



**105 Cottonwood Drive, Blackfalds, AB T4M 0M4**  
**Telephone: (403) 885-1008 Fax: (403) 885-2296**  
**[www.stgregoryschool.ca](http://www.stgregoryschool.ca)**

***Principal - Teresa Borchers***  
***Vice Principal - Amanda Jackson***

## ***Student Handbook***

**Come Follow Me**  
***Matthew 4:19***

## **PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE**

***We Honor Our Children*** - Our schools are child-centered communities. We celebrate each student as a unique child of Christ through our love, care and respect.

***We Provide A Safe And Secure Environment*** - Children feel safe and secure in our schools. We provide an environment of belonging for all children through gospel-centered communities of hope.

***We Live And Proudly Proclaim Our Catholic Christian Faith*** - Our faith permeates our thoughts, words and deeds as we model Jesus, serving children first.

***We Provide Quality Education In A Catholic Environment*** - Our schools maintain high standards of academic achievement while fostering lifelong faith development.

***We Pray As An Educational Community*** - Our Catholic Christian education system reflects the communion of home, school, and Church providing daily opportunities for prayer and celebration of our Faith.

***We Practice Servant-Leadership*** – Our staff are committed members of our Faith community who serve the family, school and Church.

***We Focus On Our Mission Through Clarity Of Purpose*** – Our Catholic Christian Faith is clearly and consistently communicated and supports our unique and distinct ministry.

***We Value Our Staff*** – Our staff members are an integral part of our community and we affirm their ministry and life long journey.

## **COMMITMENT TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

### **Religious Education**

Our Catholic faith is continually permeated in Religion classes, all curriculum areas, celebrations, and daily prayer. Students are encouraged to attend church and Catholic values are reinforced in classroom school activities. There are many opportunities for parents to join in both school and classroom celebrations of our Catholic faith.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Our school is a member of St. Stephen's Catholic Church in Lacombe. Children in grade two or older will celebrate the Sacrament of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist. The grade four students will participate in a Bible Celebration, in which they receive their own Bible. Our grade six students will celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation, as well.

### **Vision For Our School:**

St. Gregory is committed to offering a caring learning environment, where students can work collaboratively in groups that extend learning beyond the classroom to influence the greater community.

## **Our Mission:**

At St. Gregory the Great Catholic School, it is our mission:

- To offer, as a pillar of the Catholic community in Blackfalds, faith filled relationships.
- To make Christ the foundation of all, as we model and evangelize our Catholic faith.
- To foster a welcoming and inclusive environment that recognizes and understands the unique gifts of each child.
- To instill a love of learning and be the foundation of collaborative and eager learners in our community.
- To create diverse learning opportunities that are inclusive, safe and challenging, for 21st century learning.
- To extend learning beyond the classroom by building and developing relationships within our community.

## **ABSENCES AND LATES**

All parents must notify the school of their child's absence. This can be done by emailing [sgtgregattendance@rdcrs.ca](mailto:sgtgregattendance@rdcrs.ca) or by calling the school and leaving a message on the attendance line 403-885-1008 by 8:50 a.m. The school checks all unexcused absences. You will be notified by phone or you will receive an automated text message stating your child is not in attendance. If your child will be away for a long period of time, due to a prolonged illness or a family holiday, please contact the school principal to make special arrangements. Students who arrive late in the morning or the afternoon must report to the office to sign in and will receive a late slip.

### **Leaving School**

Students leaving the school for appointments must report to the office and must be signed out by a parent or guardian before leaving, and then signed in upon their return. If a student is sick or injured, parents will be contacted by the office and arrangements will be made for pick up.

### **Noon Hour**

**St. Gregory the Great Catholic School is a Closed Campus.** All students are to remain at school over the lunch break. If you wish your child to go home daily for lunch, you will be asked to contact the principal. The school provides a full cafeteria service and students do not need to go elsewhere at lunch. This policy will greatly assist the student's prompt return to class after the lunch period. The cafeteria provides healthy hot entrees as well as snacks on a daily basis.

