



Elementary School

Academic Guide 2022-23

Sacred Heart School of Halifax is an independent Catholic school that educates students intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically in a caring and trusting environment. Our heritage and Sacred Heart spirit inspire commitment to value-based education relevant to a pluralistic student body.

The goals of the School are to educate to:

- ♥ A personal and active faith in God
- ♥ A deep respect for intellectual values
- ♥ A social awareness which impels to action
- ♥ The building of community as a Christian value
- ♥ Personal growth in an atmosphere of wise freedom

Welcome to Sacred Heart School of Halifax, one of the top independent schools in the region. Here, we offer an unparalleled education - one that is tailored to our students by gender, by aptitude, by interest, and by dream. We also offer an experience no other school can match. As part of the worldwide network of Sacred Heart schools around the world, we offer meaningful traditions and global opportunities. We also believe in faith, hope, and love as guiding principles in the spiritual development of students. That solid moral grounding means we can inspire our students to be the best for the world - not just the best in the world.

Sacred Heart School of Halifax meets and exceeds all provincial Department of Education requirements and standards. We also know that education is inherently relational, so we invest in small classes with dedicated teachers and emotionally positive and academically motivated peer groups. To round out the academic experience, we offer a robust co-curricular program that includes educational travel, athletics, artistic development, and social action - all designed to prepare each student for his or her journey through life.

We are accredited by the Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS), one of only three Halifax schools to earn this distinction. It's your guarantee of excellence - it means we offer the best in education, leadership, management, and governance.

Our Academic Guide opens our program to you - step through and open yourself to what we mean when we say "Dare to be True."

Kind regards,

Dennis Phillips, Head of School
Jared Griffiths, Principal - Grades Jr Primary-6

Sacred Heart Elementary School Academic Program

In our Elementary School, we teach the whole child, encouraging healthy development in language, cognition, and physical, social, emotional, artistic, and spiritual growth, because we know children need and deserve balance in their lives.

Our co-ed Elementary School is a thriving and nurturing environment, where every child is known, where love and joy are abundant, and teachers work in partnership with parents. We intentionally make the best use of instructional time through blocks of reading, writing, and math every day. And at the same time, we value and support learning across many disciplines. Our students engage in physical education, French, music, science, religion, social studies, art, and health classes. We also teach them positive values rooted in the Catholic tradition and universal in relevance - kindness and gratitude are part of our daily life.

We provide age-appropriate French instruction to serve our students' developmental needs. Love of language is introduced in Junior Primary and Primary. The enhanced French program in Grades 1 and 2 provides English and French language instruction daily. The program provides a solid foundation of oral fluency and confidence. Building on this, our daily academic core French class in Grades 3 through 6 sets our students on the path to achieving their French fluency by High School.



JUNIOR PRIMARY - An Engaging Entry into School Life

The philosophy of our Junior Primary program is to encourage learning through play and through structured activities with a focus on school readiness.

A typical day in Junior Primary starts with drop-off between 8:00-9:00am. with the children and the parents being welcomed into their classroom by engaging and certified early childhood



educators. Parents are encouraged to touch base with their child's teachers. A calm separation makes for a great start to the day for the child, parent, and teacher. The children settle into their day with play and socializing. The morning is busy with French, physical activity, music, and time for a snack. Following lunch and outdoor play, the children settle into small groups to read books, complete phonics and writing activities, engage in crafts and creative

arts, and more.

Added elements of our JP program include:

- Inclusion in full School community, with participation in Liturgies, special assemblies, and use of facilities such as gymnasiums, Library, multiple outdoor play spaces;
- 3 physical education classes weekly with a specialist;
- 2 French classes weekly with a specialist;
- 2 music classes weekly with a specialist;
- Reading buddies with Grade 4 students;
- Senior School student volunteers in our classrooms.

PRIMARY - A Solid Foundation for Future Learning



Grade Primary extends through a full academic day and includes child-centered activities that stimulate intellectual, physical, social, emotional, artistic, and spiritual development. Our School provides safe, clean, bright, comfortable and attractive learning spaces.

The Primary program at Sacred Heart Elementary School is designed to be a joyful learning experience where your child will develop a love of learning, positive self-esteem, and a caring, accepting attitude toward others.

Age-appropriate objectives meet each child's need for growth. The curriculum objectives introduce your child to formal learning through activity and instruction.

The program is based on extensive research and established pedagogy in language, literacy, and math development. Our teachers are engaged in ongoing reflection and professional development to further enhance the learning experience for our students.

