Catholic School Improvement Learning Cycle
2018 – 2019

St. Nicholas Elementary School

MISSION STATEMENT

Anchored in faith, understanding, and peace, we are called through Christ and his teachings to love one another. We, the community of St. Nicholas School recognize, celebrate, and nurture the unique gifts we offer and receive to/from each other.

MOTTO

Faith, Understanding, Peace.

CATHOLIC FOCUS

St. Nicholas Catholic Elementary School is located in the town of Caledon. The student population of approximately 600 students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 8, is drawn from the Bolton area, west of Hwy 50. Our school was opened in September 2003, to work in partnership with Holy Family parish, to support Catholic parents in their responsibility for the spiritual, religious, moral, academic, and physical growth of their children in accordance with the teachings of Jesus. The school community is committed to the search for excellence, the uniqueness of the individual, and the education of the whole person.

Parents and families are active in our school in many ways. Our Catholic School Council is highly engaged and supportive of all aspects of school life.

Our students come to us with a variety of strengths and needs, with their Catholic faith as their common bond. Our prayer life, liturgical celebrations, the sacraments, and our faith and values system form the foundation of our school program. We offer students a well-rounded and value-centred education to help them make good choices for the future. A wide range of learning experiences are offered to develop the skills, abilities and talents of all our students.

In support of the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board's Catholic Board Improvement Learning Cycle, St. Nicholas School is further committed to:

• Deepening the understanding, appreciation and practice of the Catholic Christian lifestyle, with Jesus as role model;

• Aligning a school-wide approach to Catholicity, whereby all educational practices are implemented through a Catholic lens;

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• Developing students who are fully alive in Christ, not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but in terms of values, attitudes and actions.

• As a diverse educational community responding to God's call, St. Nicholas School fosters and nourishes an inclusive atmosphere rooted in tradition and scripture while:

  • Being authentic witnesses to our Catholic Faith;
  • Being responsible stewards of God's grace in the world;
  • Respecting human dignity;
  • Modelling all learners after Jesus, as ministers of compassion.

DUFFERIN PEEL’S STRATEGIC SYSTEM PLAN CORE PRIORITIES

CATHOLICITY

How does the school community model, celebrate and nourish gospel values in the teaching and learning of our Christ-centered programs and services?

Faith formation at St. Nicholas includes the well-being, learning and leading of our students. Staff work to create opportunities for spiritual reflection for our students in their classrooms, through liturgies, shared stories, as well as through our Religious Education and Family Life curricula. Faith formation is constant and relevant in all we do. We pray collectively before lunch, at school liturgies, and at school Masses. Students have the opportunity to build on their faith in a variety of clubs offered at St. Nicholas such as: Youth Faith Ambassadors, PALS, Heart Heroes, Tree Huggers, and Bus Patrollers.

St. Nicholas staff deepen their faith formation as Adult Faith Ambassadors and provide both staff and the school community support for spiritual development and gospel action. They are part of the larger Dufferin-Peel community of Faith Ambassadors who gather throughout the year to pray and reflect during retreats and liturgies that celebrate and promote our Catholic virtues and gospel teachings. St. Nicholas creates faith formation connections for well-being, learning, and leading in a positive climate as demonstrated in our various virtue initiatives, creating a healthy social space that includes student voice, where all learners feel safe, involved and supported.

CATHOLIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Summary of the school's most recent (2017-2018) EQAO Primary Assessment Performance

• Reading 71% of students at or above Provincial Standard
• Writing 67% of students at or above Provincial Standard
• Mathematics 50% of students at or above Provincial Standard

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Summary of the school’s most recent (2017-2018) EQAO Junior Assessment Performance

- **Reading**: 84% of students at or above Provincial Standard
- **Writing**: 83% of students at or above Provincial Standard
- **Mathematics**: 48% of students at or above Provincial Standard

Describe how the school fosters the achievement, well-being and continuous development of all through a caring, safe and inclusive environment.

St. Nicholas demonstrates, communicates, and exemplifies the importance of knowing and responding to the needs of the learner. We believe in a working environment that is safe, caring, and inclusive. Students' social, emotional, and academic needs are addressed and staff are sensitive to support these students so that they experience success at school. The school focus is on creating Catholic conditions for well-being and a commitment to realizing the Ontario Catholic Schools Graduate Expectations. We recognize all learners and continue to explore student interests, preferences, and learner readiness through various resources and supports. At St. Nicholas school, we work collaboratively on transitional practices to support the well-being and development of all learners. We promote a safe learning environment that encourages risk taking and ensures that the voice of all learners is heard. Staff and students are challenged to approach all new learning experiences with a positive outlook, and a growth mindset.

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

How does the school demonstrate that it values the involvement of community through partnerships and collaboration?