## **BILL 10**

Red Deer Catholic Regional School Division is committed to using the LIFE Framework as a guideline for the creation and operation of student groups that are comprehensive in their approach to inclusion and open to the exploration, in a Catholic context, of a variety of issues including bullying, sexual harassment, sexual orientation, gender identity, discrimination, justice, and respectful relationships and language. The LIFE Framework is the result of a provincial collaboration of Catholic school jurisdictions. Each of our schools may be organizing LIFE Framework/Diversity groups. They will keep their communities informed as these groups are established by placing notices in their newsletters/websites.

## **BULLYING**

Bullying is defined by Alberta Education as "repeated and hostile or demeaning behavior by a student where the behavior is intended by the student to cause harm,

fear or distress to another individual in the school community, including psychological harm or harm to the individual's reputation. Bullying often involves an imbalance of social or physical power.

Bullying or physical violence is NOT tolerated at St. Gregory the Great. Bullying behaviors are a form of aggression and can be:

- Physical – For example: poking, elbowing, hitting
- Verbal – For example: name-calling, insults, racist, sexist or homophobic comments, put-downs
- Social – For example: gossiping, spreading rumors, excluding someone from the group, isolating, ganging up
- Cyber – For example: social or verbal bullying through the use of email, text messages, social media including the sharing of intimate images.

Students who are bystanders to or victims of an act of bullying, harassment, intimidation, or any other safety concerns should immediately report such incidents to school staff. All situations will result in the highest consequence, suspension.

### **CAFETERIA**

Our school has a wonderful cafeteria service that is open at lunchtime. Through this venue, a healthy hot lunch program for all students is available. Please visit <https://www.hotlunches.net/schools.html> to order.

### **COLD WEATHER**

During extreme weather conditions, children will not be required to go outside if the temperature **is colder than -20 degrees Celsius with the windchill**. The school may also decide to keep students indoors warmer than -20 degrees Celsius at the discretion of the principal. It is expected that all students dress appropriately for weather conditions. Please mark items such as snow boots, running shoes, mittens, coats, etc. so that a lost item may be returned to the student

### **COMMUNICATION**

In a commitment to our environment, important notices will be emailed, in a timely manner, to all of our families and also posted on our web page. The URL is [www.st.gregoryschool.ca](http://www.st.gregoryschool.ca). At the beginning of the month, the school and church news will be posted on our web page.

### **COUNSELING**

Teachers, parents, or students may refer students/themselves to a counsellor. Referrals are made directly to the counsellors via the school staff, email or telephone.

1. **School Counsellors** support the academic, social, and emotional growth of students while providing the student with personal, group and/or career counseling. The goals are to continue building and expanding a counselling program that enhances all students' growth and development in the following areas:
  - Help students interact effectively with others.
  - Help students maximize their academic, social and emotional potential.
  - Help students gain the skills to cope with personal problems and concerns that may impede educational achievement and personal/social growth.
  - Request the assistance of parents, teachers and other school personnel in identifying the personal, social and intellectual needs of students.
2. **Family School Counselors** support the social, emotional and mental wellness of students and families within their home, school, and community through early intervention and prevention.

- Meet with families to go over issues affecting student success supporting them to look for options, develop strategies and find solutions.
- Promote effective parenting and communication skills
- Assist families in finding information and resources and help facilitate referrals to community agencies and other supportive services

**CTF (Career and Technology Foundations) Courses:**

- CTF is short for Career & Technology Foundations. These courses meet the requirements as set out by the Govt. of Alberta.
- Students will be enrolled in two exploratory options in a variety of topics related to Careers, Technology Foundations and Fine Arts.
- CTF courses will occur on Tuesdays and Thursdays block 5 & 6.

**DAILY OPENING AND CLOSING OF SCHOOL**

The school office is open from 7:45 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. each day. At 8:05 a.m. assigned teachers will be on outside supervision. Students are to remain outdoors until the bell rings to commence school. **Students should not arrive at school prior to 8:05 a.m.**

**Students are expected to leave the school premises immediately after school, unless they are under the direct supervision of a teacher or watching a supervised activity.**

**SCHEDULE**

<b>Grades K- 6 Monday - Friday</b>	
<b>1</b>	8:30-9:05
<b>2</b>	9:05-9:45
<b>3</b>	9:50-10:30
<b>4</b>	10:30-11:10
<b>Recess</b>	11:10-11:40 (K-3 eat)
<b>Lunch</b>	11:40-12:10 (4-6 eat)
<b>5</b>	12:20-1:00
<b>6</b>	1:00-1:35
<b>Recess</b>	Floating Recess
<b>7</b>	1:50-2:20
<b>8</b>	2:25-3:05

