



# ST. PATRICK FINE ARTS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2022-2023

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## ‘UNITING THE ARTS AND GOSPEL VALUES’

### VISION STATEMENT

The St. Patrick Fine Arts Elementary School community is dedicated to having everyone  
Learn Actively  
Grow Spiritually  
Live Creatively

### MISSION STATEMENT

St. Patrick Fine Arts Elementary School is a Christ-centered community actively engaging each child spiritually, academically, physically and creatively within a strong academic fine arts program serving the world in meaningful ways.

### BELIEF STATEMENT

We believe that every child is a unique and valued gift from God and shall have the opportunity to experience educational success through emphasis on fine arts in an environment that upholds Catholic principles.

### Welcome to St. Patrick Fine Arts Elementary School

We live our Catholic faith and bring our students' talents to light as we teach and learn each day through the arts including music, visual art, dance and drama. We know that exposure to the arts will only *strengthen* other areas of interest and talents, and build responsible, thinking citizens at the same time. There is a place for everyone in the arts and incredible life skills can be developed there, too. With an artistic mindset, students work through challenges with hope, have a thirst for knowledge, and reflect on their roles in the world.

Preparing learners for their futures, we consistently seek ways to appropriately integrate technology in responsible, safe ways. Gr 4-6 students can bring their own devices to school for learning. In addition to traditional arts, we are exploring robotics and coding opportunities (including 3D printing) for STEAM exploration. Students grow in their digital citizenship skills at every stage, through formal lessons and daily practice. Our Learning Commons is where traditional library elements merge with ones of collaboration, research, and creation. The possibilities are endless!

All of our students' gifts are worthy of celebration, and all students have a place at our school. To complement daily instruction, we offer co-curricular opportunities throughout the year where students are able to pursue their arts interests in choral singing, visual art, drama, dance, STEAM, leadership and athletics. Our grade 4-6 students participate in 3 rounds of exploratory workshop classes where teachers share their talents and respond to the growing changes in creative workforce demands and leisure interests for our students.

Our fine arts program is enriched by students taking their talents to the greater community both live and online. Our choirs have participated in many city events, including Christmas carols at City Hall, collaborating with the Lethbridge Symphony, and joining with other schools whenever possible. Choral speech with the Lethbridge Music and Speech Arts Festival in mind have been very rewarding experiences. Our traditional Christmas Concert is a highlight, and after a very full year of fine arts activities, a year-end Learning Through The Arts showcase rounds out many students' performance repertoire.

Along with daily religious instruction rooted in Gospel values, our mission as a Catholic school calls for us to reach out to the wider community through social justice projects. We actively support Mission Mexico, the Interfaith Food Bank, Holy Childhood, Development and Peace, and Chalice. The liturgical year guides our school celebrations, and we gather often as a school to sing and pray. All students participate in an annual faith retreat, and many will partake in First Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation sacraments while attending St. Patrick Fine Arts. Students receive dedicated learning in First Nations ways of knowing and you will see these teachings infused throughout the year. We are all Treaty people.

St. Patrick Fine Arts Elementary School is a growing, vibrant and energetic school with a proud history and a bright future, providing a fulfilling and rich arts experience for every student. Our parents agree: "...it is a Christ-centered school that encourages our children to grow spiritually and to learn in a creative and active environment. We love the teachers and staff who share their talents and wonderful skills and experiences with our children." We look forward to 'Uniting the Arts and Gospel Values' with you!

## **BELL TIMES**

<b>Monday-Thursday</b>		<b>Friday</b>	
8:35	Warning Bell	8:35	Warning Bell
8:38	School day starts	8:38	School day starts
34 minutes	Period lengths (10 per day)	34 minutes	Period lengths (4 per day)
11:48 - 12:33	Lunch break (eat/play)	9:51-10:06	recess
3:38 - 3:48	Homeroom time	11:14	Homeroom Time
3:48	Dismissal	11:30	Dismissal

## **SCHOOL COLORS**

Kelly Green and White

## **SCHOOL TEAM NAME**

Crusaders, to honour St. Patrick's lifelong commitment to share Catholicism with everyone

Visit <https://stpatrikfinearts.entripyshops.com/> to purchase school logo clothing.

