St. Stephen's School – "Week at a Glance"

Monday, October 5th– Friday, October 9th, 2026

Parent/Guardian Weekly Memo #5 2026-2027

At St. Stephen Catholic School, we are committed to nurturing the spiritual, intellectual, and moral growth of every child. Rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ and guided by the values of the Catholic faith, we strive to create a supportive and inclusive community where students are inspired to achieve excellence, develop strong character, and serve others with compassion and integrity. Through faith-filled education, we prepare our students to become lifelong learners, responsible citizens, and faithful disciples of Christ.

As we move through another busy, exciting season at St. Stephen, I want to thank you for your continued partnership and support. Your involvement helps make our school community a positive and welcoming place for all students.

Please take a few moments to review our upcoming important events, including our Catholic School Council Meeting this Wednesday at 4:15 p.m. We encourage all parents and guardians to attend and be involved in the many wonderful initiatives taking place at our school.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Terry Fox Run, and to Mrs. Hiff for organizing it. We are proud to share that our entire school participated in this worthy cause, demonstrating great generosity, compassion, and school spirit while supporting cancer research and continuing Terry Fox's remarkable legacy.

You may have noticed several recent improvements around our school. We are pleased that our school sign has finally been replaced, the playground mulch has been topped up, and one of our basketball nets has been straightened and secured with a new cement base. We are also grateful to the St. Stephen parish community, who have committed to repairing the second basketball net. A special thank you goes to Mrs. Schaus for her efforts in helping coordinate these improvements.

We were also fortunate to participate in this year's Caledonia Fair Cheer Competition. Our students represented St. Stephen with enthusiasm, teamwork, and school pride. Thank you to Mrs. Peterson, Ms. Jenny, Mr. Mancini, and Mrs. Meyer for organizing this opportunity, leading our cheer team, and assisting with the delivery of our students' artwork to the fair. Their dedication helped create a memorable experience for our students. Also, thank you to Mrs. Meadows for organizing our school skating sessions.

Thank you as well for continuing to communicate proactively with the school through student agendas, email, phone calls, and D2L. Strong communication between home and school plays an important role in supporting student success and well-being.

One of our key school improvements goals this year is to continue reducing student absenteeism. As a school community, we are working toward maintaining an absenteeism rate below 10%. Regular attendance helps students build strong learning habits, remain connected to their classmates, and achieve their full potential.

We are also pleased to share that St. Stephen has been selected by the Board to receive new security cameras, which will further enhance the safety and security of our school. The preliminary utility locates are scheduled to take place on Friday, October 16, as part of the preparation process.

As always, if you have any concerns, questions, or compliments, please do not hesitate to contact me. I value your feedback and will do my best to respond within 24 hours.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Stephen Catholic Elementary School. Together, we continue to build a faith-filled community where we strive to Love, Lead, and Learn Like Jesus.

God bless,

Mr. Docherty

Monday, October 5th, 2026	Day 5	• Trip-Grades 4's (Taquanyah) • World Teacher's Day
Tuesday, October 6th, 2026	PA Day	• **No School for students**
Wednesday, October 7th, 2026	Day 1	• Skating grades K-3 from 11:30-12:30; see School Cash Online • Parent Council Meeting @ 4:15 pm-5:15 pm • Special Education Engagement Evening @ 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Location: St. Patrick School Gymnasium, 320 Fairview Drive, Brantford
Thursday, October 8th, 2026	Day 2	• **Snack Day** • Skating grades 4-8 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
Friday, October 9th, 2026	Day 3	• **Name that Song, Attendance Award and Random Acts of Kindness Draw @ 2:30 pm** • **Pizza Day (Oct. 16th)**

Upcoming Important Dates/Events:

