

Newsletter ~ March 2026

Administrators' Message

As we move more deeply into the season of Lent, we can already see signs of change around us. The daylight stretches a little longer each evening, a gentle reminder that new life, springtime, and the joy of Easter are drawing near.

Lent began this year on Wednesday, February 18—Ash Wednesday—a sacred day that invites us into prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. During the Ash Wednesday liturgy, ashes are placed on our foreheads in the sign of the cross with the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” The ashes come from the palm branches blessed on last year’s Palm Sunday. This year, Palm Sunday will be celebrated on March 29. Our Lenten journey will come to a close on Thursday, April 2, as we prepare to rejoice in the celebration of Easter on Sunday, April 5.

Throughout this holy season, our students continue to demonstrate focus, perseverance, and care in their learning. As a reminder to families, Thursday, March 26 will be a full instructional day, and students will be dismissed at 12:12 p.m. on Friday, March 27 as we begin Spring Break. We hope this time provides rest and renewal for all.

We are also delighted to share joyful news within our Good Shepherd community. Mrs. Gabrielle Binst and her husband welcomed their fourth daughter, Maya Maskosis Houle, who arrived on December 4 at 11:32 a.m., weighing 7 lbs 2 oz. Mr. Fernandes and his wife also celebrated the arrival of their first child, a son named Zayn, at the beginning of January. We are grateful to share that both families—and their beautiful new babies—are happy and healthy. We extend our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to them.

May this Lenten season be a time of reflection, growth, and hope for all.



Jennifer Dimas
Principal



Beth Pecson
Assistant Principal



Sonia Schultz
Assistant Principal



School Charism

Ways Christ Is the Good Shepherd

Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11, 14). The relationship of believers with Jesus Christ is that of sheep to a shepherd. The Lord is our shepherd; we are his flock. But what does that mean?

In John 10, Christ spells out what it means for him to be our shepherd and for us to be his sheep in seven wonderful ways.

Christ has received you as a gift from the Father

“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.” (John 10:29)

Christ’s sheep are a gift that he receives from the Father.

Now how would you know if you are one of Christ’s sheep? How would you know if you have been given by the Father to the Son?

The identifying marks of Christ’s sheep are stated clearly in these verses: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (10:27). But what does it mean to hear his voice?

Jesus says earlier, “You do not believe because you are not among my sheep” (10:26). So it follows that believing is a distinguishing mark of the sheep given to the Son by the Father. Christ’s sheep hear his voice, they believe his Word, and they follow him.

So, if you believe and follow Jesus Christ, you are one of Christ’s sheep. You have been given by the Father to the Son.

Christ knows you completely

“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father...” (10:14-15)

Jesus Christ knows you completely! There may be times when you are a mystery to yourself, but you are never a mystery to Christ.

In the Psalms we read, “The Lord knows our frame...” (Psalm 103:14). Christ knows your temperament, your moods. He knows what lifts you up, and he knows what gets you down.

There is nothing you could ever tell Jesus about yourself that he does not already know completely.

Here is the joy of following Jesus Christ. Because he knows you completely, he is able to lead you effectively. The good shepherd knows what you need, and he is able to give you what you need at precisely the time that you need it.

Don't Forget to Book Your March Student-led Conference

Bookings for our March Student-led Conferences opened on Monday, February 23!

Student-led Conferences will take place on Tuesday, March 17 (Mrs. Mazer's Kindergarten A and B homerooms), Wednesday, March 18 (Mrs. Mazer's Kindergarten A and B homerooms) and Thursday, March 19 (Kindergarten to Grade 6). Parents/Guardians will have the opportunity to share in the learning that has taken place via their child's portfolio and have the opportunity to celebrate successes, set goals and touch base with the homeroom teacher.

Due to the number of Kindergarten students that are in Mrs. Mazer's Kindergarten A and B homerooms, Mrs. Mazer's Student-led Conferences will be held over three days:

- Tuesday, March 17
- Wednesday, March 18
- Thursday, March 19.

