

Newsletter ~ May 2026

Administrators' Message

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Honoring Mary, Mothers, and the Gift of Education

During the month of May, we honor Mary, the Mother of God, with special devotion. Each morning, we will begin our day by praying the Hail Mary together as a school community. It is fitting that we dedicate this month to Mary, the Blessed Virgin and Mother of Jesus, during the same time we celebrate all mothers. We extend heartfelt wishes to each of our Good Shepherd mothers for a joyful and blessed Mother's Day on May 10!



May is also a time of continued Easter celebration. In the Christian tradition, Easter is a pivotal moment that commemorates Jesus' resurrection. It marks the culmination of Lent and ushers in the season of Pentecost. As such, Easter is central to the Church's liturgical calendar and serves as the foundation for many important feasts and traditions throughout the year.

On **May 29**, we also observe **World Catholic Education Day**. This global celebration is a time for Catholics everywhere to reflect, give thanks, and pray for the gift of Catholic education, which has shaped lives and communities around the world for centuries. The day highlights the essential role of Catholic schools in helping students grow in faith, wisdom, and character. Catholic education partners with families and parishes to nurture children in their journey toward holiness.

May this month be filled with gratitude, joy, and renewed purpose as we honor Mary, celebrate mothers, and give thanks for the blessing of Catholic and public education.





Jennifer Dimas
Principal



Beth Pecson
Assistant Principal



Sonia Schultz
Assistant Principal

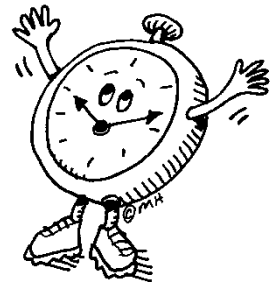
School Supplies for Next Year

Once again, Good Shepherd will be offering families the option to purchase school supplies through Write-On Stationary. Supply lists and information on how to order will be sent out via email this month and posted to our school website.



Hours for 2026-2027

Our hours of operation will change only slightly for the upcoming school year. The first bell will ring at 8:45 am, with announcements and instruction beginning at 8:50 am. Dismissal at the end of the day will remain at 3:30 pm. On Thursdays, students will be dismissed at 12:05 pm. Before major holidays, we will again flip our Thursday and Friday schedules, with Thursday being a full day and Friday being the early dismissal day so that students have an earlier start to the holiday. Lunch hour will be from 12:15 – 12:50 pm.



Staffing for 2026-2027

We are busily planning for the next school year, and we do anticipate a few staffing changes for next year. The staffing cycle is just beginning, so we will have a clearer picture of what is happening in June. Staffing is tentative until our staffing cycle is completed at the end of June.

Student Faith Day ~ May 1

We are pleased to share that our annual Student Faith Day took place on Friday, May 1. This special day was rooted in our school charism:

“Inspired by our Good Shepherd, Jesus, to Love, Learn, and Lead.”

The afternoon began with a beautiful Opening Liturgy of the Word, where we were grateful to have Father Glenn lead us in prayer.

Throughout the afternoon, students rotated through three engaging sessions in their house groupings, participating in a variety of faith-based activities led by staff. We were honoured to welcome Mr. Kevyn Ernest, retired ECSD teacher and chaplain, as a guest presenter for sessions. The afternoon concluded with a closing prayer and time for reflection, offering students a meaningful opportunity to deepen their connection to their faith, their peers, and the values that guide our school community.

It was a joyful and enriching day of faith, fellowship, and spiritual growth for all.



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Thank You Staff and Community Members!

Many of the experiences students enjoy at school beyond regular classroom learning are made possible because teachers, staff, and community members generously give their time. This may include helping with lunchtime activities, special events, clubs, or school teams, often before or after the school day. These activities are not part of regular instructional time, but they play an important role in helping students build confidence, learn to work with others, and feel connected to their school community.

