



*In partnership with family, Church and community, we provide
Catholic Education of the highest quality to our students.*

2025-2026

St. Francis Xavier School

Parent-Student Handbook

318 8 Street NE
Medicine Hat, Alberta T1A 5R6
Phone: 403-527-7223

<https://www.stfrancisxavierschool.ca/>



@StFrancisMH



Instagram

@StFrancisMH

Welcome to St. Francis Xavier School

St. Francis Xavier School is dedicated to the fullest development of the spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional and physical dimensions of each student.

As a Catholic School, St. Francis Xavier School endeavors to:

1. Teach and reinforce the principles of Catholic faith.
2. Provide a thoroughly Catholic Christian atmosphere to enable each student to gain understanding of his/her faith and learn to apply Catholic principles to an everyday life situation.

In order to achieve our objectives, communication with, and cooperation from parents are of utmost importance. Consequently, parents are encouraged to communicate frequently with the school and participate in school sponsored activities whenever possible.

St. Francis Xavier School provides a safe and caring environment. It is important that this continues, and welcome any suggestions and/or feedback from parents.

St. Francis Xavier (1506-1552 A.D.)



Francis Xavier, born Francisco de Jasso y Azpilicueta April 7, 1506. He died on December 3, 1552. Francis was a pioneering Roman Catholic missionary born in the Kingdom of Navarre (now part of Spain) and co-founder of the Society of Jesus. He was a student of Ignatius of Loyola and one of the first seven Jesuits, dedicated to Montmartre in 1534. He led an extensive mission into Asia, mainly in the Portuguese Empire of the time. He was influential in the spreading and upkeep of Catholicism most notably in India, but also ventured into Japan, Borneo, the Moluccas, and other areas which had thus far not been visited by Christian missionaries.

Our Mission:

To provide a strong Catholic education inspired by Christ's teachings, in a safe environment as each child develops into a lifelong learner.

Our Mission Statement:

With Christ and St. Francis Xavier as our inspiration, our students will grow in Faith, Hope, Love, Knowledge, Understanding and Commitment.

Our Vision:

At St. Francis Xavier School, we envision a Christian community of active learners. Using innovative and trusted methods, staff will modify and evaluate programs based on individual needs. A sense of partnership between parents, staff, and students will be established through mutual respect and acceptance of each person as a gift from God.

Our Motto:

“Be Great in Small Things” - St. Francis Xavier

Our Partnerships

St. Francis Xavier School is a dynamic school community that continually strives to develop its partnership between staff, students, community services, parents and our parishes.

Expectations for School Staff

- ❖ To provide an opportunity for students to develop good study and work habits.
- ❖ To be consistently firm, fair, friendly and flexible.
- ❖ To be a model of acceptable social and academic standards.
- ❖ To strive for the development of positive self-worth in our students.
- ❖ To be attentive and to treat students, parents and each other with dignity.

Expectations for Parents

- ❖ To ensure regular and punctual attendance for their children.
- ❖ To support student growth by providing a rich home environment.
- ❖ To support school staff as they attempt to foster the spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, emotional, cultural and moral development of each student.
- ❖ To contact school personnel and discuss student progress at regular intervals.
- ❖ To attend parent/teacher conferences as requested.
- ❖ To support staff in having students follow through with their responsibilities.

Expectations for Students

- ❖ To be responsible for their education and be actively involved.
- ❖ To be prepared for learning and receptive to new ideas.
- ❖ To exercise self-control and become a self-directed learner.
- ❖ To possess a positive attitude.
- ❖ To have respect for authority.
- ❖ To treat others and their property with respect and dignity.
- ❖ To work to the very best of their ability.

Expectations for the Parish

- ❖ To serve as a link between home, school and the parish.
- ❖ To work toward the development of the spiritual growth of our community.
- ❖ To provide sacramental programs for students and assist in the development of their lives within the church.

School Bell Schedule

Early Learning Program A.M.

8:50 AM.....Classes Begin
11:50 AMDismissal

Early Learning Program P.M.

12:35 PMClasses Begin
3:24 PMDismissal

Kindergarten A.M.