**SCHOOL TELEPHONE:** (403-327-4386) Parents are always welcome to contact the school by phone in regard to any matter or e-mail to [spfaoffice@holyspirit.ab.ca](mailto:spfaoffice@holyspirit.ab.ca). If students need to call parents, they can use a phone in the office. Office hours are 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Mon. to Thurs. and 8:00 am - 12:00 pm Fridays.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION** Within our commitment as a Catholic school, students receive religious instruction in direct class time and also permeated throughout other subjects. As a school, we attend Mass at St. Martha's Parish 3-4 times each year and also hold Masses and liturgies at school. We embrace children of all faiths, but expect that all students will attend Mass and participate in all celebrations, retreats, and religious education classes throughout the school year. To discuss any concerns around religious instruction, please contact the Principal.

This year we continue a new 3-year faith plan with a theme focus called Build! Pilgrims of Hope'. Year 2 reminds us that God is in our minds and that we can build one another up through God in every thought, word and action (special focus on the Corporal Works of Mercy). We are excited to continue growing in faith in our school community, and share resources home via newsletters, family gatherings and School Council.

**UNIVERSAL SUPPORTS FOR LEARNING AT SPFAE** All students are gifts from God. All students learn differently and develop at different rates. While there are 'typical' milestones, the staff at St. Patrick Fine Arts recognizes that a keen awareness for making learning accessible is key for all students to succeed. You will see this practice in room configurations, in student groupings, in allowing for a variety of assessment styles, and in how both low and high forms of technology are used to see kids grow in their student skill confidence. We also know that students need frequent breaks and to stay hydrated; these truths shape teachers' individual lessons, instructional timing and routines.

One area of ongoing attention is a desire to strengthen students' self-regulation skills, often called 'Executive Function' skills. These are rooted in the brain's ability to move away from fight/flight mode to more complex levels of decision making, prioritization, sorting through information, and being emotionally ready for learning. Again, young people do not develop these skills at the same rate; thought must go into best plans for each gender, as well. Our brains are complicated, but worthy of personalized attention. We believe it is not enough to regulate learning environments for students; we want to see students recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, and take

action accordingly, strengthening those weaker skills along the way. We encourage thoughtful problem solving, and adopting mindful strategies to develop greater awareness of both positive and negative stress. Developing a 'growth mindset' is important to set kids on a lifetime of resilience and positive self-management. Our staff is committed to practices that infuse Catholic mindfulness and we can assure students and parents that supporting students' social and emotional wellbeing is foundational at our school.

**FAMILY-SCHOOL LIAISON COUNSELOR** Students experiencing emotional, social or academic challenges receive day-to-day support from classroom teachers and administrators. Our Family-School Liaison Counselor is available to provide more specialized support for children and families, and can also connect families with a network of support agencies. A referral/consent form is available in the office or through your child's teacher. At this age, extended support beyond 1 visit requires written parental consent.

**PATHS TO PARENT/FAMILY INFORMATION** Monthly calendars and newsletters are posted on our website ([www.spfa.holyspirit.ab.ca](http://www.spfa.holyspirit.ab.ca)) and sent out via the primary e-mail address you provided at registration. Print copies can be provided upon request. Also, check our website regularly as new information will be posted there on our interactive calendar. The website is our main source of up-to-date information for parents along with regular come and go info with your child's teacher. Additional notes may be sent out from time to time in your child's agenda or via Remind, SPACES, etc. It is essential that you reach out if you are not receiving school communication.

In addition, we have an active parent community through classroom representatives. If you have a keen sense for building community, please consider being your child's class rep to pass along important e-mails or to start a phone-out when necessary. School Council meets monthly to discuss goals, policies and social opportunities. Check the September newsletter for more information and consider getting involved.

We encourage parents to contact the school by phone to volunteer, to discuss problems, to ask questions or to offer suggestions. The normal communication route is to first contact the classroom teacher who may then refer you to administration. Classroom teachers will return your call as soon as possible, within 48 hours. Matters of a more general or emergent nature should be directed to the Principal. E-mail is also an effective way of communicating; all teacher e-mail addresses are available on our website or by calling the office. Our division practices a 'right to disconnect' policy, asking staff to disengage from electronic communication between 6pm-6am daily.

