

St. Mary's School

Ecce Ego Sum Mitte Me

October 2026



Principal's Message

Mr. Josh Van Uden

Dear St. Mary's Families,

As we enter October, it is hard to believe that we have already completed our first month of school! September brought many firsts and lasts for our students, and while change can be challenging, it also brings growth and new beginnings. On a personal note, our family has just welcomed our first grandchild. This wonderful event is a touching reminder of how quickly life moves and how many blessings surround us.

With Thanksgiving approaching, I want to emphasize the importance of gratitude. We are now in Year Two of Holy Spirit Catholic School Division's three-year faith plan: "Open Wide the Doors: Love God." This year, we are called to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. I have challenged our students to be a light for others and share God's love in everything they do.

Later this month, we will celebrate Catholic Education Week and Catholic Education Sunday (October 18–23) under the theme "The Power of the Holy Spirit." This is a wonderful opportunity to reflect on how grateful I am for Catholic education in our province. My prayer for each of you is that your homes are filled with reasons to be thankful and that you find time to pause and give thanks for all the good in your lives.

Looking ahead, I am excited for the many volleyball games scheduled throughout October. I also invite all parents and guardians to join us for Parent-Teacher Interviews on October 22 from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM. This is a great opportunity to meet your child's teacher(s) and discuss their progress. Additionally, please save the date for our Academic Awards ceremony on November 5, where we will celebrate our students' achievements from the past school year.

As October continues to showcase its crisp air and vibrant colors, I hope your family enjoys the beauty of the season. Thank you for your continued support, partnership, and dedication to our school community. May your month ahead be filled with warmth, happiness, and peace.

In Christ,
Josh Van Uden

Happy
THANKSGIVING

October 12th:
Happy Thanksgiving -
No School

October 13-14th:
PD Days - No School

October 16th - 17th:
Double Blue
Volleyball Tournament

October 20th:
Picture Re-Take Day

October 21st:
Soup Day

October 22nd @ 4-7 PM:
Parent/Teacher
Interviews

October 23rd-24th:
Big Storm Volleyball
Tournament

November 5th:
Academic Awards
Ceremony @ 6 PM

News from our St. Mary's Band Booster Club

It has been a great start to the year in the band room at St. Mary's School. There are lots of great sounds coming from our students.

The first public performance for the year will have our Senior Band (Grades 9-12) performing at our annual Awards Night at the school at 6pm on Thursday, November 5th. We look forward to playing for everyone!

Our Jazz Band meets every Tuesday from 3:15 to 4:20 and is open to students from grades 7-12. This is a great opportunity for our older students to play some really cool, different styles of music. Please see Mr. Makarchuk if you would like more information.

A reminder to all band students that Christmas Concert will be held on Wednesday December 16th @ 7:00 in the school gym. All students need to have a white dress shirt with no writing on it, or a white sweater, and a black pair of pants or skirt. Please mark this on your calendar and invite as many people as you like. It is always great to see and hear our new band students perform, as well as our more seasoned ones.

Grade 6-8 band students are reminded that they are to be handing in a practice sheet EVERY week. To receive full marks, students must practice 70 minutes per week. Extra practice sheets are available in the band room. Please remember that practice sheets are worth 10% of the band mark.

All band students are reminded that they need to hand in a Home Performance Assignment every calendar month. Forms are available in the band room and are due the first school day of the new month. Students are responsible for playing for an adult at home and having them fill out an evaluation form, as well as the student filling out a self-evaluation. Grade 6's will complete their first assignment in October. October's Home Performance Assignments are due November 1st.

The St. Mary's library has a collection of supplemental music books that are available for band students to check out. These are more popular pieces in the classical, jazz, rock and pop fields. Each one comes with a play-along CD that allows the student to hear background music during the song. These are a great idea for students to get in extra practice minutes, as well as just having fun on their instruments.

SOUP DAY

October 21st



If any parents or SMS community members would like to bring a pot of soup, please contact our school office at 403-223-3165.

2025/2026

Yearbooks

now available
in the school office.