At St. Nicholas School our focus for school-wide improvement in our Catholic Social Teachings of the Church root our actions in supporting each other and those less fortunate than us. Throughout the year, students, staff, and parents support Catholic charities and families in need both in our community as well as in the global community. Various programs include: Youth Faith Ambassadors, Adult Faith Ambassadors, the Liturgical Committee as well as the Rosary Apostolate. School wide activities such as: Share Life initiatives, milk bags for Haiti, collecting candy for Dr. Simone, Angel Hair for Kids, Food Drives, The Giving Tree in cooperation with Holy Family Parish, Autism Awareness and the Terry Fox run are part of some of the school initiatives that occur on an ongoing basis. Social support for our students includes the PALS program, CYW support, as well as a variety of student teams and clubs. St. Nicholas staff and students participate in activities such as Black History month, the Diversity Conference, and the Youth Faith Ambassadors’ Commissioning. Through this variety of programs and experiences, students are given the opportunity to learn and support the human dignity of each person, and serve the most vulnerable in our society.

The school also has community partners including OPP (NPU, DARE and OPP Kids), Peel Safety Village, Peel Health, Ecoschools Caledon (Pals, Bully Prevention Program, Healthy Schools), Peel Children’s Centre, Dairy Farmers of Ontario and collaborates with various agencies dedicated to the support of student well-being.

PARISH – HOME – SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS

Describe how the school demonstrates strong partnerships and collaboration among Parish, Home and School that are based on mutual respect rooted in our lived Catholic Faith.

St. Nicholas School’s development and maintenance of positive home-school-parish relationships is rooted in our Catholic faith. We are affiliated with Holy Family Parish. Our students are given opportunities to develop their faith journey through masses/liturgies, the Rosary Apostolate Program, Rosary Club, being a Youth Faith Ambassador and participating in retreats. Our grade 1, 3, 5, and 7 classes have an opportunity to celebrate Mass.

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at Holy Family Church and the Parish Team spends time teaching them about the Church. In co-operation with the parish team, our staff assist students and families with sacramental preparations of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation. The Grade 8 graduation ceremony is also celebrated at the church. An invitation is always extended to our school community to celebrate Mass and liturgies with us. Various outreach activities initiated by the church or school are supported by our community (e.g., Giving Tree, Food Drives, supporting families at Christmas, etc.). A link to the parish website is provided on our school website. Important parish information is also included in our school newsletter. Our staff spends part of the September Faith PA Day at Holy Family Church with all the Bolton schools for Mass, reflection and prayer.

**STEWARDSHIP OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Describe how the school is committed to healthy and safe learning and working environments that enhance well-being, engagement and achievement.

St. Nicholas School is committed to a healthy and safe learning and working environment that enhances well-being, engagement, and achievement. Our school is very diligent in regards to following all ministry and school board policies and procedures when allocating/spending funds. Allocation of funds is always student centred, striving to meet the learning, social and environmental needs and requirements of all students. We have implemented our online payment system to further ensure our financial accountability, transparency, and accuracy. All home/school communication is shared via email, twitter and other means of digital communication.

**TECHNOLOGY**

How is the school committed to a responsible approach in addressing the technology needs of our learners in a global context?

St. Nicholas School is committed to addressing the technology needs of our learners by providing access to various platforms, applications, and program use that enhances student learning based on sound pedagogical use. All students and staff have access to various technology within our school. We have 4 iPad carts (60 IPADS), 13 Chrome Book carts (140 chrome books), 25 SMART Boards, and various SEA laptops/computers in our school. Our Tech Committee meets regularly to review the use of technology within the school and to share best practices. At monthly staff meetings, a portion of time is designated to the sharing of technological knowledge. Whenever possible, technology is embedded within the structure and organization of staff meetings. Staff are continuing to explore the use of various digital methods of communication with parents as an organizational tool and ways to share, support, and access student learning. Electronic programs like Razz kids and Prodigy Math are used to engage our learners. Staff attend various inservices, focusing on the integrated use of technology within various curricula.

**SACREDNESS OF OUR ENVIRONMENT**

How does the school encourage the respectful and sustainable environmental practices of reducing, reusing and recycling?

St. Nicholas School is committed to local and global stewardship of our environment through student engagement in our Recycling program, Eco-Caledon, and Eco-School/Tree Huggers initiatives (e.g., lights out,, Litterless Lunches, Tap Water Tuesdays, GOOS bins, etc.), Big Gulp, Big Crunch, Earth Hour, and Earth Day activities. We also maintain an Eco School Certification-Gold Rating, and our Tree Huggers Committee meets regularly. Various curricula (i.e., Geography, Science, Religious Education, Family Life programs) is delivered in a form that fosters ‘respect for life’ and stewardship of resources. Outdoor learning opportunities are integrated into various learning experiences that focus on the sacredness and appreciation of creation (e.g., Kortright Centre, Silver Creek, Niagara Falls, Downey’s Farm, Van den Hoek Farms, St, Marie Among the Hurons, Riverwood

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Conservancy). Staff are also striving to reduce photocopying amounts, and electronic communication with staff and parents is strongly encouraged.