Religion

Sacred Heart welcomes students of all races, cultures, and religions. Religious education is an important part of our program. Emphasis is placed on God's love for all people and our call to respond in faith, hope, and love. All students participate in religion classes and are involved in planning and celebrating prayer liturgies. The *Be My Disciples* series provides the foundation for our religion program through Elementary.

English Language Literacy

Language learning is a complex process. Children have learned most of the syntax and semantics of their own language and have developed a large speaking and listening vocabulary as they enter school. Here, the language curriculum builds on and extends the language knowledge and skills the child has already acquired. Reading and writing are developmental extensions of speaking and listening.



We also provide a stimulating language environment which includes many opportunities for children to explore language and to use language for many purposes. Students develop skills and fluency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Great emphasis is placed on developing effective communication and literacy skills. A rich and diverse environment of text is visible in each classroom, and teachers present an extensive variety of children's literature to support literacy growth for all students. Guided Reading and Phonics instruction are components of our balanced approach to literacy instruction.

Mathematics

The mathematics program at Sacred Heart Elementary School recognizes that young children learn math best through manipulating concrete materials and interacting with their environment. They later extend this authentic mathematical experience into conceptual understanding. Students' attitudes toward math and their self-image as learners strongly influence their success in the subject. An environment which is accepting, encouraging, stimulating, and fun fosters a positive attitude toward math.



Mathematical reasoning is developed at all levels. Math is taught as a problem-solving activity. Opportunities are provided for students to use materials and explain their reasoning, and activities are carefully designed and sequenced to allow children to explore and discover the order, relationships, and patterns that are the basis of mathematics.

Science

The Primary Science Program develops children's natural curiosity to discover how the world works. Activities based on a range of topics encourage students to develop the basic scientific skills of observation, manipulation, prediction, recording, and classification. These activities accommodate the child's need for direct, concrete experimentation, and promote questioning and problem-solving attitudes.

Social Studies

A thematic study of the child's community in school, at home, and in the neighbourhood offers opportunities for students to discover how groups of people work together. The objective is to demonstrate how many different people work together to make a home, school, or community a good place for everyone. Children learn through discussion, literature, art, games, songs, and other cooperative activities that they can be responsible, contributing members of a group.

French

The Junior Primary and Primary French programs introduce students to French vocabulary and simple language structures through games, songs, stories, and other activities. A child who has good command of his or her first language typically finds it easy to learn a second language. Linguistic strategies from one language are readily transferred to a second language.

Art

The basic goal is to foster enjoyment of art through making and doing. Artistic expression is encouraged to communicate feelings and ideas. Art can be integrated with children's literature and seasonal themes. Emphasis is placed on exploring the design possibilities of various materials, shapes, and colours. Art and craft activities are used to develop drawing, cutting, pasting, and other fine motor skills. Art is an integral part of all areas of the curriculum. Artistic expression is also encouraged as a free-time pursuit.



Music

Music complements all areas of curriculum and is also taught as a separate subject. The music program engages students in songs, games, movement, and rhythm activities to develop music skills and appreciation.



Physical Education

The major emphasis in PhysEd is the enjoyment of physical activity. Children improve their physical skills through movement, combining basic locomotion, small manipulative apparatus, large apparatus, cooperative games, dance, and gymnastics. They also learn that fun, good sportsmanship, and healthy lifestyles go together.

GRADES 1 - 6

French Language

Our unique French program provides students with a jumpstart in the language and a firm foundation. Students are exposed from an early age to all strands of French language learning. Students in the early years begin their experience with an introduction to oral French through songs, stories, games, and activities. From this young age, they learn phonetic awareness, progressing to correct pronunciation and fluency. Students encounter French culture and develop a respect and appreciation for it through singing "O Canada" in both official languages and participating in "La Journée de la Francophonie."

Junior Primary and Primary children build phonemic awareness and basic vocabulary through one to two hours of instruction per week. Students in Grades 1 and 2 are further immersed in French through an **enriched French program**, with students taught in French and in English each day by dedicated teachers. Social studies, science, health, and Language Arts are taught in both languages. Math, physical education, music, and religion are taught in English.



Students develop the ability to orally communicate in present-tense French, learning basic grammar structures and further building their vocabulary. They build on their pronunciation skills through phonetic sound blends. They begin to write simple sentences and move towards more creative writing as they proceed through the bilingual program. At this stage in our program, they work towards communicating with their teachers in French. Students from Grades 3 to 6 participate in daily French classes, where they fine-tune and expand the foundation built at the earlier grade levels. They are prepared for an environment in which French is the primary language of communication. Students are introduced to basic grammar structures, both orally and in writing, in tandem with authentic communication.