October 10th- WHO World Mental Health Day
October 12th- Statutory Holiday- Happy Thanksgiving
October 14th- Picture Day
October 15th- Steve away at AAC
October 19th- Bus Driver Appreciation Day
October 28th- National First Responders Day
October 29th- Dress Purple
October 31st- Halloween
November 4th- Skating grades K-3 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
November 5th- Skating grades 4-8 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
November 12th- Father class visits in the library
November 13th- Rocks and Rings (all day)
November 17th- Retake Picture Day
November 23rd- 27th- Book Fair
December 2nd- Skating grades K-3 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
December 3rd- Skating grades 4-8 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
January 6th- Skating grades K-3 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
January 7th- 4-8- Skating
January 28th- Father visits meeting in the library
February 3rd- Skating grades K-3 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
February 4th- Skating grades 4-8 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
February 18th- Father visits; meeting in the library
March 3rd- Skating grades K-3 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
March 4th- Skating grades 4-8 from 11:30-12:30- see School Cash Online
April 15th- Father visits; meeting in the library
May 13th- Father visits; meeting in the library

****FYI****

- **Medical Updates**
  - Children with medical conditions need to return their form from June so we can update their records. If you need a form, don't hesitate to contact the office.
- **School Cash Online**

- Permission forms for media release/pictures, concussion, STEM, parent information form, and DPA/community walks. Pizza days will start September 19th. **Please use Cash Online only.**
- **Mobile Devices Policy**
  In accordance with the Ministry of Education's guidelines, all personal devices must be **kept out of sight** during the school day.
    - Devices may be stored in backpacks or with the teacher.
    - Any communication during the day should go through the school office.
    - Repeated misuse of devices will result in progressive consequences, including parent pick-up. *Teachers may allow device use for specific classroom activities, but students are not required to bring devices, as the school provides adequate technology.*
- **Attendance Initiative**
    - As we begin a new school year, we are excited to share one of our key goals for student success: improving attendance across all grades. This year, we are continuing to strive for a 90**% average attendance rate** for our students. **As of last year, we were #1 in the board for most improved schools. Congratulations to you for helping St. Stephen's achieve this goal.**
    - We will be giving awards to the class with the best attendance at the end of each month.

Regular attendance is critical for academic success. Here are three important reasons why:

1. **Consistent Learning**: Students who attend school regularly are more likely to keep up with lessons, assignments, and classroom discussions.
2. **Stronger Connections**: Being present helps students build relationships with peers and staff, creating a sense of belonging and support.
3. **Positive Habits**: Good attendance fosters responsibility and routines that benefit students both in school and beyond.

We believe that our parent community is a vital partner in this effort. Together, we will work hard to continue to make St. Stephen's a place where students feel welcomed, engaged, and excited to learn every day.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At **BHNCDSB**, one of our greatest priorities is ensuring that all our students arrive safely at school each and every day.

To enhance our existing absence-checking procedure, we are introducing ***a new, more efficient*** student absence reporting system called **SafeArrival**. This new system will reduce the time it takes to verify student attendance, make it easy for you to report your child's absence and easy for staff to respond to unexplained student absences.

With **SafeArrival**, you are asked to report your child's absence in advance using any of these 3 convenient methods:

1. Using your mobile device:

    - Download and install the **SM Home app** from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store (or from the links at home.schoolmessenger.ca).
    - The first time you use the app, select **Sign Up** to create your account. Please note, the email account you use to sign up for SafeArrival must be on record with the school and associated with your child in PowerSchool. If you are unsure or need a change, please contact the school.
    - Select **Attendance** then **Report an Absence**. If you used the previous SMApp, you can simply use the same login credentials.

2. Use the SafeArrival website:

    - Go to https://home.schoolmessenger.ca.
    - The first time you use the website, select **Sign Up** to create your account. Please note, the email account you use to sign up for SafeArrival must be on record with the school and associated with your child in PowerSchool. If you are unsure or need a change, please contact the school.
    - Select **Attendance** then **Report an Absence**. If you used the previous go.schoolmessenger.com, you can simply use the same login credentials.

3. Call the toll-free number:

    - Call **1-844-445-4381** to report an absence using the automated phone system.

These options are available 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. Future absences can be reported at any time.

- **Board Spiritual Theme for 2026-2027**

  To honour and celebrate the ongoing Jubilee Year, the theme is an extension of our Pilgrims of Hope theme, "***Catholic Education: Becoming Artisans of PEACE,***" rooted in the Scripture, "***Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God***." (Matthew 5:9).