Our school and Edmonton Catholic Schools are grateful to the teachers, staff, and community members who volunteer their time in these ways. By working together, we can show respect and appreciation for those who support students outside of regular work hours and help make school a welcoming place for all.



Message From Our Chief Superintendent Lynnette Anderson

Join Chief Superintendent Lynnette Anderson as she reflects on our Division Patron, Mary, Mother of God, and celebrates the gift of publicly funded Catholic education in Alberta in her [May Chief Superintendent Message](#).

Bus Driver Appreciation Day ~ May 4

On Monday, May 4, the Edmonton Catholic School Division would like to offer our thanks to our awesome bus drivers who are committed and dedicated to getting our students to and from school safely and efficiently.

They are the first and last encounter that our students experience as part of the school day, and the happiness and generosity of spirit with which they serve is a powerful influence on our students.

Spring Concerts

The Spring Concert series was a tremendous success, filling our gymnasium with music, joy, and a strong sense of community.

A heartfelt acknowledgment is extended first to the students, whose energy, bravery, and enthusiasm brought each performance to life. Each concert showcased not only the growth of their musical skills, but also their increasing confidence, courage, and presence on stage. The gym was filled with music, joy, and spirit, as students shone brightly and delivered performances that were both memorable and outstanding.

Special recognition is extended to the music teachers and Spring Concert coordinators, Mrs. Kim and Mrs. Pecson, for their imagination, dedication, and remarkable ability to coordinate countless details. Their behind-the-scenes work brought the entire production together with professionalism and care. The musical growth and abilities of our students are a direct reflection of their outstanding instruction and commitment.

Appreciation is also extended to the school staff for their encouragement, rehearsal support, and many contributions that made these evenings possible. Their efforts were evident throughout every aspect of the performances. Gratitude is shared for the Grade 6 AV and stage hand crew, Natalia and Solomia, and the Grade 5 AV crew of Mila, Liv and Anaia. Their attention to detail and technical expertise ensured the concerts ran smoothly. They all did an outstanding job.

A huge thank you is also extended to Noah Pecson for accompanying the Grades 5 and 6 students on cello, adding richness and depth to the musical performances.

Sincere thanks are given to the School Council decorating team—Andrea Simon, Jamie Hautmann, Melissa Stoklosa, and Sawra Mueller—for transforming the gym into a warm and festive space that set the tone for the celebrations.

Finally, appreciation is extended to the families and guests whose presence and ongoing support play an important role in student confidence and success. Their encouragement helped make the evenings even more meaningful.

Overall, the Spring Concerts were a beautiful celebration of talent, teamwork, and school spirit, and a true highlight of the school year.

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Food Bank Drive

A sincere thank you is extended to the school community for the generous donation to the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry through the SSVP Good Shepherd Conference. Over 1,000 items were collected and shared in support of families in need, reflecting a strong spirit of service and compassion.

This initiative was introduced as a fun House competition, with each of the seven Houses contributing food donations on a designated day. The friendly spirit of participation helped inspire strong engagement across the school community. While House spirit and enthusiasm were on full display, the true winners of this initiative are the many community members who will benefit from the donations.

Special recognition is given to the Grade 6 Saints Leadership Social Justice Team for their outstanding effort and commitment in organizing and supporting this initiative. Their leadership played an important role in its success.

The SSVP Good Shepherd Conference expressed deep gratitude for the ongoing support, noting that these contributions make a meaningful difference for individuals and families in the community, serving others in hope.



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Reporting a Student Absence



Edmonton Catholic Schools utilizes the SchoolMessenger SafeArrival system to simplify reporting absences for families. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and you can report your child's absence in advance using any of these options:

- **SchoolMessenger App** (iOS or Android)
- **PowerSchool** (click on the SchoolMessenger icon in the left hand menu)
- **Website:** go.schoolmessenger.ca
- **Phone:** 1-833-788-7662

Using SchoolMessenger is quick, convenient, and helps keep your school informed and your child safe. For full instructions and more information,

visit ecsd.net/reportingabsences.