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROCEDURES**

It is a requirement of Alberta Learning that schools in this province take the necessary steps to ensure that they are safe and caring places. We will practice “hold and secure”, lockdowns and

evacuations to be sure that we can do each safely. **All of the people in our building must participate in these drills.** We practice 6 fire drills, 2 lockdowns, 2 hold and secure & 2 shelter-in-place. We ask parents to familiarize themselves with our Emergency Response Plan on our website. In the case of a real emergency, parents receive pertinent information through our social media platforms and Swift K-12 Alert Systems.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES**

Our staff will promote positive environmental practices in classroom and school activities. We also encourage all parents to be “Idle Free” as they drop off or pick up their children.

## **HOMEWORK REQUESTS**

Students in every grade are encouraged to pick “homework buddies”. These are classmates who can be contacted if ever a day is missed due to illness, etc. In the case of a prolonged absence, parents may wish to contact the child’s teachers. It is helpful to inform staff ahead of time if there will be absences, due to vacations outside the regular time or prolonged illness. Students are asked to use their homework buddies and discuss with their teachers work missed when they return. It is difficult to assign work for material that has not been taught.

## **ILLNESS AND INJURY**

In the event that a child becomes ill at school, the parent will be contacted to pick up the child. If parents are unavailable, the emergency contact person identified on the child’s registration form will be contacted. It is District policy that school employees cannot distribute any form of medication to students without the proper paperwork signed by parents and/or doctor.

In the event of injury, students will be directed to our office. Minor scrapes and cuts are treated in school. If there appears to be any doubt about the seriousness of an accident, parents are contacted. If we are unable to contact the parents, the school will use its discretion to get medical attention, including calling an ambulance when deemed necessary.

## **LOST AND FOUND**

Items of value that have been found are kept in the office. Clothing and other items are then sent to the “lost and found” container. They will be put on display just before school holidays and after Parent/Teacher Interviews. All unclaimed clothing will be donated to charity.

## **MEDICAL CONCERNS**

For your child(ren) safety, please fill out the Medical Release/Medication Form at the office if you have any medical concerns. Medical concerns and accidents of serious nature will be reported to parents/guardians immediately.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENT LEARNING**

### Instructional Coaching Team

Each grade in St. Gregory the Great Catholic School will be assigned a part - time LIFT Team member. Each LIFT teacher will work in unison with the classroom teacher to plan, deliver curriculum, assess for optimum student learning, and respond with appropriate interventions when necessary.

### Technology

Our students will have many opportunities to utilize technology in all areas of the curriculum.

### Library

Each class will have at least one weekly, regularly scheduled opportunity to check out books, conduct research, and work on related projects.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Parent involvement is highly supported and encouraged. At St. Gregory's, there are many opportunities for parents to play a significant role in their child's education.

**All volunteers must complete a criminal record check.** Please contact the office for further information. Involvement is encouraged in ANY of the following areas:

- 1) attending school functions
- 2) providing a supportive learning environment at home
- 3) volunteering for work committees and projects
- 4) providing supplementary learning activities at home
- 5) participating in School Council
- 6) providing positive support and good public relations for the school
- 7) communicating openly with the school

If you would like to volunteer in your child's class, please contact the homeroom teacher. We are grateful for any support you can give us by volunteering for committees, projects or attending activities at the school. Research clearly indicates that student success rates at school (happiness and achievement ratings) are highest when parents are supportive of the school and involved in school activities.

As part of our school's Emergency Response Plan, we must ensure that all parents and visitors **sign in at the office** when visiting during the day. We need to know who is in the building, should an emergency occur. Our office staff will assist you with your needs, and will have children called to the office when required. Thank you for your cooperation

## **PARENTS & VISITORS**

We ask that all parents and visitors enter through our main doors only and immediately check in at the office. In keeping with our Safe and Caring Policy, we also ask that you remain in the gathering area while waiting to pick up your child.