At Sacred Heart, students do not just learn about the French language; they learn in the French language and learn to use it correctly through authentic communication. They develop reading, writing, comprehension, and communication skills through whole group, small group, and independent activities. By the end of the Elementary program, students are well prepared, comfortable, and confident in their abilities as they enter the Junior High program.

Religion

Religious education is a valued part of our academic program, as rooted in the Sacred Heart Goals and Criteria. We use the *Be My Disciples* program and other resources in Grades 1 to 6. All students in all grades participate in religion classes which meet twice weekly. Emphasis is placed on God's love for all people and our call to respond in faith, hope, and love. Bible study and personal prayer are developed at all levels. A wide selection of literature, music, and art is used, and a concern for social justice is promoted throughout the School. Students are involved in planning and celebrating prayer liturgies. Our students represent a variety of religious and cultural backgrounds; there are common values in our faiths, and we encourage sharing and respect for our diversity. Two weekly liturgy classes (JP-Gr. 1 and Gr. 2-6) provide time for our students to learn hymns and prayers for our School liturgies and prayer services.

Language Arts



The communication and literacy skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing are learned through language experiences. Reading, writing, development, and growth includes abundant exposure to oral experiences and text.

A rich language environment at all levels encourages the love of reading and writing. We study a variety of texts which teach the students to appreciate language and the many writing styles

used by authors. Guided Reading is an important component of our balanced Literacy Program. Phonics instruction, begun in early childhood, continues through to the end of Grade 2. Many opportunities are provided for students to develop rich vocabularies and facility for effective communication. Spelling is taught at each grade level.

Thematic study of many topics encourages students to develop and apply their language skills within all subject areas. Students learn that writing is a process that involves generating ideas, drafting, revising, editing, proofreading, and publishing. Starting in Grade 3, cursive writing is taught. The *Handwriting Without Tears* (HWT) and *Keyboarding Without Tears* (KWT) programs enhance literacy learning in Grades Primary through 5. The use of technology, particularly in Grades 3 to 6, facilitates and enhances the writing process.

Mathematics

The Mathematics Program at Sacred Heart Elementary School recognizes that, in the early years, children learn mathematics best through manipulating concrete materials and interacting with their environment. Practical experiences lead to conceptual understanding. As children progress through the grades, they naturally move from concrete to more abstract processes. Our use of the *best educational math* resources in Grades 1 through 6 provides all learners with a structured, sequential progression through the foundational skills and concepts that will prepare them for high school mathematics and beyond.

Children's attitudes toward math and their self-image as learners strongly influence their success in the subject. Our mathematics program is designed to support diverse student learners and to ensure that no learner is left behind. An environment which is accepting, encouraging, stimulating, and challenging fosters a positive attitude toward math.



Mathematical reasoning is developed at all levels. The skills of problem-solving are taught and practiced. Activities are carefully designed and sequenced to allow children to explore and uncover the order, relationships and patterns that are the basis of mathematics. The following strands are addressed in a cyclical manner, year to year, throughout our elementary math program: number sense, probability, data management, geometry, and measurement.

Science

The Science Program encourages enquiry and discovery. Critical thinking and problem-solving are encouraged through hands-on activities that provide opportunities for students to develop basic science skills of observation, prediction, recording, analysis, and questioning. Teachers use a wide variety of resource materials. Students are encouraged to question, experiment, and research. The Elementary Science Program is also designed to provide a solid base of scientific knowledge and skills for further study and development.

Social Studies

The emphasis of this program is the study of communities, both local and global.



By the end of Grade 6, students will have learned about communities around the world. Study begins with our local community and gradually moves outward. As early as Primary, students learn mapping skills and as they progress, they explore the effects of geography on given communities. Field trips and guest speakers complement all levels of the program.

Health

Our Health Program provides the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to enhance active healthy living. We teach social-emotional competence and self-regulation skills through the Committee for Children's *Second Step* SEL program. Students receive instruction and coaching in skills for learning, empathy, emotion management, and problem-solving. Our approach to health education stresses the importance of students making informed choices and taking personal responsibility for their own well-being and development.

Art

Visual arts classes with a specialist teacher are scheduled bi-weekly for every class. In addition, art is an integral part of learning in all subject areas. Emphasis is placed on the process rather than on the finished product. A wide variety of media, forms, and techniques is explored. Artistic expression is encouraged both as a vital communication skill and a leisure pursuit.