While student absences can be reported through the SchoolMessenger SafeArrival app, **please be aware that messages sent via the app do not reach staff members. If you need to communicate directly with your child's homeroom teacher, please continue to use email or write a note in your child's agenda.**

Thank you for helping us ensure clear and timely communication!

New Riders - Bus Application Deadline: May 31

The deadline to apply for new student transportation to ensure your child can run the bus on the first day of school is May 31, 2026.

Link: <https://www.ecsd.net/apply-for-transportation>

Families will receive an email during the second week of August advising that the school start-up transportation information is posted in the Parent Portal in [PowerSchool](#). Due to the high volume of applications, new applications received during the summer or after school starts will take up to 3 to 4 weeks to add a new stop. Requests are processed in the order in which they are received.

Current Riders: If a student is already using transportation services, you don't need to submit a new application. Only when there is an address change or when a student transfers to a different school should a form be completed. You can apply, make changes, or cancel bus service throughout the school year.

Asian Heritage Month

Asian Heritage Month is celebrated every May in Canada to recognize and honor the contributions, achievements, and histories of Asian Canadians. It highlights the rich cultural diversity of communities with roots across Asia and the Pacific Islands, and encourages learning about the challenges they have faced, including discrimination, exclusion, and struggles for justice.

Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity to:

- Celebrate cultural traditions, art, and stories from Asian communities.
- Reflect on the importance of equity, diversity, inclusion, and anti-racism.
- Support students in exploring identity, belonging, and community connections.
- Promote conversations about anti-Asian racism and social justice.

School Council/Parent Advisory Association

Parents are always welcome to join us for our School Council meetings. Our most recent meeting was held at the school on Wednesday, April 22 at 6:30 pm. We invite you to attend our last meeting of the year which will be held on Wednesday, May 27 at 6:30 pm. School Council meeting minutes can be found on our school website.

Pita Pit Hot Lunch ~ May 29

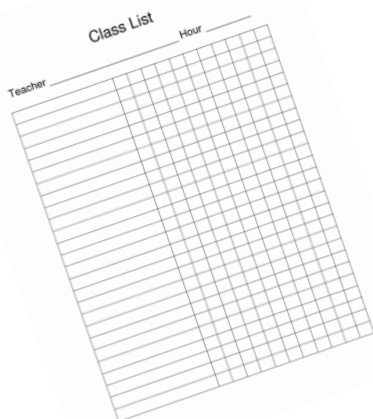
Just a reminder that May 29 is a Pita Pit hot lunch day! If you ordered a meal for your child through Healthy Hunger, they don't need to bring in a lunch on that day.

A special thank you to all of our parent volunteers who so seamlessly always get the hot meals delivered to each and every student! You are all amazing!

Homeroom Placements for the 2026-2027 School Year

We will soon begin the process of determining homeroom placements for the upcoming school year. A great deal of care, collaboration, and professional judgment goes into this work, and we appreciate families' understanding and support as school staff complete this important responsibility.

In forming homeroom classes, many factors are carefully and intentionally considered to ensure balanced and effective learning environments. These include gender balance, academic needs, learning styles, work habits, achievement levels, and social dynamics within each



group. Considerable time is devoted to ensuring that each class is well-balanced and supportive of student success. Teacher assignments are also made with equal care, taking into account pedagogical expertise, student needs, and overall classroom composition, with the goal of equitable and effective distribution of supports across all classrooms.

It is important to clearly state that **friend requests and teacher requests will not be accepted or honored under any circumstances**. This policy is necessary in order to maintain fairness, balance, and integrity in the placement process for all students. As a result, families are asked not to submit requests for specific teachers or peer groupings, as these will not be considered.

If there are specific learning needs or relevant educational considerations that may support placement decisions, families are invited to share this information in writing with Mrs. Dimas by June 1. Please note that while this information is appreciated, it does not override the broader needs of balanced classroom composition. Placement information must be submitted annually, as needs may change from year to year.