PARISH PHOTO DIRECTORY

PHOTOGRAPHY SESSIONS | Taber Oct 20 -24 Nov 4 & 5 Vauxhall Nov 6 & 7

Help us get to know one another, strengthen the bonds of our faith community, and put names to faces.

**WE WANT ALL PARISHIONERS
INCLUDED IN THE DIRECTORY!**



BOOK A PHOTO SESSION For Your Picture

- Sign up after Mass
- Sign up when a volunteer calls you
- Invite family and friends to take part
- What to wear: colour coordinated or complimentary clothing, long sleeves,
- Session is approximately 30 minutes



UNAVAILABLE for a Photo Session?

- Submit a photo by November 6
- \$20 submission fee
- Print: VIRTUAL no larger than 4 x 6 inches
Submit to the parish office
- Digital: VIRTUAL minimum file size of 1 MB
Submit by email secretary@catholicparish.ca
- High-quality, high-resolution image
- Photographer's permission required
- No close-ups or headshots
- Include names and correct spelling



*Photo packages may be purchased,
but there is no obligation to buy.
Everyone pictured will receive a directory.*



NEED A RIDE OR HELP SUBMITTING A PHOTO?
Call Parish Office: 403-223-2226

Please be part of this special parish keepsake and communication tool!



My Photo Session Date:

Time:

Location

Donate School Supplies

Just a reminder that we accept all gently used school supplies at our school. We place these items out for everyone to access for FREE! It helps to save items from the landfill and with the cost of everything lately, every little bit helps!



Career Centre NEWS

WORK EXPERIENCE RAP APPRENTICESHIPS

Get a head start on your career with Work Experience and RAP! These programs let you earn anywhere from 15 to 40 high school credits while working on the job. Choose Work Experience to pick up as many as 15 credits. Or, join RAP to earn up to 40 credits and build hours toward your official apprenticeship at the exact same time!

Scholarship Watch

The Rodriguez Excellence Award - Prairie College
This is a full tuition scholarship to the value of \$50 000 for students enrolled in Education, Aviation, Nursing or Business. See the attached link for more information.

GREEN CERTIFICATE

The Green Certificate Program is an industry-driven agricultural training curriculum that allows high school students to earn up to 16 credits and gain a recognized credential while working on a farm or ranch.

SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER 19TH
POST SECONDARY AND
SCHOLARSHIP EVENING. 6PM
ON THE EAST CAMPUS.
UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE
AND LETHBRIDGE
POLYTECHNIC WILL ALSO BE
THERE.

OCTOBER 24TH
UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE
OPEN HOUSE

OCTOBER 28TH
LETHBRIDGE POLYTECHNIC
OPEN HOUSE

REGISTER FOR OPEN HOUSES
ON INSTITUTION WEBSITE

CAREER FOCUS FOR OCTOBER:
BUSINESS, FINANCE, AND
SUPPLY CHAIN

DUAL Credit



LETHBRIDGE
POLYTECHNIC

WINTER 2027 FEB 1 to MAY 12

AGS1100 - Foundations of Agriculture
BIO1155 - Human Nutrition
BIO1160 - Anatomy and Physiology I
BIO1167 - Botany
BIO1172 - Ecology
BUS1177 - Entrepreneurship
CJP1160 - Introduction to the Criminal Justice System
COM1162 - Interpersonal Relationships & Communication
ECE1155 - Introduction to Early Childhood Education
ENG1150 - Composition
ENG1159 - Writing for the Workplace
GEO1166 - Physical Geology
INS1155 - Introduction to Indigenous Studies
MKT1188 - Introduction to Marketing
PSY1160 - Introduction to Psychology
SOC1160 - Introduction to Sociology *pending approval
*****APPLICATION DEADLINE NOV. 27, 2026

EARN COLLEGE AND HIGH
SCHOOL CREDIT WHILE IN
HIGH SCHOOL



SOUTHERN ALBERTA
COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

WINTER 2027

TRA1131 - Introduction to the Trades
TRA1132 - Introduction to Transportation Trades
TRA1135 - Introduction to Culinary Trades
VXR1160 - Art & Design for Extended Reality
Pre Employment trades