Music

Music classes are conducted by our music teachers and include movement, singing, ear training,



listening skills, and music theory. Students frequently perform for audiences and enjoy the preparation for musical performances. Our co-curricular Elementary Choir (Grades 3-6), offers students the opportunity to sing and learn as part of an organized choir.

An elementary musical is performed each year, providing an opportunity for students in Grades 4-6 to learn about musical theatre

and to participate in a community production. A co-curricular beginner band program is available to Grade 6 students.

Physical Education

The goal of the physical education program is to develop a commitment to physical fitness and healthy living. Personal improvement and participation are key elements of the program which is developmental and cumulative. Emphasis is placed on cooperative teamwork rather than competition. The program includes movement, large muscle activity, balance, games, gymnastics, and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Intramural activities are available for Grades 4-6. Co-curricular participation in cross country, track and field, swimming, and badminton tournaments take place throughout the year.

Information Technology



Our aim is to develop skillful users of information technology. Our vision of technology is an integrated tool to enrich and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching and learning. Interactive whiteboards, iPads, and Chromebooks are used in class. Students can learn computer, touch typing, and digital literacy skills through the *Keyboarding Without Tears* (KWT) program in Grades 1 to 5. Students in Grades 3-6 are assigned their own Google accounts for use at school and home.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The culture and environment of Sacred Heart School of Halifax contributes profoundly to the development of our students. Sacred Heart teachers are committed to working with our children and their families to nurture and develop all aspects of the whole child. At SHSH, we continue the tradition of holding a monthly assembly called Primes during which individual children's accomplishments, academic and otherwise, are recognized and celebrated.

Support for Student Learning

Learning strategists provide support for students requiring resources or enrichment in order to meet their needs. Students are recognized for their strengths and areas of need. Our goal is to help students be successful by learning to appreciate the skills they possess and develop strategies to advance their learning. Instruction can be delivered one-on-one or in small groups. The learning strategists work in consultation with the principal and classroom teachers to facilitate positive learning experiences for all children.

After School Program

We understand that many of our children finish class long before their parents' workday ends. Therefore we offer a service to all of our families in which children remain engaged and cared for in a safe and familiar environment.

Sacred Heart School of Halifax offers after-school supervision and programming through an After School Program (ASP) daily until 5:30pm and on camp days (PD days, March Break, June camps). ASP provides supervised age-appropriate activities after school in a healthy, safe, and caring environment. The fee for care is \$5.00/half hour or part thereof. Billing begins at 3:15pm (Grade JP-2) or 3:30pm (Grade 3-6). Registration is required monthly for ASP and ASP Camps.



School Uniform

All students are required to wear our school uniform. All uniform items, with the exception of shoes, can now be purchased [online](#). Optional Spirit Gear, also available for purchase online, can be worn on Spirit Gear days.



Daily Schedule

Our doors open at 8:00am, and the school day begins at 8:30am. Junior Primary dismissal is fluid (between 2:00pm and 3:15pm); Grades Primary, 1, and 2 dismiss at 3:15pm and Grades 3 to 6 dismiss at 3:30pm. Three outdoor recess periods daily are staggered throughout the day. Teachers are in their respective classrooms at 8:00am. Students are expected to be in their class by 8:25am. Classes begin at 8:30am.

Lunch is supervised by teachers, and school staff. Children bring their own lunches and their own drinking cup for milk. Cold 1% milk is available by order through the Business Office. The Sacred Heart Parents' Guild offers a daily Hot Lunch Program with online ordering.

The EAL Program

(English as an Alternative Language)

The EAL Program is for students from Primary to Grade 12 who are learning English as another language. The EAL Program allows students to focus on curriculum content, language skills, and learning strategies. Students will work on reading, writing, listening, speaking, critical thinking, spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary within the context of their grade-level material. Students will attend small group EAL classes, three to five times a week. Following a language assessment, students will be given the EAL support they require in order to enable them to understand and interact with their grade-level classes and reach their maximum potential. The EAL classes involve content-based learning of grade-level curriculum topics. Students will be taught how to prepare academic presentations, research papers, essays, compositions, grammar and vocabulary exercises, as well as test preparation. Students will complete daily homework and assignments each term. They will receive a textbook for grammar, writing, and vocabulary work.

The main goal of the EAL Program is to help students become successful in English and in their school careers. We are proud to be a multicultural school and welcome the cultures of all of our students and their families.