**PARENT VOLUNTEERS** Parent volunteers are a valuable resource and we encourage regular input and participation in our classrooms. Assisting teachers as a volunteer benefits your own and other children and strengthens the ties between home and school. All volunteers are asked to check into the office and get an i.d. pass every time you visit. Volunteers need to have security clearances done in advance if they are taking on a larger "chaperone" role. Information about the necessary steps will be shared in September.

Volunteer duties may include:

- contributing special talents or knowledge
- hot lunch volunteers
- being active in School Council
- Christmas Concert or Wellness/Sports Day volunteers
- helping in the library or with book fairs
- field trip supervisors
- odd job tasks (i.e. bulletin boards)

**COMMUNICATING STUDENT PROGRESS** In addition to 'Meet the Teacher Night' in September, parent/student/teacher collaboration meetings will take place in October and March. Other

meetings may be requested by parents or teachers and held at a mutually agreed upon time. All get-togethers provide parents with an opportunity to examine a child's individual learning in more detail, to discuss his/her present achievement, to set goals, and/or to discuss any activities, incidents or challenges that relate to positive growth and development. This year we will continue sharing student progress through a digital portfolio called SPACES instead of a traditional report card. This is just year 2, so your support in the transition is invaluable.

**ATTENDANCE** We take attendance each morning. Students arriving late must report directly to the school office. If your child will be absent from school, please call the school office before 9:00 AM; a phoneout will notify parents of absent children to ensure they are safely accounted for. We have voicemail to record your messages outside of office hours. Being on time sets the child up for a successful day without the stress of rushing in. If a child is late in arriving at school or absent quite often, we will reach out to parents to try to come up with support solutions.

**LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY** A student may not leave the school prior to regular dismissal time without receiving permission, including at lunch. Students needing to leave the school for medical or dental appointments or other parental requests must present a note to the office or have the parents call to request the dismissal. A child may only leave with an authorized individual whom you identified on your registration form or later by phone or in person. When leaving the building, the parent must physically sign the student out in the office. Your child's safety is our primary concern, so your cooperation is appreciated.

**BEFORE SCHOOL PROCEDURES** Outside supervision is available to students at 8:20 daily and all students are expected to stay outside until the first bell rings, unless they are meeting with a teacher. Dress for the weather! If your child must arrive sooner occasionally, they can come in until 8:20. BLAST provides before school care for a fee, and is best for families who must drop off early regularly. If a child often arrives too early, administration will connect with parents to explore different options. When the first bell rings, students are asked to line up in their class groups to allow for a smooth entry.

**RECESS EXPECTATIONS** For their social and physical wellbeing, all students are to go outside for recess unless specific plans have been made with teachers or administrators. If a child is not well enough for recess, they are likely not well enough to be at school. Students have indoor recesses when the wind chill temperature is -20 Celsius or colder. Please send your child dressed for cold weather or keep extra toques and mitts at school. Supervisors are outside to monitor student activity and to assist as needed. Students are responsible for their actions during recess, and must recognize recess as another learning environment with rules and expectations. Teachers review those regularly throughout the year, and positive, Christian behavior is expected of all students. If students take snacks outside for recess, they must put wrappers in the garbage.

**DROP OFF AND PICKING STUDENTS TO START AND END THE DAY** While we welcome family involvement at school, we ask that parents wait for their kids at agreed-upon spots on the playground/field or where you plan to park your vehicle. This keeps our halls free of congestion and clean, especially in the Winter. Of course, in inclement weather, you should come in to stay warm. If you wish to meet with a teacher before or after school, you are welcome to come in after the majority of students have left. Calling ahead is important for those meetings so teachers can prepare and give you their full attention.

If you drive your child to/from school, you cannot park (leave) your car in the loop as it is first and foremost a fire lane. Also, please drive through to the furthest spot so that others can fill in after you. Consider agreeing on a further-out spot for drop-off/pick-up to develop greater independence, to strengthen knowledge of safe pedestrian practices, and to reduce congestion during peak times. Students must walk on sidewalks and cross at the designated crossings at all

times. Students must walk their scooters or bikes once on school property and must lock them up - we are not responsible for stolen property. Also, please mind all driving laws, especially our new daily playground zone times of 7:30 am to 9:00 pm EVERY DAY.