Secretary- Ms. Leedale
FDK- Mrs. Meyers and Mrs. Lynch
Grade 1/2- Mrs. Peterson
Grade 2/3- Mr. Mancini
Grade 4/5- Mrs. Bath
Grade 5/6- Mr. Rivas-Gonzalez
Grade 6/7- Mr. Bortolotto
Grade 7/8- Mrs. Foster
FSL- Ms. Litchy
SERT- Mrs. Hiff
CYW- Ms. Jenny
EA- Mrs. McEvoy
EA- Ms. Pearson
Librarian- Ms. Bayr
Custodian- Mr. Lewis
PREP- Ms. Lootsman
STEM- Mr. Senia
Lunch Supervisor- Mrs. McEwan

Bell Times

- **School Start: 8:50 am (Students will be supervised starting at 8:30 am outside)**
- **First Nutrition Break: 10:30 am-11:10 am**
- **Second Nutrition Break: 12:50 pm-1:30 pm**
- **School Dismissal: 3:10 pm**

Subject: Supporting Student Well-Being at Our School

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At St. Stephen, we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and caring learning environment where every student feels a sense of belonging and can thrive.

As part of our student support team, we are pleased to have a full-time Child and Youth Worker (CYW) on staff. CYWs are trained professionals who support students' social, emotional, behavioural, and mental well-being. They work collaboratively with students, families, educators, district staff and community partners to help students build resilience, strengthen relationships, develop coping skills, and successfully navigate challenges that may impact learning and well-being.

The support provided by our CYW reflects the Ontario Ministry of Education's commitment to student well-being and aligns with the evidence-based practices promoted through School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO). Through prevention, early intervention, and collaborative support, we strive to ensure that all students feel safe, connected, supported, and ready to learn.

Our Child and Youth Worker may support students by:

- **Building positive relationships and a sense of belonging**
- **Developing and bolstering mental health literacy and social-emotional learning skills through classroom engagement sessions (alongside the educator), small groups, or within the life space of the student**
- **Supporting emotional regulation and coping strategies**
- **Assisting students during times of transition or change**
- **Recognizing and responding to emerging mental health concerns (support and linkages)**
- **Connecting families with mental health and wellness resources, when appropriate, including Board or community regulated mental health professionals**
- **Collaborating with school staff to promote student success**

Please be advised that because CYWs are integrated members of our everyday school team, formal parental consent is not required for a CYW to interact with, support, or assist your child. Our school CYWs do not provide counselling nor replace the work of a regulated mental health professional.

Just as students interact naturally with principals, vice-principals, and teachers as part of the standard school day, they have access to CYW support whenever a need arises. While we always value open communication and will partner with families for long-term individualized support plans, immediate or day-to-day CYW guidance is provided as a standard school-wide resource to ensure all students thrive.

Families play a critical role in supporting student well-being, and we value our partnership with you. If you have questions about the support available through our Child and Youth Worker or believe your child may benefit from additional support, please contact the school office.

To access parent/caregiver resources to support mental health learning and well-being for every family, visit: By your side – Parents and caregivers - School Mental Health Ontario
Together, we can help every student be well, feel well, and do well.

Student Accident Insurance Form

Many families do not know that our school board does not cover accident costs!
If an accident happens, the board may be prevented from offering financial solutions to our families even if we wanted to. Student accident insurance, Insuremykids®, can mitigate your board's exposure and help you manage the loss for student injuries that occur on school property or during school activities, including extracurricular sports. Each year, many families are left financially unprotected when their children are injured at school, while participating in non-school activities or at home. If a student is injured, parent(s)/guardian(s) are responsible for any costs not covered by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) or their employer's health care plan. Please check with your provider regarding your coverage.
Most accident-related expenses are not fully covered under OHIP and some expenses like ambulance fees, casts, crutches, physiotherapy, and emergency dental care are usually not covered at all. This leaves you, the parent/guardian, financially responsible. To help protect your family, it is recommended that you consider obtaining student accident insurance. As a convenience to you, the Board has arranged to offer student accident insurance through insuremykids®. Participation is voluntary, but highly recommended, and the costs are to be paid by the parent/guardian. The program is available for students up to the age of 26.
Coverage is provided for a wide range of accidental expenses, including:

