

## Grade 7 at Holy Cross

I am incredibly honoured and thrilled to be able to experience this Grade 7 year with all of you and your children. It is a pleasure to work with another amazing group of students and I look forward to the year ahead.

### **My Philosophy:**

I am not just a teacher. I am an initiator of curiosity, a mentor, a coach, and, most of all, a facilitator of learning. Our classroom will be a learning community driven by respect, fairness, and character. I will encourage the students to push themselves in all disciplines by challenging them in order to get their personal best every single day. I believe that encouraging students and promoting positive reinforcement and genuine connections will create a better learning environment and also strengthen their mental health and wellness. I plan for the students to not only learn but to *experience* the curriculum, encouraging them to take risks, make mistakes, and ask questions at the same time. I plan to design and implement learning experiences for students that are engaging, creative and meaningful. I aim to teach students by using lessons that promote leadership, imagination, discovery, critical thinking, and fun, as well as many cooperative learning opportunities.

-Mr. C. DeFazio

## Curriculum Overview

*More detailed information regarding the Grade 7 Curriculum can be found on the Ministry of Education Website.*

<b>Christian Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The theme for this year is “One Family, One Hope in Christ” and our focus will be to find goodness in our neighbours and to lend a hand to those that need it like the <i>Good Samaritan</i>. We will seek God’s creative hand through reading scripture, preparing for Confirmation, exploring the lives of saints, participating in the Sacraments, reflection, and acts of charity.</li> </ul>
<b>Math</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will develop a deeper understanding of numbers, patterns &amp; relations, shape &amp; space, and statistics &amp; probability. We will engage through the curriculum through hands-on activities, drills, and problem solving exercises.</li> </ul>
<b>English</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reading: We will aim to empower students by giving them tools that allow them to be “meta-cognitive” or aware of their thinking while they read.</li> <li>Writing: We will become proficient writers by practicing strategies and showing how to engage and invite our readers’ thinking through our writing. Students will be asked to reflect often this year by writing online reflections called, “Don’t Just Think It. Ink It,” to help improve paragraph and essay writing skills and writing from different perspectives.</li> <li>Speaking: We will become confident and thoughtful speakers by delivering various presentations, debating and participating in public speaking events and projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Social Studies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This year’s focus will be on our shared and personal past and ancient civilizations. We will explore the history of peoples and places like Mesopotamia, ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, China, Rome and India and conduct an inquiry into how these past civilizations have shaped our identity today.</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This year’s areas of interest include hypothesizing and developing experiments, evolution, adaptations, chemistry, the earth’s changing environment and electromagnetism.</li> </ul>
<b>Health and Career Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will promote positive relationships and deeds in our communities through performing acts of service and demonstrating excellent leadership. We will study topics that include goal setting, successful work habits, maintaining good health, as well as safe and morally sound decision-making. We will also begin exploring various careers and job opportunities and participate in an entrepreneur experience.</li> </ul>
<b>Art</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our art education will be integrated in a variety of ways with our other study areas. We will emphasize learning about how we can manipulate a variety of materials and media so as to be able to express ourselves in a meaningful and beautiful way.</li> </ul>

*Grade 7 curriculum also includes French, Music (Band), Applied Designs, Skills and Technologies and Physical and Health Education.*

## Routines, Procedures and Expectations



### Morning Routine

- Students will arrive at the north doors of the school wearing their personal mask. As they enter the classroom they will wash/sanitize their hands and have an opportunity to unpack their bag and store their belongings into their locker. They will also receive their own combination lock in order to better prepare themselves for high school transitions.
- Students will wear their masks in all areas of the school at all times.
- "Finish Up Work" is to be dropped off (or submitted online) the morning of the due date in the class **INBOX**. Assignments handed in later will be considered late and deducted marks every day that it is late.
- Students who have any forms or letters to hand in must drop them off in the class **INBOX**. Money and cheques should be given directly to me at my desk.

### Prayer

- Students must be attentive, reverent, respectful, and actively participating in prayer.
- Students must know common Catholic prayers such as the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be, and the Apostle's Creed (it is a good idea to pray these are home with them, before meals, special occasions, etc.).

### Mass

- Students will lead and celebrate Mass in the church
- Students are expected to be active participants at their Mass by singing the Mass parts if sung, by singing songs that the choir plays, by reciting the prayers and responses to the Mass, and by being thoughtful listeners during the readings and homily.
- Students are expected to be responsible for their spiritual health by going to Mass every Sunday and on days of obligation, by receiving the Eucharist whenever possible, and by regularly going to Confession.



