.
- Follow boundaries and adult directions.
- Solve small conflicts respectfully and ask an adult for help when needed.
- Report injuries, unsafe behaviour, repeated conflict, or anything that makes you feel unsafe.
- Follow specific rules for soccer and other high-energy games.

Field trips

Field trips are extensions of school learning. The same expectations for safety, respect, behaviour, personal devices, and following adult directions apply on field trips and school events. Students must have required parent or guardian consent and follow any trip-specific safety expectations.

11. Support, Inclusion, and Asking for Help

Students learn in different ways and may need different kinds of support. Some students use accommodations, Individualized Program Plans, behaviour or safety plans, English language supports, assistive technology, or other learning supports. These are meant to provide meaningful access, belonging, independence, growth, and participation.

What students can do

- Tell your teacher when something is too difficult, confusing, or not working.
- Use approved accommodations and supports responsibly.
- Participate in goal setting and reflect on your progress when asked.
- Respect that another student may receive different support than you.
- Ask for a trusted adult if you are worried about learning, safety, friendships, behaviour, or wellness.

Fair does not always mean identical

Different students may need different tools, supports, spaces, or amounts of time in order to learn successfully. Respect the privacy and dignity of other students.

12. Indigenous Learning and Respectful Participation

Holy Cross is committed to learning about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit histories, cultures, perspectives, and traditions with openness, humility, and respect. This is part of our Catholic commitment to human dignity, reconciliation, solidarity, and right relationships.

Smudging

Smudging is a sacred Indigenous cultural and spiritual practice that may involve traditional medicines such as sage, sweetgrass, cedar, or other medicines. Participation is voluntary. Students may respectfully observe if they do not wish to participate.

- If something is unfamiliar, respond with curiosity rather than disrespect.
- Do not make rude comments about sacred medicines, smoke, prayer, ceremony, or cultural practices.
- If smoke causes discomfort, tell an adult respectfully and ask for space.
- You can remain committed to your Catholic faith while respectfully learning about Indigenous traditions and reconciliation.

13. Library, Gym, Shared Spaces, and Student Leadership

Library

- Use the library as a calm, respectful learning space.
- Care for books and materials.
- Follow sign-out procedures.
- Return materials on time.
- Tell an adult if a book is lost or damaged.

Gym

- Use equipment only for its intended purpose.
- Wear safe footwear.
- Follow teacher and supervisor directions.
- Return equipment neatly after use.
- Report damaged equipment or safety concerns.

Student leadership

Holy Cross values student voice and leadership. Leadership can include service, faith, school spirit, assemblies, announcements, stewardship, and caring for the school community. Leadership opportunities will come throughout the year and include: Snow shovel club, birthday card club, lunchtime supervisor, IGNITE team and more! You are encouraged to apply.

14. When You Need Help

You do not have to solve every problem on your own. Choose the adult who is closest to the situation or who you trust, and tell them what is happening.

If you need help with...	A good first step is...
Learning or missing work	Talk to your teacher.
Friendship conflict or playground concerns	Talk to the supervising adult or your teacher.
Racism, threats, or feeling unsafe	Tell a trusted adult immediately.
A personal device question	Ask your teacher, principal, or vice-principal before using the device.
Health, medical, or accommodation needs	Tell your teacher or the office.
Something you are worried about	Tell any trusted staff member. We will help you find the right support.

15. A Holy Cross Student Commitment

As a student at Holy Cross, I can help make our school a place where everyone is known, loved, supported, and called to grow. I will try to:

- place kindness, dignity, and respect at the centre of my actions;
- come ready to learn and use learning time well;
- be honest in my work and ask before using supports I am unsure about;
- keep personal devices away for the day;
- follow safety directions and care for our school;
- include others and speak up when someone is being harmed;
- take responsibility when I make a mistake;
- repair harm where I can and try again;
- respect different cultures, needs, experiences, and ways of learning;
- ask for help when I need it.

Our shared goal

We want Holy Cross to be a caring Catholic school where students can learn, belong, grow in faith, feel safe, and become responsible members of the community.

This student handbook is based on the Holy Cross Staff Handbook and school-level procedures for 2026-2027. It supports, but does not replace, official Lakeland Catholic School Division Administrative Procedures.