**SCHOOL CASH ONLINE** Visit [www.holyspirit.schoolcashonline.com](http://www.holyspirit.schoolcashonline.com) to create your own account where all fees for school can be paid. Our schools are no longer able to accept credit card/debit payments in the office. School Cash Online is a secure site, and should you forget to log in on your computer or phone, a computer is available for your use in the office. Please check your e-mail regularly to see if new items are posted (i.e. hot lunch or pizza lunch sales).

**SCHOOL FEES** An itemized list of school fees will be provided to you on the first day of school. You are asked to have school fees paid by September 30 using School Cash Online (see above). These fees help us to create a richer learning experience than provincial funding alone. The School Council fee covers the cost of family social events, hot lunches for all, and other valuable school projects.

**SCHOOL BUSES** We have 3 buses serving various communities in West Lethbridge. If you are interested in bus transportation and have not registered for it, please contact our office. This year, there is no transportation fee thanks to a grant from Alberta Education. Parents are asked to remind their children of proper and courteous behaviour while en route to the school and home. In the event of unacceptable behaviour on the bus, parents will be notified. If the behaviour does not improve, **bus privileges may be removed** for a period of time. Please call the office for transportation support or visit <https://www.southland.ca/lethbridge> for routes, times, and the [student handbook](#).

**BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AT SCHOOL** At St. Patrick FAE, we attempt to help students develop skills that will assist them to function effectively in society. In order to be good citizens, students must learn to be responsible for their behavior; therefore, we instruct them of our expectations and through frequent reminders and coaching, we hope to develop the Christian values, and the social and personal characteristics that are necessary for a healthy life among other people. Being held accountable and setting personal boundaries are important steps in growing up and building healthy relationships with peers and adults alike.

Students who require behavior redirection or support are initially attended to by the classroom teacher (or other staff). Continued difficulties will necessitate conversations and follow-up with an administrator. Consequences for inappropriate behavior may include recess detention, writing a letter of apology or, in the case of extreme behavior (ie. aggression or fighting), an in-school or out-of-school suspension. Parents will be notified when deemed appropriate. Ultimately, we want to see students accept responsibility for their actions, seek forgiveness when necessary, and grow in personal strategies to restore damaged relationships afterwards using Catholic values as their guide. Strategies for discipline vary by student and by event, and we welcome working with parents to support their children. Please reference the [Alberta Education Act](#) (last revised 2020 – sec. 31 and 32) for complete student and parent responsibilities. As an anchor document, we use a Student Code of Conduct ([div I](#) and [div II](#)) to map pathways of support for students. Note that these are very comprehensive as to events and that staff considers students' needs each time.

**DRESS GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL** Students are expected to dress appropriately for school, and parents are asked to monitor their child's choices. Clothing that is revealing and/or inappropriate for a child's age and physical development is not acceptable, nor are t-shirts with offensive slogans or graphics. Shorts are acceptable during warm weather but should be of a decent length. All children are required to wear some form of proper footwear on their feet during the school day. For every day, we ask that the child **keep shoes at school** for classroom/gym wear. All clothing that a child may remove during the school day (e.g. jackets, sweaters, runners,

boots, hats, scarves, gloves, etc.) **should be marked with the child's name** to reduce the number of lost or misplaced items of clothing. Lost items are kept for a time, and put out for students/parents to see several times in the year. Unclaimed items are donated regularly.

**CELLULAR PHONES** Students who come to school with a cell phone are required to store the phone in their backpack/locker each day, including before/after school on the grounds and during recesses and lunch breaks. The understanding is that a cell phone at school is for a specific purpose, directed by the teacher for learning. Please talk to your child's teacher(s) for more information and continue to talk with your child about online safety, including intellectual property, cyber security and social media. Should a student be found to use their phone inappropriately, parents will be contacted. If your child needs to have special cell phone arrangements for emergency purposes, please talk with your child's teacher.

**TOYS AND TECHNOLOGY** Students are asked to keep all toys (including stuffed animals), technology, or hand-held electronic devices at home. These items are important to the child and can be costly; the chance of accidental damage is certainly greater if the toy/technology is at school. Children at school are always encouraged to play actively on the playground or field as our healthy school climate fully supports physical activity at break time whenever possible. If you believe your child will benefit from personal use of a fidget item or something to increase his/her comfort, please talk first with the teacher and develop a learning support plan with that in mind.