*****APPLICATION DEADLINE JUNE 12, 2026



OLDS COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE & TECHNOLOGY

WINTER 2027 - FEB. 24 - MAY 19

ACT1012 - Accounting Principles II
ANH1050 - Introduction to the Veterinary Profession
ANH1510 - Veterinary Medical Terminology
CEA 1040 - Operating Controlled Environment Systems
COM1020 - Workplace Communication
GIS1300 - Introduction to GIS
MGT1000 - Principles of Management
SPM1020 - Training for Performance

****APPLICATION DEADLINE FEBRUARY 17, 2027

How We Help

The Career Centre provides students with valuable off-campus experiences, as well as guidance in post-secondary planning, scholarships, and career preparation. Our off-campus opportunities include the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), Work Experience, Early Learning Level 1, Green Certification, Special Projects, and Dual Credit programs. Through Dual Credit, we partner with Lethbridge Polytechnic, Olds College, and Bow Valley College, as well as intermittently with the University of Lethbridge. Whether you are connecting with our Career Practitioner, Mrs. Bam, or our Off-Campus Coordinator, Mr. Boschee, we are here to support you in planning your future.



Holy Spirit
CATHOLIC SCHOOL DIVISION

Mark Boschee
Off Campus Education Coordinator
Lize Bam
Career Practitioner

Cell: 587-220-4358
Office: 403-327-4596
boscheem@holyspirit.ab.ca
hsoffcampus@holyspirit.ab.ca

baml@holyspirit.ab.ca holyspirit.ab.ca

CCH Campus East
405-18 Street South
Lethbridge, AB
T1J3E5



Holy Spirit
CATHOLIC SCHOOL DIVISION

Piitawaani

Traditional Powwow

Thursday, October 8th

5:00pm-7:00pm

Grand Entry at 5:00pm

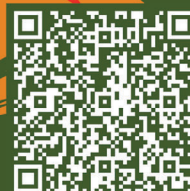
Children of St. Martha School

206 McMaster Blvd. W.

- ◆ Host drum will be paid.
- ◆ First 14 registered dancers will be paid (all dancers welcome).
- ◆ Food trucks available for purchase of dinner.

Please bring lawnchairs or blankets.

Everyone welcome!



Dancer Registration Form



Open Wide the Doors!

Sent To Share Christ's Love

St. Francis de Sales

Feast Day: January 24

A Simple Prayer for Peace. Inspired by St. Francis de Sales

God, help me to be at peace. Help me not to be afraid of what might happen tomorrow. When things change, help me to trust You.

You have cared for me in the past, and I know You will care for me today and tomorrow. When life is difficult, give me the strength I need to keep going.

When I am worried, help me remember that I am never alone. Hold me close in Your loving arms and help me to trust You.

God, You are my loving Father. Help me to let go of my fears and place my worries in Your hands.

Help me to be still, to trust You, and to live in Your peace.
Amen. St. Francis de Sales — Pray for us!

Prayer: The Prayer of St. Francis de Sales
Sisters of the Divine Savior



Holy Spirit Catholic School Division

...where students are cherished and achieve their potential

Dear Parents/Guardians,

At Holy Spirit Catholic School Division, we are committed to ensuring the safe arrival of all our students to school every day. To enhance our safe arrival process, we are implementing a new system that will simplify the reporting and handling of student absences at all schools.

Parents/Guardians can begin pre-reporting absences through the new SafeArrival system as early as August 24, 2026 for the start of the school year.

The new student absence reporting system, SafeArrival, allows you to report an absence in advance using a mobile app, a website, or an interactive toll-free phone line. This will help the school verify student attendance more quickly and notify parents and guardians promptly about unexpected or unplanned absences.

This new, automated SafeArrival process is part of our SchoolMessenger notification system from PowerSchool, and our new SchoolMessenger Home mobile app for iOS and Android devices. It will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to make it convenient for you to report future absences.

More information and instructions can be found on our website by following this link: [Safe Arrival](#)

Thank you for your patience and cooperation as we implement this new system.