## **PEANUT AWARE SCHOOL**

St. Gregory the Great Catholic School is striving to be a Peanut Aware School. Some students may have a fatal reaction if exposed or ingest any amount of peanut products. We ask that parents and students refrain from bringing any food containing nuts or nut products to the school. Thank you for assisting us in providing a safe environment for all students and staff.

## **PLAYGROUND PRACTICES**

All students are expected to go outside for recess breaks each day. Recess provides opportunities for socialization, exercise and fun! During inclement weather, recess will be indoors for all students. If the temperature is -20° or colder with wind-chill (or at the discretion of the administration), students will remain inside for recess. **It is important that students come dressed appropriately for rain, snow and sun conditions.**

## **PROPERTY DAMAGE/THEFT**

Any student involved in the damaging of school property or theft will be expected to pay for the damage or theft occurred. Other school consequences may be applied if deemed appropriate.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Kindergarten: All classes receive one block of PE and one health block a week. In PE all students are graded on their effort, cooperation and participation.

Grade 1-6: Grades 1-6 students will receive 4 classes a week @ 40 mins each for PE. They will also receive one classroom instructed health block per week for a total of 5 classes weekly. All students are graded on their effort, cooperation and participation. (Their health grade will be separate as it is delivered in a classroom setting).

Students are allowed to change into gym wear if they choose but are not required. Proper footwear however is required.

## **ATHLETICS**

**In order to be part of an athletic team, it is mandatory that you fill in a Rycor permission form online before your child can participate.**

### **Coaches Expectations:**

1. To help guide and direct each group in maximizing their talents and abilities to achieve the goals that have been set forth to accomplish both personally and communally during the season.
2. To be committed to the team and be reliable to the team as a whole, as well as individual athletes

### **Player Expectations:**

1. Value loyalty to the team and show commitment to the team by showing up to all practice and games
  - a. If students miss practice they must inform the coach as to why they have missed. If an athlete is consistently missing practice this will affect their game time.
  - b. Athletes are making a commitment to time manage appropriately so they are able to show up for team practices and games
  - c. All athletes must have proper ATHLETIC footwear and shorts**
2. School and family come first
  - a. Students must keep up with their school work and meet classroom expectations
3. Athletes are expected to represent St. Gregory the Great in a positive, respectful, and responsible manner both inside the classroom and on the court
4. Playing Time: Students are required to commit to showing up for BOTH team practices and games. If a player is not showing that commitment it will reflect in their playing time. Our focus in middle school is on skill development which means playing time will be as close to equal as possible (with the exception of a senior grade 9 team during playoffs).

### **Parent Expectations:**

1. Enjoy your athlete's successes and support them and their teammates in a positive manner.
2. Please respect and trust the coach of your child's team. We have a purpose and a way of doing things. The team concept is the most important aspect of what we do.
3. If you have a concern with the way things are done please wait a day before talking to us. We will be more than willing to listen to your concerns but please remember that the decisions that are made are made based on what is best for the team and the goals they have agreed on, not one player.



## REPORTING PERIODS - STUDENT EVALUATION SCHOOLGY

2024 / 2025 Report Periods are as follows.

Reporting Periods 2024 / 2025	
Term 1	September 3 - November 28
Term 2	December 2 - March 20
Term 3	March 24 - June 26, 2024
Parent Teacher Conferences	November 7, 8 - 2024, March 19, 20, 2025

Parents are highly encouraged to attend the first parent/teacher/student conference where individual student goals and concerns are identified. Elementary and Middle School reporting throughout the year will be online with Schoology. A second set of parent/teacher/student conferences is held in March. Parents are invited to arrange additional interviews and conversations any time they have a concern by contacting the classroom teacher or administration.

### SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL

In Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools we honor our children and we provide a safe and secure environment for our students. We believe that everyone in our school must show respect for self, others and our school property. If your child reports problems in this area, please feel free to contact his/her classroom teacher.