We are pleased to once again be using the online program *Conference Manager* to schedule Student-led Conferences this year. The *Booking Steps* below will give you step by step instructions to assist you with booking your conference time.

Step 1 (Only necessary if you did not previously register)

Pre-Register at:

<https://gsc-ecsd.schoolsoft.com>

- Click the REGISTER NOW button and complete the registration form. Your login credentials (email and password) will remain in the system to make it easy to access *Conference Manager* in the future.
- If you are using an older browser, *Conference Manager* will automatically prompt you to update your browser and provide you with a link. This is a one-time process and only takes a couple of minutes.
- In order to ensure that your email program does not block emails sent from the *Conference Manager*, we suggest adding appointments@schoolsoft.com to your contacts.

Step 2 – *Conference Manager* Opens to Parents/Guardians on Monday, February 23 @ 6:00 am

- You can access the Parent Login Page using the link in the Confirmation Email. If you do not receive a Confirmation Email, you can login by going directly to <https://gsc-ecsd.schoolsoft.com>.

Step 3 – Book your Student-led Conference

- Select the teachers with whom you would like to schedule conferences. You will be able

to view each teacher's available time slots.

- Once you have booked your appointments, you can print your schedule for reference. You will also receive an email confirmation containing each teacher's name, time, and location of the conference.
- You can log into the system at any time to view, print, cancel, or reschedule your appointments.

Please be sure to arrive at your booked time to respect other families' schedules. Only a limited number of families are scheduled for each time slot to allow for meaningful discussion with the teacher.

As always, if you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact the school office and we will be happy to assist you.

We look forward to seeing you at our March Student-led Conferences!



2026 – 2027 New Registrations

We are currently accepting registrations for new students for the 2026-2027 school year for all grades. To register for Kindergarten, children must be 5 years of age on or before December 31, 2026. We, once again, are projecting three half-day kindergarten classes. If you know of anyone who is planning to register their child for Kindergarten or any other grade, please have them visit our website to register online.

We know that our best form of advertising is your sharing of the good things that are happening at Good Shepherd. We thank you for passing on this information to any parents you know who may be considering our school for the fall. Thank you for spreading the good news!

Reminder of Deadline for Pre-enrolment for 2026-2027

Don't forget to share your plans for the 2026-2027 school year! Sign in to your PowerSchool account and click on "Pre-Enrolment for Next Year" to let us know if you will be returning to our school or where you will be attending as you move into kindergarten, junior high, or high school. The pre-enrolment process lets us know how many students to expect in September 2026 and helps us plan for staffing, class sizes, and programming. You can find more information about pre-enrolment on ecsd.net/pre-enrolment.

The BusPlanner Delays App

Please stay up to date with your children's transportation. The BusPlanner Delays mobile app is free and easy to use. It helps mobile users view notifications more quickly and easily.

Just like the BusPlanner Web Delays & Cancellations page, the app will display:

- Delay and cancellation notices for specific routes or runs.
- General notices for all subscribers.

Users can download and access the BusPlanner Delays App via the [Apple](#) or [Android](#) app stores.

For instructions on how to download the app, please access the following ECSD link:

<https://www.ecsd.net/page/34228/transportation-services-bus-delay-notifications>

Please note that our school office does not email or send text messages to families regarding bus delays since the school receives the same notifications as parents through the BusPlanner App.

School Council

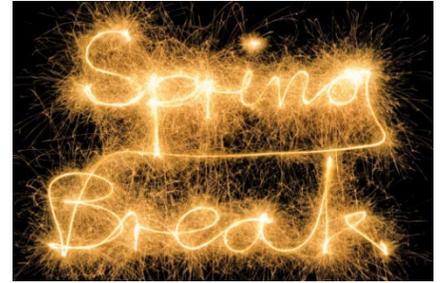
Parents are always welcome to join us for our School Council meetings. Our previous School Council meeting was held on February 11. We invite you to attend our next meeting which will be held on **Wednesday, March 25 at 6:30 pm at the school**. School Council meeting minutes can be found on our school website.