New Attendance Reporting System



Safe Arrival is coming to Holy Spirit Catholic School Division



Holy Spirit
CATHOLIC SCHOOL DIVISION

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

SafeArrival is Coming...



WHAT IS SAFEARRIVAL?

SafeArrival is an absence management system that improves student safety and simplifies absence reporting.



Report in advance whenever possible!

3 EASY WAYS TO REPORT AN ABSENCE

MOBILE APP



- School Messenger Home Mobile App.

WEBSITE



- School Messenger Website.

TOLL-FREE PHONE

(833) 225-4644

- Interactive Telephone System.

HOW IT WORKS:

Absence Reported in Advance

You receive confirmation by email/text.



Absence Not Reported

Automated system (App, Email, SMS, or Phone call) will contact you immediately for the reason.



Starting September, 2026, SafeArrival will be in effect at all schools across our Division. Please use SafeArrival instead of notes, calls or emails for absences.



Fair Notice Letter

Dear Parents / Guardians,

The Holy Spirit Catholic School Division is committed to providing safe learning environments for all students, staff, school visitors and community members. When a student behaves inappropriately, principals use progressive discipline to help a student take responsibility for their actions, change their behavior and learn from their mistakes.

When students' behaviors pose a potential threat to safety or serious harm, the Southwest Alberta Regional Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) Protocol assists administrators in taking the necessary steps to protect the well-being of students and staff. This protocol ensures that schools can respond promptly to worrisome behaviors or threatening incidents, such as possession of a weapon or replica, bomb threats or plans, verbal, written, or electronic (internet, text) threats to harm oneself or others, as well as other acts of violence, including fire-setting.

The protocol requires trained division staff and community partners to work together as a team to complete an Assessment of Risk to Others (ARTO) whenever a student threatens to harm others. The ARTO process leverages the team's knowledge, skills, and experience to assess the level of concern and identify appropriate interventions to protect individuals from harm and ensure a safe environment in both the school and the community. A multi-disciplinary approach is used to address these concerns. Please be advised that the school team will take positive and proactive measures to address all known threats or high-risk behaviors. If you are invited to a meeting to discuss safety concerns about your child, please be assured that our protocol is being followed and that our primary goal is ensuring safety.

The Southwest Alberta Regional VTRA Protocol outlines how a school should respond immediately to threatening behavior. Principals may first assemble a School Threat Assessment Team, ideally comprising the principal or associate principal, a school-based counselor or jurisdictional lead, and local police. If the situation is serious, the principal may also consult the Superintendent of Schools and involve members of the Community Threat Assessment Team. This team may include representatives from local police, children's mental health organizations, or Child and Family Services, among other community agencies that collaborate with us to enhance school safety. Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as possible during the Stage I - VTRA Process. If parents/guardians cannot be reached, but a safety concern persists, the threat assessment may proceed. Personal information shared during this process will respect and balance each individual's right to privacy with the need to ensure everyone's safety.

This letter complies with procedure 2 of *Administrative Procedure 322: Violence Threat / Risk Assessment (V-TRA) Protocol*, which states that parents/ guardians will be provided with "fair notice" that each threat will be taken seriously. Should you wish to further review this Administrative Procedure, please visit our website at www.holyspirit.ab.ca.

If you have any questions regarding the Holy Spirit Catholic School Division's use of the Southwest Alberta Regional V-TRA Protocol, please contact the Director of Support Services at the St. Basil Catholic Education Centre. We appreciate your support in ensuring our schools are safe environments for our students, staff and community partners.

Sincerely,

Chantel Axani, Superintendent of Schools

Updated August 2026



Notice to Parent or Guardian of Religious Permeation

Section 58.1 of the *Education Act* requires a school board to give notice to a parent or guardian when courses of study, education programs, institutional materials, instruction or exercises include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion. All of the schools in this division are Catholic Separate Schools, the essential purpose of which is to fully permeate Catholic theology, philosophy, practices and beliefs, the principles of the Gospel and teachings of the Catholic Church, in all aspects of school life, including in the curriculum of every subject taught, both in and outside of formal religion classes, celebrations and exercises. Every course of study and educational program, all institutional materials, instruction and exercises will at all times include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion.