Dear CSM Families,

Welcome back! We hope you have had a wonderful summer and are looking forward to another year of learning, growing and belonging together at Children of St. Martha School.

We are excited to welcome our students and families back into the building and wanted to share some important information to help everyone prepare for the beginning of the school year.

Important Dates at a Glance

- **Tuesday, September 1** – First day of school for Grades 1–6
- **Tuesday, September 8** – First day of school for Kindergarten and Early Learning
- **Tuesday, September 15** –School Photo Day (Individual Photos)
- **Thursday, September 17** – Welcome Back BBQ, Family Blessing, Open House and School Council AGM
- **Tuesday, October 6** – Photo Retake Day
- **Thursday, October 8** – First Annual Holy Spirit Pow Wow at CSM

School Hours

School begins at 8:40 a.m. and dismissal is at 3:48 p.m.

- Entrance Bell - 8:40
- Morning Recess - 10:00 to 10:20
- Lunch/Recess Gr 1-3 - Lunch 12:00 to 12:20 Recess 12:20 to 12:40
- Lunch/Recess Gr 4-6 - Recess 12:00 to 12:20 Lunch 12:20 to 12:40
- Afternoon Recess - 2:20 to 2:40 (Wednesday Wellness break 2:20 to 3:00)
- Dismissal Bell - 3:48 (11;30 on Fridays)

Our school office is open from **8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

The best ways to reach the school are:

Phone: 403-381-8110
Email: csmadmin@holyspirit.ab.ca

First Day of School – Grades 1–6

The first day of school for students in **Grades 1–6 is Tuesday, September 1**.

On the first day, classrooms will open at **8:20 a.m.** Families are welcome to bring their children into the school and help them get settled.

For the **first week of school**, parents and caregivers may continue to walk their children into the building.

We will have staff outside at the front of the school and throughout the building to help students and families navigate the first few days.

At the end of each school day, teachers will walk students to the **front of the school**, and all students will be dismissed from this area.

Regular Morning Routine – Beginning September 8

Beginning **Tuesday, September 8**, students arriving at school may:

- Attend our **Breakfast Program from 8:15–8:35 a.m.** and then head outside; or
- Go directly outside to play, with supervision beginning at **8:20 a.m.**

The hallways will remain closed until the **8:40 a.m. bell**. If you would like to wait with your child before school, we ask that you please wait outside with them.

When the bell rings, students will enter the school through their **designated classroom door**, where they will have an opportunity to change into their indoor shoes before heading to class.

Kindergarten and Early Learning

The first day of school for **Kindergarten and Early Learning is Tuesday, September 8**.

During their first week, parents and caregivers are welcome to bring children directly to their classrooms.

Kindergarten classrooms will open at 8:30 a.m.

Early Learning families will enter through the north door beginning at 8:50 a.m.

Following the first week, Kindergarten students may be dropped off at the front entrance. Students arriving **before 8:30 a.m.** will attend the Breakfast Program. Students arriving **after 8:30 a.m.** may head directly to their Kindergarten classroom.

Attendance and Late Arrivals

If your child is going to be absent, please inform the school office in one of the following ways:

- Call **403-381-8110**
- Email **csmadmin@holyspirit.ab.ca**
- Submit the absence through **SafeArrival in PowerSchool**

If a student arrives after the first bell, we ask that they stop at the school office before going to class. An office staff member will provide them with a **Welcome Back slip** and ensure they have been properly included in our attendance for the day.

Class Lists

Class lists will be posted in the school entryway on the **first day of school**.

A great deal of time, care and professional consideration goes into building balanced classes. Staff consider many factors, including student learning needs, relationships, social dynamics, supports, class composition and the creation of successful learning environments for all children.

Because moving one student can affect many of these carefully considered factors, **class lists are considered final**.

We recognize that children value their friendships and connections. Students in different classrooms will continue to have many opportunities to learn and spend time together through grade-level activities, mixed-grade buddy activities, school-wide events, **STEAM & DREAM Fridays**, Colour Team activities and recess.

Our goal is always to create classrooms where children are supported, relationships can grow and teachers can provide successful learning environments for all students. We appreciate your trust in our staff and in this thoughtful process.

Bussing

Bus routes will also be posted in the school entryway.

If you have questions about your child's bus route, please stop by or contact the school office.

Please note that if your child was **not registered for bussing in the spring**, arranging transportation may take some additional time at the beginning of the school year.

To receive access to bussing you must live in our catchment and a distance greater than 1.6 km from the school. We have received many requests for exceptions and cannot grant them at this time.

Student Registration Information

If your child's **2026–27 registration information has not yet been reviewed and updated**, please complete this as soon as possible.

This process ensures that we have current contact, emergency and medical information for every student.

Even if you have **no changes**, please log into the program and confirm that the information remains correct.

If you need assistance completing this process, please contact the school office and we will be happy to help.

School Supplies

School supply lists are available on our school website.

Families who would still like to order all supplies in one place and have them delivered directly to the school may use School Start:

Here are your school supply lists for the 2026-27 School Year. You can buy directly online and have shipped to your home or to the school. Items shipped to the school will be in your child's classroom for the first day of school.