It is the intention of our staff to guide students in a positive manner towards self-discipline and self-control. Our approach tries to:

- promote appropriate behavior, and encourage an awareness of actions and an acceptance of responsibility for these actions.
- With this in mind, we will strive to maintain those behaviors which:
  - enhance the self-worth of the student
  - provide a respectful, engaging learning environment
  - ensure the safety of the students
  - recognize the rights of students, teachers & parents, and encourage the development of self-discipline

### SCHOOL COUNCIL

The model we will adopt, in keeping with the provincial mandate for Alberta schools, is a town hall model. Within this model all interested parents are part of the council. **The council provides an advisory function to the principal and staff on matters of school operation and also provides opportunities for family activities throughout the year.** Please join us for our monthly meetings, which will be posted on our website.

### SCHOOL FEES

Please refer to our website for fee information. All school fees are to be paid through Rycor. <https://www.stgregoryschool.ca/parents-students/pay-school-fees-online>.

### SECURITY OF PERSONAL ITEMS

Students are asked to leave valuables at home and, when possible, to use cheques and not cash to pay for school fees, etc. Students (grade four and older) will be provided combination locks for their use for the school year. Students are NOT to share their combinations. When attending sporting events, whether participating or being a spectator, students should lock their possessions. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

In accordance with [Administrative Procedure No.314](#), St. Gregory the Great has adopted the following policy with respect to searching lockers on school property. Student lockers belong to the school, not to the student. Since students have been made aware that school lockers are the property of the school, the locker is subject to search at any time, without notification, by any personnel associated with the school or by persons representing other authorities, including the police.

## **STUDENT DRESS CODE**

Clothing is to be modest and respectful of a Catholic School. The following guidelines apply:

- Shirts that can be tucked in (no midriff showing) and no slogans that are deemed inappropriate for a Catholic school.
- Caps, hats, toques and hoods are **not** allowed in school or at school functions.
- Shirts or tops must cover most of the shoulders and have a modest neckline and the back is not to be exposed.
- Modest shorts and skirts, there are no “short shorts” or mini skirts. For example no bottoms of pockets showing. Individual conversations will be had with students.
- Students should not have any undergarments visible at any time; top or bottom.

Students that do not comply with this dress code will be asked to change or call their parents to bring appropriate clothing. If a student is spoken to on more than one occasion, the student's parents will be contacted. The student may need to go home and change to adhere with the dress code.

## **Personal Mobile Devices**

In the case of passing messages along to students, we ask that you call the school in the case of urgency only. On June 17, 2024, Alberta's Government introduced new restrictions on the use of personal mobile devices and access to social media sites on school networks. Personal Mobile Devices are a distraction for learning.

- Cell phones are to be “off and away” during all class times. This means cellphones/earbuds/apple watches must be turned off and placed in a student's locked locker. Middle School students are only allowed to access phones prior to school, recess and after school. Students are not permitted to be on their phones during eating time.
- If any Personal Mobile Device (cell phone/Smart technology/earbuds) are seen or heard in class or during non-designated times the following steps will be taken:
  - 1st time - student is given a reminder and device is required to go back in locker/backpack
  - 2nd time - phone goes to the office and student picks up their device at the end of the day
  - 3rd time- parents/guardians are called to pick up the device from the office. If parents/guardians are unable to pick up the device, students will drop their phone at the office the next day.

- If a student continues to use their Personal Mobile Device after three occurrences, additional steps will be taken to support the student in understanding this policy. This could include student suspension.
- All devices (Apple watches, etc) will fall under the same policy.
- Please note that there is no “reset” to zero for violations for the cell phone policy.
- Sharing and recording videos and/or photos of individuals without explicit consent is prohibited.
- Accommodation and the process for the use of personal mobile devices used for health and medical reasons, will be determined by the principal.
- Please contact our office if you need to reach your child in an emergency.

### **TRANSPORTATION - BUSSING**

All students who ride the bus are expected to cooperate with the driver for the safety of the passengers. Disorderly conduct, rowdiness, and lack of cooperation may result in bus privileges being removed. The following offenses are grounds for immediate suspension of bus riding privileges:

1. Weapons of any sort; such as the use or carrying of knives, lighters, sticks or sharp objects.
2. Drug usage or possession.
3. Vandalism to the bus.
4. Throwing items out the bus window.
5. Defiance with driver or other students.
6. Any form of harassment against other students.

### **VAPING**

Red Deer Catholic Schools' policy prohibits vaping, smoking or the use of any illegal substances on school property, on the school bus or while at a school function.