Homeroom placements will be shared a few days prior to the first day of school to allow for any final adjustments over the summer period.

Registrations for 2026 – 2027

We are well into planning for the 2026 - 2027 school year. Students who are currently registered at Good Shepherd do not have to complete registrations forms for the next school year since that has been replaced with the Intentions Icon in PowerSchool. If you have neighbours, friends or family who are interested in having their children attend Good Shepherd, please advise them to register as soon as possible.

Thank you for spreading the good news about Good Shepherd. We have a terrific community of students, parents and staff. We continuously receive positive feedback about the behavior of our students and the way they conduct themselves in the community. Thank you for your support. You and your children are our best form of advertising!

Moving? Please let us know...

Staffing and classes depend on who is here for next year. We continue to experience an increase in enrollment at Good Shepherd, and we need to have as accurate a count as possible. If you are planning a move, please let us know in writing, by email, or by phone so that we can have the right number of teachers and the right number of students in each classroom. This will also be beneficial for your children so that their student information can follow them. A special thank you goes out to those of you who have already been in communication with us regarding moves for next year. We greatly appreciate it!



Good Shepherd Reading Superstars Program



Our monthly draw for our Good Shepherd Reading Superstars was held on April 29, and we are pleased to congratulate our lucky winners who will enjoy a pizza lunch with Mrs. Dimas and Mrs. Pecson on Friday, May 8! Our Kindergarten students will get to “shop” for a new book of their choice.

- Kindergarten: Aibel, Ava and Harry
- Grade One: Adrian, Henry and Andreas
- Grade Two: Patrick, Oliver and Ethan
- Grade Three: Tyler, Lorde, Kevin and Kiersten
- Grade Four: Jordana, Yaa and Bruno
- Grade Five: Jean, Joshua and Aiden
- Grade Six: Pavlo and Sophie

The top three classes with the most accumulated reading strips for April are:

- 🏆 **1st Place:** 1A with 113 strips
- 🥈 **2nd Place:** 6B with 93 strips
- 🥉 **3rd Place:** 6C with 89 strips

Great job, everyone! A big thank you to our homeroom teachers and parents for encouraging students to read and participate!



June Library Closure

A reminder from the Good Shepherd Library that the final week for borrowing books will be May 25 to May 29. Following this week, all library books will be collected in preparation for the end of the school year.

Families are kindly asked to ensure that all library books are returned promptly so that our collection can be organized and ready for the new school year. Your support in encouraging responsible borrowing habits is greatly appreciated.

Thank you for supporting your child’s literacy learning.

“Today a reader... tomorrow a leader.”

Mental Health Awareness Week ~ May 4 to May 8

A focus on positive mental health for students, families, schools and communities contributes to building a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and nurtures a sense of belonging and positive sense of self. Students who are mentally healthy are better able to achieve success, are more resilient and are more likely to build healthy relationships.

The 2026 Hats On! For Mental Health Day will occur on May 6. Each May, Albertans are invited to wear a hat to raise awareness of the importance of good mental health. Participating schools will relax their hat rules and encourage students and teachers to build understanding by wearing hats to school. Students will also participate in a coordinated lesson on understanding mental health and the importance of removing the stigma associated with mental illnesses.

Parents/Guardians can also learn more about supporting positive mental health by visiting www.canwetalk.ca website.

Thank you for being part of the ongoing conversation around mental health.



APPLE Schools Core-ner

Rainbow Lunch Week is May 25-29. Students love this week. This is a week where we encourage students to try new fruits and vegetables or to bring their favorite ones to school in their lunch. Below are the dates and the colours of fruits or vegetables to pack in your child's lunch.

Monday, May 25, 2026 - red,

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 - orange,

Wednesday, May 27, 2026 - yellow or white,

Thursday, May 28, 2026 - green

Friday, May 29, 2026 - blue or purple.