School Supply Pre-order Packages

Good Shepherd will once again be offering parents the opportunity to pre-order school supply packages for the 2026 - 2027 school year. Order forms and supply lists will be available on our school website and in the school office in late April or early May. Information will be sent out in an email to parents.

Spring Break

We will be working very hard over the next few weeks and then we will enjoy a well-deserved Spring Break. Thursday, March 26 will be a full day of classes and we will dismiss at 12:12 pm on Friday, March 27 for Spring Break. We will return from holidays on Tuesday, April 7.



ECSD Mental Health Monthly Link

Supporting positive mental health in our students and families is a priority with Edmonton Catholic Schools. Parents can find a wealth of information on a variety of topics concerning their child's mental health at the following link:

<https://www.ecsd.net/mental-health>

Good Shepherd Reading Superstars Program



Our monthly draw for our Good Shepherd reading superstars was held on February 24 and we are pleased to congratulate our lucky winners who will enjoy a pizza lunch with administration on Friday, March 6! Our Kindergarten winners get to shop for a book to add to their home library.

Kindergarten: Charles, Ziora and Harry
Grade One: Adrian, Rina and Andreas
Grade Two: Patrick, Sochima and Grace
Grade Three: Caleb, Lorde, Ajong and Summer
Grade Four: Joseph, Rilian and Luka
Grade Five: Haskel, Danielle and Valeri
Grade Six: Elizabeth, Valeria and Sophie

The three classes with the most accumulated reading strips for the month of February were 3C with 62 strips, 1A with 59 strips and 6A with 56 strips. Great job, Everyone!

Thank you to our homeroom teachers and to our parents for encouraging their children to read and participate!

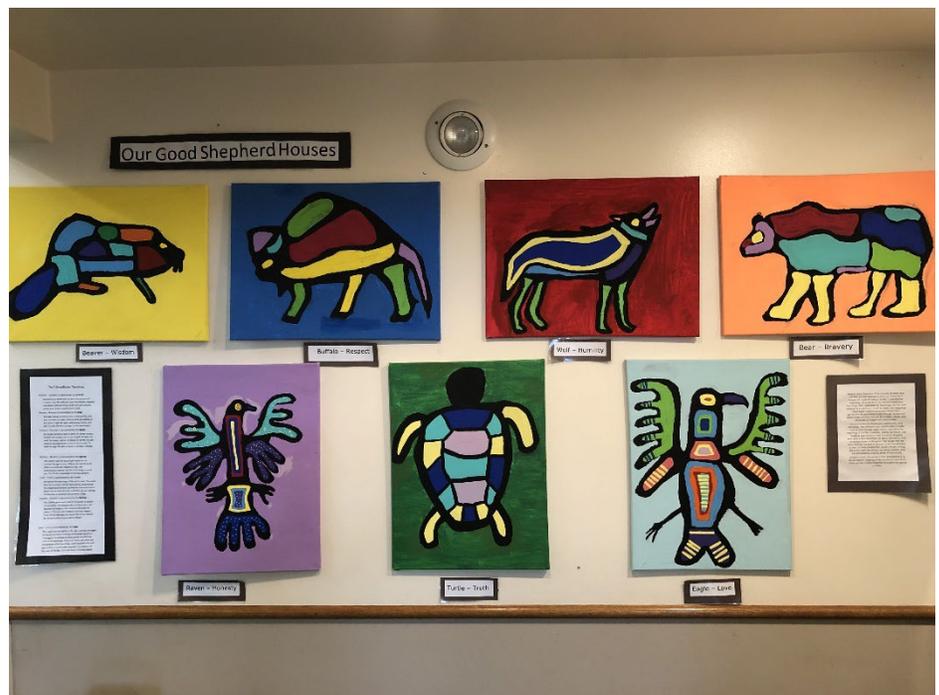
The Seven Grandfather Teachings/ Good Shepherd House News