### Lunch Routine

- Students begin by washing their hands before eating every day.
- Students are expected to bring their own healthy lunches to school and parents are to refrain from dropping off lunches at the office.
- All student food waste and lunch items are to be brought home to help be properly recycled.
- Students will not be using their electronic devices during this time in an effort to encourage socializing and a break from their screens.

### Classroom Economy

- Students will be able to learn about saving as they earn currency weekly this year
- Every student will be "Class Manager" for a week in the school year making sure that their fellow classmates are completing their designated classroom job
- Students who don't do their job will not be paid for the week and may lose their chance at being hired again

- They will be able to save up their currency for an item on the provided menu or spend monthly in prize draws

### Physical Education

- Students are expected to wear their proper gym strip, especially running shoes, when engaging in physical activity. This is for their own safety and comfort. Students who fail to have their full gym strip ready will have to sit out of any physical activities for the day.
- All student clothing and items should be clearly marked with their name.
- Students must **wash their gym strip regularly** to avoid bacteria and odor build-up.
- It is strongly recommended that students begin using deodorant and/or antiperspirant during this age to maintain good hygiene. They should also be considerate to those with scent allergies and sensitivities by choosing, whenever possible, to use products that are scent-free or mildly scented.



### Assignments, Agendas and Finish Up Work

- There will be 45-60 minutes of work daily. This will fluctuate throughout the year.
- I call this "Finish Up Work" because students will always receive time in class to work on their assignments, they may "finish up" what they don't complete at home.
- Wise use of class time = no homework
- New assignments rarely given out on Friday that will be due Monday.  
Assignments/tests with a due date that runs through a long weekend are usually given weeks in advance. Important to do large assignments or study for tests a little every day to avoid anxiety or panic.
- I'm flexible and approachable for students but also want them to learn good habits.
- It is important that student advocate for themselves when they need support for any assignment. This is a life skill that they need to be comfortable doing.
- I am available to meet students at recess, lunch or after school to support their needs.
- Students should check their Google Classrooms for any assignments or announcements at least 3 times a week. They should also be checking their school emails regularly in an effort to be comfortable with that area of communication.
- Keep binders and duotangs organized and up to date with notes, handouts, returned assignments, etc. (This is still a good skill to have before high school)
- Students have an agenda book that they are supposed to use to write down their daily assignments. There might be times when the teacher sends notes to the student's parents/guardians through the agenda. Agendas should be taken home by the student daily. It is important that parents know their child's habits. Check their child's agendas, computer, digital classrooms and personal devices frequently.
- Agenda books will not be checked by the classroom teacher. This is a skill that they should be doing on their own in order to prepare for high school the following year.
- Students are expected to hand in their work on time. Should a circumstance arise preventing a student to miss a deadline, **the student must notify the teacher** of the situation. The teacher will award an extension if needed and if there is a valid reason.

*While it is important that guardians demonstrate concern for their child's school work and production, it is equally important that they don't do work for them or make excuses for them. Allow the student to learn and grow by making their own decisions and mistakes.*

- Students who miss any work (both in class and homework) are required to hand in any missed work for marks as soon as possible, provided that they have a valid reason for their absence.

### **Special Events (Birthdays, Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, etc.)**

- Students are encouraged to make celebrations a regular part of their school life.
- Birthdays:
  - We celebrate each students' birthday in class by hanging a banner on their locker.
  - If you want to bring food or any goodie bags to the classroom to celebrate your child's birthday, please make sure that:
    - You inform the teacher of your plans at least one day before
    - No homemade items will be distributed
    - All items are nut-free (due to allergies in the classroom)
    - It is professionally made and individually wrapped
    - It is easy to distribute
    - There is enough for all students (there are 32 grade 7 students in total)
  - If you are planning a celebration outside of school, here are a few things to consider:
    - You are allowed to distribute invitations at the school only if you plan to invite the whole class, or all the boys only, or all the girls only. (Being excluded from such events is often very isolating and painful for students who don't get invited)
    - If you are only able to accommodate a certain number of children in your celebration, please avoid doing this during school hours. It is best to send invitations by contacting the other student's parents directly.



### **Lockers**

- Students have an assigned locker for the year. They have privilege of storing their bags, jackets, gym strips, and other school related materials in their assigned locker.
- We value each student's rights to privacy. However, it is the school's safety policy that the administration should have access to all student lockers at any time and do have their lock combination on file for this reason.
- Students are not allowed to deface or damage the lockers or enter into anyone else's locker for any reason.
- In no circumstance should a student ever enter someone else's locker or touch someone else's lock.