- **Dental Expenses - includes 10 years unlimited dental benefit coverage, future dental up to $1,650 per tooth, and injury-related orthodontia coverage up to $2,500 per accident.**
- **Total and Permanent Disability - up to $350,000.**
- **Loss of Limb/Loss of Sight, Hearing, or Speech.**
- **Accidental Death.**
- **Ambulance Fees.**
- **And much more.**

Insuremykids® Student Accident Insurance offers three plans with 24/7 coverage at affordable rates – their most affordable plan is $17 per year, and their most popular plan is the Platinum at $33 per year, which provides out-of-province emergency medical coverage and travel benefits. All annual plans provide 13 months of coverage from the date of purchase. Family rates are available for three or more children in the same family, even if attending different schools. You can also save time and premium with an optional 3-Year or 5-Year plan, available for online purchase only. If you wish to purchase coverage, please do so directly online at **www.insuremykids.com** or call **1-800-463-5437**. The insurance agreement is between You and the insurance underwriter, Old Republic Insurance Company of Canada. For more information, please visit **www.insuremykids.com**

BHNCDSB

Catholic Education: BECOMING ARTISANS of PEACE

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)

2026-27 Elementary School Year Calendar

SEPTEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
		1 P 2	2 P 3	BH 4
H 7	8 1	9 2	10 3	11 4
14 5	15 1	16 2	17 3	18 4
21 5	B 22 1	23 2	24 3	25 4
28 5	29 1	30 2		

OCTOBER

M	T	W	T	F
			1 3	2 4
5 5	P 6	7 1	8 2	9 3
H 12	13 4	14 5	15 1	16 2
19 3	20 4	21 5	22 1	23 2
26 3	B 27 4	28 5	29 1	30 2

NOVEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
2 3	3 4	4 5	5 1	6 2
9 3	10 4	11 5	12 1	13 2
16 3	IN 17 4	18 5	19 1	P 20
23 2	B 24 3	25 4	26 5	27 1
30 2				

DECEMBER

M	T	W	T	F
	1 3	2 4	3 5	4 1
7 2	8 3	9 4	10 5	11 1
14 2	B 15 3	16 4	17 5	18 1
BH 21	BH 22	BH 23	BH 24	H 25
BH 28	BH 29	BH 30	BH 31	

JANUARY

M	T	W	T	F
				H 1
4 2	5 3	6 4	7 5	8 1
11 2	12 3	13 4	14 5	15 1
18 2	19 3	20 4	21 5	P 22
25 1	B 26 2	27 3	28 4	29 5

FEBRUARY

M	T	W	T	F
1 1	2 2	3 3	4 4	5 5
8 1	9 2	10 3	11 4	12 5
H 15	16 1	17 2	18 3	19 4
22 5	B 23 1	24 2	25 3	26 4

MARCH

M	T	W	T	F
1 5	2 1	3 2	4 3	5 4
8 5	9 1	10 2	11 3	12 4
BH 15	BH 16	BH 17	BH 18	BH 19
22 5	B 23 1	24 2	25 3	H 26
H 29	30 4	31 5		

APRIL

M	T	W	T	F
			1 1	2 2
5 3	6 4	7 5	8 1	9 2
12 3	13 4	14 5	15 1	16 2
19 3	20 4	21 5	22 1	23 2
26 3	B 27 4	28 5	29 1	30 2

MAY

M	T	W	T	F
3 3	4 4	5 5	6 1	7 2
10 3	11 4	12 5	13 1	14 2
17 3	18 4	19 5	20 1	21 2
H 24	B 25 3	26 4	27 5	28 1
31 2				

JUNE

M	T	W	T	F
	1 3	2 4	3 5	4 1
7 2	8 3	9 4	10 5	P 11
14 1	15 2	16 3	17 4	18 5
21 1	B 22 2	23 3	24 4	25 5
28 1	29 2	P 30		

- H — Statutory Holiday
- P — PA Day
- BH — Board Designated Holiday
- IN — Inaugural Meeting of the Board 6:30 p.m.
- B — Committee of the Whole | 4:30 p.m. Board Meeting | 6:30 p.m.
- Catholic Education Week
- First Day of School
- Final Day of School for Students

Excellence in Learning ~ Living in Christ