In February, our school community focused on the Eagle character trait of love, love for the environment, for others and of oneself. Students worked hard to demonstrate this attribute and were recognized. The three houses that earned the most rocks in February for being respectful were as follows:

1st Place: Buffalo House – 161
Rocks Earned

2nd Place: Wolf House – 143
Rocks Earned

3rd Place: Eagle and Raven
House – 132 Rocks Earned

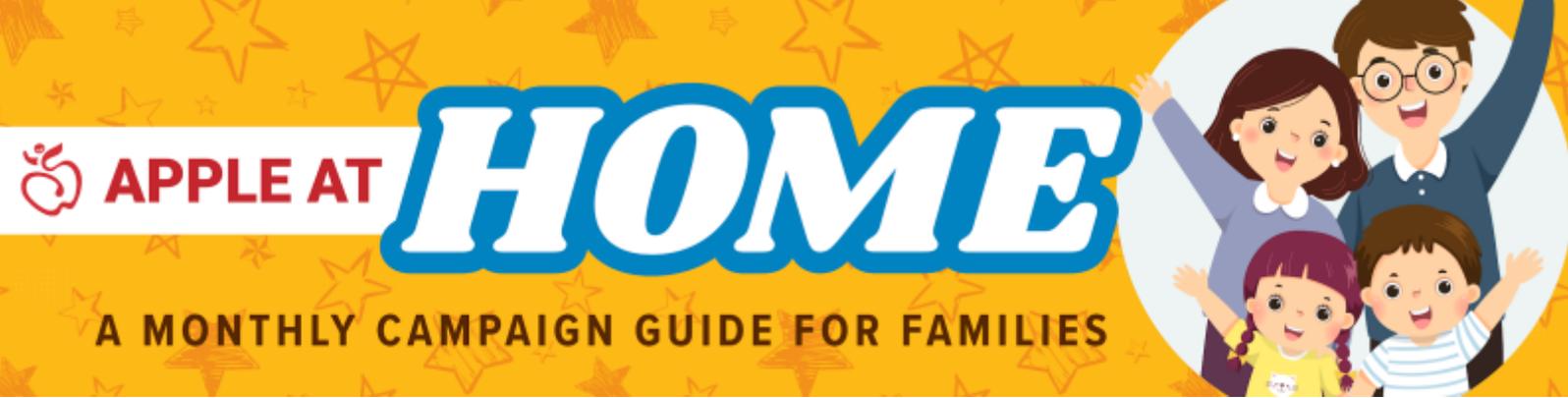


In March, we will work towards developing the character trait of the turtle, which is truth. Truth is represented by the turtle as he was here during the creation of Earth and carries the teachings of life on his back. The turtle lives life in a slow and meticulous manner because he understands the importance of both the journey and the destination. Truth is to know all these things. Apply faith and trust in your teachings. Show honor and sincerity in all that you say and do. Understand your place in this life and apply that understanding in the way that you walk. Be true to yourself and all other things.

Truth is having the knowledge of our cultural teachings. It gives you the ability to act without regret. You must understand, speak, and feel the truth, while also honoring its power. Truth should not lead you to deception. You know who you are in our heart. By knowing that, you also know the truth. Your emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual gifts will guide each one of you in your journey.