8:55 AMClasses Begin
11:55 AM.....Dismissal

Grades 1-6

8:55 AM..... Warning Bell
9:00 AM..... Classes begin
10:15-10:30 AM Gr. K-3 Recess
10:30-10:45 AM Gr. 4-6 Recess
11:55-12:15 PM..... Gr. 4-6 Recess
12:15-12:35 PM..... Gr. 4-6 Lunch
11:55-12:15 PM..... Gr. K-3 Lunch
12:15-12:35 PM..... Gr. K-3 Recess
2:10-2:20 PM..... Recess
3:24 PM.....Dismissal

Policies

School Attendance and Lates

1. Students are expected to attend all their classes and must make up time for which they are absent (truant or without reason). Repeated absences will be addressed by school administration.
2. As there is sufficient break time allowed between classes, students must arrive to class on time. Teachers may assign consequences to students who are late.
3. Parents are asked to phone the school by 8:45 am when their child is going to be absent or late.

Early Arrival and Supervision of Students

Students are encouraged to arrive after 8:35 am. Supervision is provided: mornings at 8:35 am-8:55 am, during the lunch break, and after school (until the bus arrives). Students who do not normally take the bus at the end of the day must be picked up by 3:35 pm. Students who need to remain at the school after this time (on a regular basis), will be asked to register in the Out of School Care Program.

Code of Student Conduct (AP 351 Appendix A)

1. **Statement of Purpose** - Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education is committed to providing welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and a sense of belonging for students. (School Act Sec 45.1). The treatment of all persons with respect and dignity is a core value within the division. Expectations for student conduct arise from School Act requirements and the school district's Catholic values.

In our ministry, we value and celebrate:

- Teaching and living our Catholic faith
 - Our Catholic traditions
 - Our ability to offer a full range of educational programs for all students
 - That every child is a unique creation who possesses an intrinsic dignity which must always be respected
 - Parents as primary educators. Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children
2. **Definition of Bullying** - Section 1.1 (b.1) Alberta School Act, defines "bullying" as "repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual in the school community where the behaviour is intended to cause harm, fear or distress to one or more other individuals in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to an individual's reputation."
 3. **Communication** - The Student Code of Conduct must be:
 - Made publicly available
 - Reviewed every year, and
 - Provided to all staff, students and parents/legal guardians

4. **The Alberta Human Rights Act** - our priority is to ensure that all of our students are provided with a respectful and compassionate school environment rooted in Catholic values and teachings. This includes placing a strong value on having students conduct themselves properly at all times by respecting:
 - All individuals and not engaging in discriminatory actions towards others because of their age, race, colour, place of origin, ancestry, family status, religious beliefs, physical disability, mental disability, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation
 - School authorities and School and Division property, as well as, the property of others
5. **Shared Responsibility** - Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education recognizes that responsibility for student conduct is a shared responsibility between the Division, students, their parents/guardians and the broader community. The students in our Division are expected to behave in a virtuous manner that is charitable, courteous, respectful of others and supportive of the school philosophy and the goals of Catholic education.
6. **Acceptable and Unacceptable Behavior** - As required in Section 12 and Section 45.1(3) of the School Act the following behaviors are deemed acceptable and unacceptable within the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education.

6.1 Acceptable Behaviors

Students are expected to meet the requirements of the School Act (Section 12) which states a student shall conduct himself or herself so as to reasonably comply with the following code of conduct:

- Be diligent in pursuing the student's studies
- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services
- Comply with the rules of the school
- Account to the student's teachers for the student's conduct
- Respect the rights of others
- Ensure that the student's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging
- Refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means
- Positively contribute to the student's school and community

6.2 Unacceptable Behaviors

The following are examples of unacceptable behaviors with regard to student conduct in schools that interfere with the establishment of welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments that respect diversity and a sense of belonging for students:

- Defiance and disrespect

- Inappropriate use of language
- Behaviors that interfere with the learning of others and/or the school environment or that create unsafe conditions
- Open opposition to authority
- Bullying, including cyber-bullying
- Breaches of digital on-line safety
- Physical harm/assault; Personal and/or sexual harassment
- Possession or use of weapons
- Drug, tobacco, e-cigarette, alcohol use, possession or distribution
- Inappropriate student dress
- Inappropriate use of mobile devices
- Theft and vandalism; Threats or intimidation
- Extortion; Discrimination

7. **Progressive Discipline Plan** - The school's discipline plan will outline the expectations, consequences and the progression of actions to be taken depending on the severity and/or frequency of the occurrences and will take into account the student's age, maturity and individual circumstances, and must ensure that support is provided for students who are impacted by inappropriate behaviour, as well as for students who engage in inappropriate behaviour. As well, parental and district involvement may be requested to support school discipline procedures. At all times, teachers and administrators will use their professional judgment in applying consequences. Each school will keep a record of any disciplinary action taken with a student or group of students.