Steps to order - Parents can go directly to: https://schoolstart.ca/, and click on the following:

- Parents Shop Here

- Purchase School Supply Kits

- Select Province, then City, then School

- Click Here to Purchase

- Lastly, they click on their grade and proceed from there

Indoor and Outdoor Shoes

It is important that **every student has a pair of appropriate indoor shoes at school each day**.

Indoor shoes should be safe and appropriate for regular classroom use as well as **Physical Education**.

Students change between indoor and outdoor shoes throughout the school day and at recess **all year long**, not only during the winter or on wet days.

This helps us keep our school floors free from dirt, mud, grass, water and rocks, and helps protect our flooring from damage.

Please ensure your child has a clearly labelled pair of indoor shoes ready for the beginning of the year.

Labelled Belongings & Items from Home

Each year, we collect an incredible number of items in our Lost and Found. Unclaimed items are donated at **Christmas, Easter and the end of the school year**, and more often than not, we still have an abundance of clothing and belongings left behind.

Please take a few minutes to **clearly label your child's personal items**, particularly anything that may not stay on their person throughout the day. This includes:

- Indoor and outdoor shoes
- Boots — especially important, as we often have several identical pairs
- Coats and jackets
- Hats and gloves
- Hoodies — by far one of our most popular Lost and Found items!
- Lunch kits and water bottles

A name inside an item makes it much easier for us to get it back to its owner before it reaches the Lost and Found.

We also ask that students **leave toys, collectibles and other special belongings at home** unless their teacher has specifically asked them to bring something to school. Unfortunately, staff are not able to investigate or manage lost, traded or misplaced personal "treasures."

Similarly, unless you have received specific information from your child's teacher or the school, **your child will not need to bring money to school**.

Thank you for helping us keep track of belongings and avoid unnecessary disappointment when special items go missing.

Snacks, Lunches and Water Bottles

Students should bring a **snack for recess and a lunch from home each day**.

Microwaves are available for students; however, they are intended only for **reheating food that has already been cooked**.

If you are sending a frozen meal or something that normally requires cooking, please prepare it at home first so that it simply needs to be warmed.

Ideally, student lunches should require **no more than approximately 60 seconds in the microwave**. Longer heating times can make it difficult for students waiting to use the microwave to have enough time to eat their lunch.

All students should also bring a **water bottle that seals securely and will not spill or break if dropped**.

Teachers will let students know whether water bottles will be stored in the classroom or in lockers. Water bottles should go home **at least once each week** to be thoroughly washed.

Parking, Pick-Up and Drop-Off

As our school continues to grow, it is especially important that we work together to keep our parking lot and bus areas safe.

If you are using the parking lot, **vehicles must be parked in a designated parking stall before children enter or exit the vehicle**.

Please do not park:

- In accessible parking spaces unless you have the appropriate permit
- Beside the dumpsters
- Along cement curbs or other non-designated parking areas

If you do not wish to park, please use the **pick-up/drop-off loop at the front of the school**.

Please also be especially mindful of the **crosswalk at the north end of the loop**, which our bus students use to safely travel to and from the buses.

Thank you for helping us keep all of our children safe during our busiest times of the day.

Staying Connected Through SPACES

During the first few days of school, teachers will invite parents and caregivers to join **SPACES**.

SPACES is an important communication tool that helps families stay connected to what is happening in both the classroom and the school.

It is also used as a **digital student portfolio**. Throughout the year, teachers and students will regularly add examples of learning so families can see and hear about their child's growth, accomplishments and school experiences.

Families can expect student portfolios to be updated several times each month.

These portfolios are an important part of our assessment and communication plan and work alongside the other reports and updates families will receive throughout the school year.

We strongly encourage all families to connect to SPACES and check it regularly.

September 17 – Welcome Back BBQ, Family Blessing and Open House

We hope you will join us on **September 17** for our annual Welcome Back evening.

Families will have an opportunity to join us for a **family blessing, a meal and a visit to your child's classroom**.

Before the family event begins, we will also host our **School Council Annual General Meeting**.

All parents and caregivers are welcome to attend. We are always excited to welcome new members and new voices to School Council as we work together to continue making CSM a wonderful place for children and families.

More details and specific times will be shared soon.

October 8 – First Annual Holy Spirit Pow Wow

Some families may remember that we did not hold our traditional CSM Pow Wow last year.

Across Holy Spirit Catholic School Division, we are moving toward a new model that will allow the gifts, teachings and experiences of attending a Pow Wow to be shared with students from across our schools.

We are very excited that **Children of St. Martha will host the first annual Holy Spirit Pow Wow on Thursday October 8.**

Students will participate in learning opportunities throughout the school day, and families will be invited to join us in the evening for a more traditional community gathering.

Much more information will be shared as we get closer to this special day.

Out of School Programming

- The YMCA is providing out of school care programming (before school, after school and PD day care) for students in kindergarten. Please contact the YMCA if you are interested in these programs.
- The It's a BLAST Program is providing out of school care programming (before school, after school and PD day care) for students in grades one to six. Please contact the It's a BLAST program if you are interested in these programs.

We are very excited to welcome everyone back to CSM and begin another year together. The first few days are always filled with excitement, new routines, new friendships and a little bit of nervous energy too. Our staff will be ready to help children find their way, settle into their classrooms and begin the year feeling welcomed, safe and cared for.

Thank you for your partnership and for trusting us with your children. We look forward to seeing everyone very soon!

Warmly,

Janet Clamp
Principal
Children of St. Martha School