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

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

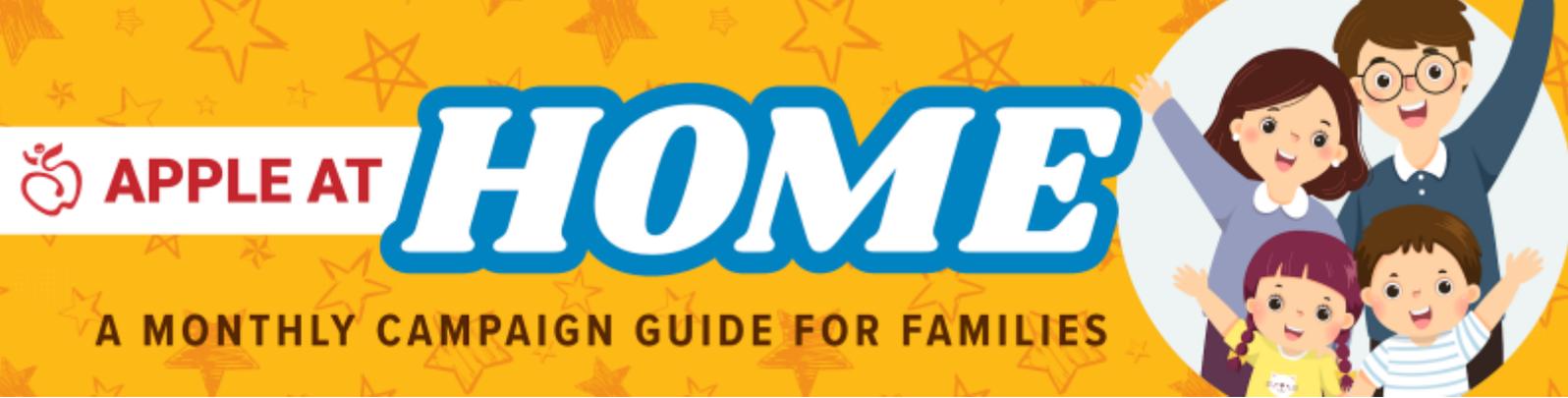


Sweat, Step, Sleep, Sit

The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) created the Canadian [24-hour Movement Guidelines](#) for 5-17 year-olds. The guidelines call for healthy sleep habits, limiting sedentary behaviours, and participating in many physical activities over a 24-hour period.¹

Practical Tips on Physical Activity, Sleep Hygiene, and Sedentary Behavior

- The guidelines¹:
 1. Sweat: At least 60 min/day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.
 2. Step: Light physical activity - several hours of various structured and unstructured light physical activities, every day.
 3. 9-11 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night for 5-13-year-olds, and 8-10 hours for 14-17-year-olds.
 4. Sedentary behaviour - limit recreational screen time to 2 hours max per day, and limit extended sitting.
- Children watch what adults say and do. That's why parents and families have the biggest influence on how active they are.²
- Examples of physical activity to engage in at home include:
 1. Bodyweight exercises (ex. squats, push-ups, lunges, planks)
 2. Yoga or stretching routines
 3. Dance workouts (ex. online dance videos)
 4. Skipping rope
 5. Stair climbing
 6. Household chores (e.g., vacuuming, gardening, cleaning)
- If possible, use your bedroom only for sleeping. Try to avoid use of electronics when you are in bed.³
- When trying to fall asleep, keep your bedroom or sleeping area dark, quiet, and cool.³
- If possible, stick to a consistent sleeping schedule, going to sleep at the same time each day.³
- Limit recreational screen time, including after school television, video games, texting, and other screen time. Instead, encourage physical activity, including outdoor play.



A MONTHLY CAMPAIGN GUIDE FOR FAMILIES

Resources

- CSEP: [24-Hour Movement Guidelines](#)
- Alberta Health Services (Primary Care Alberta): [Sweat, step, sit less, and sleep: Tips for a healthy day](#)
- Alberta Health Services (Primary Care Alberta): [Active families, active kids](#)
- MyHealth Alberta: [Sleeping Better](#)
- Project ECHO Ontario: [Sleep Hygiene Resources](#)
- BC Women's Health Centre: [Sleep](#)

References

1. <https://csepguidelines.ca/>
2. <https://schools.healthiertogether.ca/en/get-the-latest/resources-for-families/articles-for-families-with-children/active-families-active-kids/>
3. <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/pages/conditions.aspx?Hwid=af1001>