**FIRE DRILLS AND LOCKDOWN DRILLS** Both fire and lockdown drills are conducted frequently throughout the school year to familiarize students with routines and to minimize any problems or dangerous situations that may arise during an emergency situation. Whenever possible, lead time is provided, along with supportive coaching so children understand what is going on. Often, Lethbridge Regional Police or Fire Department representatives are present. We are asked to have 6 fire drills and 4 lockdowns annually.

**MEDICAL ALERTS AND STUDENT ALLERGIES** Parents are requested to notify the school of any medical concerns that may affect your child's learning performance or personal safety. If your child has a severe medical condition requiring us to store and perhaps administer medications, please see the office early in September for forms that will need to be filled out. **For those students who have Epipen prescriptions, we would like to have a current Epipen kept at school in case of emergencies.** In compliance with provincial legislation, each school now also has an emergency Epipen on site for any necessary use. All staff are trained to use it.

While there is no way to monitor every food item in the school, we ask that all parents refrain from sending their children with food containing nuts. If a classmate has a known allergy to another food, it is respectful to consider that child's needs in the classroom community, as well. Please talk with your child's teacher about any food allergies your child lives with. For hot lunch days, every effort is taken to consider common allergies; that said, if you believe your child is at risk, please inquire in advance and/or pack a regular lunch on hot lunch days.

**ACCIDENTS, ILLNESS, OR INJURIES AT SCHOOL** **If your child is feeling unwell, keep him/her at home for comfort and to protect from any virus transmission.** Students occasionally need medical attention because of an accident. In addition to providing first aid, the school will often call a parent to come and take their child for medical treatment. On occasion, the injury is such that 911 may be called as well. The parent is then contacted to meet the student and a staff member at Emergency. Accident reports are completed when students are injured, and as a precaution, parents are always contacted when a child has sustained any type of head injury for closer monitoring. Information about additional accident insurance is available at our division office (403-327-9555).

**LUNCHES/SNACKS** Students eat their lunches in their classrooms each day, with grade 5 students acting as 'lunch monitors', supported by adult staff supervisors. We do not have microwaves available for warm-ups, so please send warm food in a thermos-type container. All students are asked to reduce waste by bringing their own cutlery and a refillable water bottle each day. We do have water fountains for student use. The school does not operate a canteen with food for sale, but snacks/lunches are available to students at the office should they forget. Eating time at lunch is 20-25 minutes long followed by recess or club time.

We are now a site with full use of organics composting. Students are learning how to properly dispose of garbage, compostables and recyclable materials. Best practice includes using washable containers for lunches/snacks to reduce the number of individually wrapped items which have wrappers that cannot be recycled. You can save money by sending bulk purchases in washable containers so far less waste is produced. The kids will participate in lessons throughout the year around reducing their environmental footprints and making healthy food choices.

**INTRAMURAL TEAMS** All of our students are assigned to a multi-grade colour team for the duration of their time at St. Pat's, all named for famous artists! Siblings are usually put on the same teams. All year, we have spirit days and may have lunch intramural opportunities where kids can earn points for participating. Our oldest students are called upon to be team leaders. At year's end, the teams with the greatest number of participants earn entries for a chance to win a team party. Support your child by checking the calendar and helping them to be creative team players!

**LIBRARY LEARNING COMMONS** The school library has a large supply of appropriate books, access to e-books and learning resources that are continually updated. Our library catalog is now available online through our school website, where students can reserve books or read/write reviews. Overdue books are noted and students may not take out additional materials until the overdues are returned. Students who lose or willfully damage books or materials they have borrowed will be charged according to the replacement cost and age of the book. Our library hosts at least 1 Scholastic Book Fair each year where families can add to their collections. Many teachers choose to run Scholastic programs in their classrooms, as well. We will also hold a book sale to make room for new books!

**INDIGENOUS LEARNING FOR ALL** Our students learn about and participate in Indigenous learning both in curricular class settings and in school-wide projects as part of our commitment to reconciliation alongside Alberta Education requirements. We reside on Treaty 7 land, and we are proud to learn, sing, dance, and grow here. We pray for the needs of all of our brothers and sisters, as we are all Treaty people. We learn with guidance from elders and knowledge keepers and strive to share our learning with families as we go.