Consequences are intended to have a positive effect on the student's journey through reconciliation, either formally or informally, with the school community and those affected by the student's behaviour.

The following consequences are progressive in their degree of intervention and will be enacted depending on the frequency and severity of occurrences. They will be applied consistently and fairly to all students, notwithstanding the individual differences of children and the uniqueness of specific circumstances and situations.

Progressive discipline is a whole school approach that utilizes a continuum of interventions, supports, and consequences, including:

Prevention measures and initiatives:

- Early and ongoing intervention strategies
- Strategies to address unacceptable behavior

Interventions and consequences increase when:

- The concerning behavior is persistent
- The concerning behavior escalates

- There is a very serious infraction of the code of conduct

Interventions and consequences may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Informal Conferences
- Restriction of Privileges
- Parent Conferences
- In School Suspensions
- Risk Assessment
- Suspension / Expulsion (AP 357)
- Student Redirection
- Behaviour Support Plan
- Learner Support Plan
- Involvement of Instructional Services and Supports
- Involvement of External Services and Supports

The Principal may involve police in disciplinary matters when criminal activity has become evident. When police are involved, the Principal will conduct a separate, parallel investigation at the school level and provide disciplinary action separate from any criminal charges that may be issued.

8. **Student Support** - Support will be offered to students impacted by inappropriate behaviour and to those students who engage in inappropriate behaviour. This is significant because while the student code of conduct must address the consequences for inappropriate behaviour, it also ensures that support (not just consequences) is provided to those students who engage in unacceptable behaviour. Examples of how support could be provided to students who have engaged in unacceptable behaviour include mentoring, restorative processes, and regular check-ins with teachers or school counselors, etc.
9. **Consideration of Student Diversity** - The School Act requires that the student code of conduct address consequences for unacceptable behaviour and that these reasonable consequences take into account the student's age, maturity, and individual circumstances. The specific circumstances of the situation and of the student need to be taken into account when determining appropriate consequences. For example, any diverse needs that the student has – whether they are physical, behavioural, communicational, mental health, trauma, etc. must be considered.

School Discipline Policy

We have adopted a system to deal with discipline at the school. The following will occur when an incident has occurred needing disciplinary measures.

- T – the student will be TALKED to about the incident by the supervising staff member
- A – if needed the teacher will notate the incident in the student AGENDA
- P – if needed the teacher will contact the PARENT directly by phone
- P – if needed the PRINCIPAL will become involved to help resolve the issue

In response to inappropriate student behavior, teachers and administration of St. Francis Xavier School shall utilize a reactive strategy, depending on:

- The level of behavior as determined by the School Discipline Policy
- Circumstances of the behavior;
 - The other people involved (students/staff/etc.)
 - The environment
 - Precipitating factors
 - Special circumstances
- Past reactive strategies utilized for this student
- The frequency of the behavior
- The student's exceptionality and/or ISP, SRSP, etc.

Parental Inquiries

Parents who wish to discuss a matter of student discipline or concern should first contact the child's teacher. Further inquiries or complaints should then be addressed to the school principal. If the matter cannot be resolved by the principal, the parent will be directed to contact the Deputy Superintendent, then the Superintendent and, if necessary, the Board of Trustees.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Alberta Education defines bullying as the following:

Bullying is a relationship problem. It is the assertion of interpersonal power through aggression. Bullying by its conventional definition involves:

- ❖ Repeated and consistent negative actions against another person.
- ❖ An imbalance of power between the bully and the target.
- ❖ Contrasting feelings between the bully and the target as a result of the bullying episode (the child who bullies may feel excited, powerful or amused – while the target feels afraid, embarrassed or hurt).

The four most common types of bullying are:

- ❖ **Verbal Bullying** - name calling, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumors, threatening, making references to one's culture, ethnicity, race, religion, gender or sexual orientation, unwanted comments.
- ❖ **Social Bullying** - mobbing, scapegoating, excluding others from a group, humiliating others, damaging someone's social reputation, gestures or graffiti intended to put others down.
- ❖ **Physical Bullying** – hitting, poking, pinching, chasing, shoving, coercing, destroying, unwanted sexual touching.
- ❖ **Cyber Bullying** - using the internet or text messaging to intimidate someone, hurt someone's reputation or to put down or spread negative rumors/images about someone.