## Technology

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- Cell phones, personal iPads, etc. not allowed to be used in school. If a call has to be made students must do so in a supervised environment.
- Every family has their own screen time rules. Please consider that your child's homework time on the computer might not be included in their screen time as they also need a break from their studies.
- Please be aware of your child's social media accounts and cellphones. Every year we deal with situations that arise from unsupervised home cell phone use. Group chats are not a great idea when there could be negative or inappropriate things being discussed.
- Students must be cautious and take accountability of what they post online or text to friends.
- No photos of other students or teachers should be taken without consent if using in a negative way.



## Confirmation

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- All students are required to engage in preparation for Confirmation. Information will be distributed to parents as the year progresses.
- Confirmation requirements include:
  - Attend Spirit Day (more details forthcoming)
  - Select a sponsor that is a practicing Catholic (can be done around Christmas time, ready for the new year)
  - Select a Saint name (to be researched in class)
  - Complete 20 hours of community service (will be discussed further in class as this year they will not be able to visit the community as frequently or safely as in the past)
  - Complete Mass journals (details will be provided to students/parents)



## High School Applications/Entrance Exams

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- Although we have a "feeder school," family attendance at Mass will definitely be considered for acceptance
- If you are interested in certain high schools, **it is your responsibility to complete the necessary research.**
- My focus will be teaching the Grade 7 curriculum. I will not be focusing on preparing students for entrance/placement exams.
- Reference letter requests must be handed in at least 2 weeks before the deadline. Students must be responsible and have a good showing in order to a solid letter of reference.

## Interim Reports

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- A snap shot of where your child is and may change by their first formal CSL
- I tend to be tough on students in first term CSL's in an effort to push them for more and not have them check out early

### Parent-Teacher Meetings

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- My door is always open for any inquiries or concerns that parents may have about their child's schooling or academics. You may contact me in person, or by emails/notes, the Remind App, or by calling the office at 604 299-3530.
- My office hours (time I check and respond to emails) usually run from 7am-7pm. Please allow up to 24 hours response time.
- Please avoid lengthy emails written in the late evening about an important issue. Instead, please make an appointment with the office to speak to me in person.
- I believe that parents are the primary educators of their children. It is only through the collaboration of the parents and the school community that we educators are able to provide the optimal learning experience for our students. If you'd like to meet (in person, over the phone or digitally), I always appreciate to know what we're meeting about beforehand as this provides me with an opportunity to be adequately prepared to address your concern or to provide you with information. Please do not hesitate to share with me any thoughts, ideas, or concerns as this will greatly aid me in helping your child become the best learner she/he can be.



## Important Dates and Events

*Please notify the teacher immediately if your child cannot attend any of these dates*

<p><b>Oct. – Nov. 2021</b> @ HCS</p>	<p><b><u>Foundational Skills Assessments (FSA)</u></b> <i>(mandatory)</i> The BC Ministry of Education requires every grade 7 student to complete a BC wide assessment test prepared by the Ministry of Education to ensure students are learning the BC curriculum. Please do not plan events away from school during this time.</p>
<p><b>November 2021</b> (Dates TBA) @ TBA</p>	<p><b><u>Grade 7 Camp</u></b> Grade 7 class will experience a camp experience this year. This experience will aim to foster faith development, team building, cooperation, and self-discovery. More details coming in the near future.</p>
<p><b>November 13, 2021</b> @ HCS</p>	<p><b><u>Spirit Day</u></b> <i>(mandatory)</i> Spirit Day is designed to celebrate the Grade 7 students of our Archdiocese and has grown tremendously since the inaugural event in February 2005. This event will get participants excited about receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, and awaken the Holy Spirit in young and old alike. The day will include testimonies, games, music, skits, prayer, food, and Mass.</p>
<p><b>TBA</b> @ HCS</p>	<p><b><u>Confirmation</u></b> <i>(mandatory)</i> Grade 7 students will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. All candidates must have all Confirmation requirements satisfied before this date.</p>
<p><b>June 17, 2022</b> @ HCS</p>	<p><b><u>Grade 7 Mass and Graduation</u></b> The Grade 7 class will celebrate their years at Holy Cross on this day. The mass will begin at 6pm while the dinner will take place at 7pm. More information will be distributed throughout the year.</p>
<p><b>June 24, 2022</b> @ Playland</p>	<p><b><u>Playland Year End</u></b> The Grade 7 students will attend Playland as a year-end fieldtrip.</p>

