

St. James Parish, Our Lady of the Valley Parish, St. Benedict's Parish

February 11, 2014

Dear Parents / Guardians of Children Attending, or Registered for, St. James School, Vernon, BC

The Church continues to promote Catholic Schools as one of the best ways to assist parents in forming their children in the ways of the Catholic Faith. Jesus has instituted the Church to proclaim His Word to all nations and we do our best to be faithful to what He asks of us. As a Church, we continue to pray every day that we will "...go and make disciples of all nations ..." (Matthew 28:19)

The Catholic Bishops of British Columbia state, in their philosophy of education for Catholic Schools in the Province of BC, that "all those involved in Catholic education are called to build communities of faith and holiness. In partnership with the family and the Parish, the Catholic School builds up both the Family of Faith and the human community." As the Pastor in the Vernon, Coldstream, and Okanagan Reserve Parishes, I support this philosophy.

Our Catholic Schools are funded in the following ways:

1. Provincial Government Grant – a per student grant that is 50% of the operating grant provided to local Public Schools
2. Tuition – these rates are determined annually by the School Council and School Administration
3. Parish Support – financial support provided by the Parishes to the school to help meet the operating costs per student
4. School Fundraising Activities

The Parishioners of St. James, Our Lady of the Valley and St. Benedict's Parishes support St. James School in a financial manner. Traditionally tuition rates have differed for families who are parish supporters and those who are not parish supporters. The reason parish supporter families receive a lower tuition rate is due to the fact that these families support their Parish through their voluntary envelope offerings. The family supports the Parish and the Parish supports the Catholic School.

To be fair and just to all of our families, beginning with the 2014/2015 School Year, families who indicate that they are practicing Catholics and parish supporters will meet the following criteria:

1. The Family believes and lives their Catholic Faith as taught in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the precepts of the Catholic Church
2. The Parents understand their role as the first and best teachers of their children in matters of Faith
3. The Family is registered in a Catholic Parish and submits an envelope on a regular basis to that Parish

In your registration package for the 2014/2015 School Year, you will receive a new Pastor's reference form to be completed as part of the re-registration or registration process. This form reflects the new criteria in place for the coming School Year. Once you have completed the information on this form, return the completed form to the school. Completed forms will then be given to Father Dale Normandeau who will verify the information and sign the form, if applicable (don't forget to include your envelope number on the form). The signed forms will then be returned to the School so that the parish supporter rate can be assigned to those families meeting the 3 criteria above. In the absence of a signed Pastor's reference form, families will be charged the non-parish supporter rate.

If you have any questions regarding the criteria shown above, please contact me, Father Dale Normandeau , by calling the Parish Office at 250-542-1276.

The costs of operating our Catholic School increase in the same manner as other opportunities in our society and it is my desire to continue to develop policies and programs, in conjunction with our Administration, Teachers, Staff, and our School Council Members, that maintain St. James School's high standards and cost efficiency. With your continued cooperation, your offerings of your time, talent, and treasure, and the generous support provided by our Parishes, we pray that our Catholic School Education will grow, develop, and thrive for generations to come.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Rev. Father Dale Normandeau
Pastor, St. James, Vernon, Our Lady of the Valley, Coldstream, St. Benedict's, Okanagan Reserve