Based on our philosophy that Catholic Schools have been established to provide an environment of faith, which brings all of life together within the grace and love of God, we have established the Anti-Bullying policy set forth. The Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education, of which St. Francis Xavier School belongs, views bullying as unchristian behavior, and therefore it will not be tolerated. The goal of St. Francis Xavier School's Anti-Bullying Policy is to ensure that all students experience a safe, Christian environment that is conducive to learning. The following initial steps will be taken when dealing with bullying incidents:

- ❖ Isolated or initial incidents which do not constitute bullying will be handled by the teacher in charge at the time of the incident.
- ❖ Whenever possible, any incidents which may constitute bullying should be reported immediately to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident. The teacher in charge at the time of the incident will immediately deal with those involved in the incident.
- ❖ In some cases, students may choose to report the incident to a different adult in the building, such as their homeroom teacher, a secretary, or the principal. If so, students are encouraged to report the incident on the same day as it occurs.

The Anti-Bullying policy requires the following:

1. Staff members of St. Francis Xavier School should:
 - a. Remain alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it.
 - b. Report incidents of bullying to the principal or teacher in charge, who will determine what disciplinary action will be taken.
 - c. Offer support and encouragement to students being bullied, including notifying parents, principal, and/or support staff as needed.
 - d. Encourage all students to refrain from bullying behavior, and encourage reporting of any bullying behaviors they witness.
2. Parents of St. Francis Xavier School students should:
 - a. Report concerns of bullying behavior to their child's appropriate teacher as soon as possible following the incident(s). If concerns are not handled sufficiently at this level, a report should be made to the school principal or teacher in charge.
 - b. Support the school's anti-bullying policy and actively encourage their child to avoid bullying behavior.
3. Students of St. Francis Xavier School should:
 - a. Report incidents of bullying they witness to the teacher in charge at the time of the incident, or to another staff member as soon as possible following the incident.
 - b. Whenever possible, stand up for the student being bullied, and refrain from joining in bullying behavior.
 - c. Treat others with the respect and dignity that is expected of any Catholic school student.

Electronic Equipment

Please keep equipment at home. In the event that electronics are brought on campus, they must be placed in the off or silent position and stored in the student's backpack and/or locker during the day. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items under any circumstances.

If a student is found in possession of one of these devices during any part of the school day (when supervision begins @ 8:35 until the final bell @ 3:24), the student will be asked to turn it off and immediately surrender it to a staff member (where it will be stored at the front office until the end of the day, or longer, if problem persists). These devices will only be returned to the students at the end of the school day, upon the request of the student or his/her parents. In some cases, the school may require that a parent come pick up the device.

Work Attitude and Assignments

Students are expected to apply themselves diligently to their studies during the school day. Furthermore, they are expected to complete their daily class and homework assignments. If they fail to do so, (without an acceptable reason), they will be required to complete the work at recess, lunch break, or upon repeated occurrences – after school. Students participating in the Sports and Wellness Academy will not be permitted to attend until class material deemed due at the time by their homeroom teacher is completed. Students will need to complete the given work before entering the program.

Closed Campus

Students must check in at the front office whenever entering or leaving the school during the day or any time after classes have started. This includes the lunch hour when students are only permitted to leave the grounds accompanied by their parents or guardians (e.g. medical, dental, etc.) **Parents/Guardians are asked to notify the office or administration by note or phone in advance, whenever they plan to take their children out of school during the school day.**

Student Conduct on School Buses

In accordance with Administrative Procedure 351, the Medicine Hat Catholic Board of Education expects all students to behave responsibly and respectfully while being transported on school buses. Therefore, all school bus passengers must obey the following rules:

1. Prior to loading (on the road and at school):
 - a. Be on time at the designated stop (to ensure that the bus can stay on schedule).
 - b. Stay off the road or street at all times while waiting for the bus. Students must conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting and must not interfere with other students who are also at the bus stop.
 - c. Wait until the bus comes to a complete stop before attempting to enter.
2. While on the bus:
 - a. The driver is in full charge of the school bus at all times and students must obey the driver promptly.