All of these colours of fruits and vegetables benefit the body in different ways. Some colours of fruits and vegetables improve the immune system; other colours improve your skin and eyes. The goal is for students to show off their favourite fruits and vegetables to eat and maybe get a few ideas from classmates for their future lunch. Students will hear about rainbow lunches on announcements at the end of May and will be given daily reminders of options to pack in their lunches. Thank you for helping us promote healthy eating.



Fun in the Sun with Vita-Man D

For the month of May, we will also be focusing on playing in the sun! We will be learning all about the importance of vitamin D, and how playing outside helps our body in more ways than we know. We will also be discussing the importance of using sunscreen when doing outdoor activities and more safe sun tips!

What is the sunshine vitamin?

Vitamin D is known as the sunshine vitamin because the sun's ultra-violet B (UVB) sun rays make vitamin D in our bodies.

Sunlight on our skin provides a major source of our vitamin D, however, we cannot safely get all the vitamin D this way. One reason can be the time of year – during the winter months (October to March) northern-hemisphere parts of the world, like Alberta, do not receive the UVB rays needed to make vitamin D.

Why do we need vitamin D?

A lack of vitamin D can cause rickets in children and the softening of bones and osteoporosis (fragile bones) in adults. Many parts of the body, including muscles, nerves, skin, glands, and the immune system also benefit from the sun's rays.

The Seven Grandfather Teachings/ Good Shepherd House News

In April, our school community focused towards developing the character trait of the Beaver. The teaching of wisdom is taught to us by the beaver.

Students worked really hard to demonstrate this attribute and were recognized; a total of 2391 rocks were earned, the most this year! The three houses that earned the most rocks in April for following the character trait of wisdom were as follows:

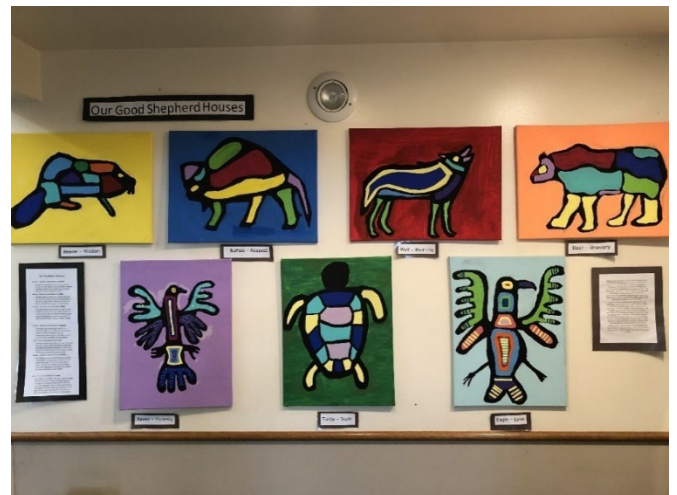
1st Place: Eagle House – 305 Rocks Earned

2nd Place: Beaver House – 288 Rocks Earned

3rd Place: Bear House – 285 Rocks Earned

For the remainder of the year, we will work towards developing all of the 7 traits.

A big thank you goes out to Mrs. Strelkov for her leadership and work in implementing The Seven Sacred Teachings initiative at our site.



Congratulations, Isabelle Mariana Mendiola, our Edmonton Catholic Schools Student Faith Leadership Award Recipient!

Each year, the Edmonton Catholic Board of Trustees celebrate those students who, through their actions and/or service to their school community, enhance the Catholic identity of that community. There are many ways in which this leadership may be demonstrated. Examples include serving the school community during celebration or prayer life, leadership in social justice endeavours, bearing witness to their faith through their interactions with others, participation in class discussions or co/extracurricular faith-based activities. These students serve as excellent Catholic role models for their peers.

Isabelle Mariana Mendiola was the Good Shepherd School recipient of this award this year and we were so happy to recognize Anne and celebrate this very special award with her and his family at Lumen Christi on April 8. Congratulations, Isabelle! Thank you for being a role-model for everyone in our school community!





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