- b. *If* the Principal appoints one of the older students as a monitor or patrol on the bus, the other pupils are to cooperate fully with him/her in the carrying out of his/her duties.
- c. The driver may assign a seat for which the student will be held responsible and he/she will retain this seat until directed otherwise by the driver.
- d. Students must be on time, and any student who habitually delays the driver will be reported to the principal.
- e. Unnecessary conversation with the driver is prohibited.
- f. Classroom conduct is to be observed on the bus and any disturbance that may distract the driver and endanger the safe operation of the bus is prohibited.
- g. There is no smoking or consumption of alcohol or drugs on any school bus.
- h. Students must not litter the bus with waste paper or other rubbish or throw any articles out of the bus windows.
- i. Students must not extend any part of their body out of the windows.
- j. Students must remain seated while the bus is in motion.
- k. Students will be debussed at their regular stops unless a note from the parent is presented to the driver.
- l. When leaving the bus, students must pass in front of the bus.

Students violating these rules will be reported to the school principal. This may result in the student being suspended from riding the bus until assurance is received from both parents and the student that these rules will be observed.

Medication

In accordance with Administrative Procedure 316, we are not authorized to administer any medications *unless* specifically requested and supplied by the parents. A special authorization form (available from the office) must be completed and must include the name of the medication, the amount to be administered, at what time during the day this medication is to be administered and must have the name of the student and authorizing physician well displayed on the container.

Student Health Problems

Parents are requested to inform the school of any health problems that their child may have (i.e. allergies, bladder problems, asthma, etc.) at the beginning of the school year or when first medically identified. School administration reserves the right to ask for a medical note and/or documentation to support a parents' medical claim. This information will be kept confidential by teachers (and kept on file for use whenever circumstances arise).

Locked Doors

It is a policy of the school to keep all outside doors locked during the normal school day hours. Anyone visiting the school is asked to please check-in with the secretary or principal at the front office.

Student Evaluation

Report Cards are sent home to parents three (3) times per school year (November, March and June). The school utilizes Outcome Based Report Cards to communicate student achievement/marks, for each reporting period. Please see your child's teacher or school administration for more detail. Provincial Achievement Tests will be administered in May/June in the core subjects for grade 6 students.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Parents are welcome to request a conference with the classroom teacher or the principal at any time (with reasonable notice, and at a mutually agreed upon date and time). Formal Parent Teacher conferences will be available and scheduled in November and again in March.

Dress Code

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner befitting a Catholic Christian School. Therefore, students are expected to:

1. Wear modest respectable dress and maintain a neat and tidy appearance.
2. Not wear any article of clothing that is unacceptable in the school environment (example, inappropriately short items, bare midriffs and/or unacceptable logos); otherwise they risk being sent home to change or given another clothing item to put on.
3. Remove their hats upon entering the doors of the school.

*All decisions concerning school dress code are made by and at the final decision of school staff.

Lunch Policy

The students will eat lunch in their own classroom. Students are expected to finish eating their lunch between 11:55 pm - 12:15 pm.

1. There are no microwaves available for student use to heat lunches.
2. Students are expected to clean up their desk area after they have eaten.
3. At 12:15 pm, the staff member on lunch supervision will dismiss the classes. Students are required to put their disposable items in the garage can (located in the hallway) as they leave.
4. Students are expected to either go outside after they have eaten or to the gym to participate in intramurals (on their specified day).
5. Any student who abuses his/her lunchroom privileges may be asked to eat his/her lunch outside of the classroom.
6. Students who eat lunch at school are expected to remain in the school grounds for the entire lunch period.

Religion Instruction

As a Catholic School, our goal is to provide an environment where religious values are permeated throughout the entire day. Periodically, we will have masses and celebrations that mark the liturgical calendar. Parents are most welcome to attend these events. Dates and times

are outlined in our digital monthly newsletters and calendars. St. Francis Xavier School students will be celebrating mass approx. four (4) times at St. Patrick's Church throughout the school year.

Students in grade 1-6 receive 150 minutes of classroom instruction in Religion per week (30 minutes per day). They will also receive an integrated unit on family life. Students in grade 2 and 3 are candidates for preparation for the Sacrament of First Eucharist (Holy Communion) and Reconciliation. It is the sole responsibility of the parents to contact the church and prepare their child for these sacraments. The sacraments will be conferred through the Parishes. We encourage you to watch your Sunday Parish Bulletin for announcements regarding parent meetings (usually in September). Although the sacramental themes are discussed in the Religion programs at school, the Diocese requires parents to do the preparation and instruction of the sacraments at home.

