

J. J. NEARING CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



SCHOOL HANDBOOK 2019-2020

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Namesake, Dr. J. J. Nearing

It has been a long standing tradition in St. Albert to name our schools after an individual who has made a contribution to the community, particularly in the field of education. J. J. Nearing Catholic Elementary School, was named after such a person.

Dr. Nearing served as Superintendent in our jurisdiction for twelve years, from 1983 to 1995. His lengthy career in education spans many communities from Sydney, Nova Scotia to Victoria, British Columbia. He received his Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education from St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia and his Master's Degree in Educational Administration from the University of Alberta. He later completed his Doctorate at the University of Alberta.

Dr. Nearing achieved historical significance in our school division at the time of the regionalization of the Legal, Thibault and St. Albert school districts in 1995 when he became the first superintendent of Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division No. 29. Dr. Nearing has long been recognized for his strong commitment to Catholic education in the province of Alberta. He is remembered fondly in St. Albert Catholic Schools for his leadership, which was distinguished by excellence and wisdom.

Our History

J. J. Nearing Catholic Elementary School opened in August, 1998. We believe that students achieve their best in a welcoming and caring learning environment. This is why we have chosen to focus on the concept that our school is like a family. Also, we begin each day with a school-wide prayer, which inspires us to be reflections of God's love in both word and action. Our academic program includes the integration of curriculum and technology, as well as a music program taught by a music specialist.

Our Motto

Our school motto is "Echo the Spirit" and our mascot is "Echo" the dolphin. Our school mission statement emphasizes the place of the Spirit of Jesus in our daily lives. The motto gives a sense of direction for every member of our school family. Each day we are called to reflect the Spirit of Jesus in word and action. Our motto, mission statement and mascot were derived in a collaborative process with students, parents and staff.

Our School Creed

As a school, we believe that ...

Our children, who are unique gifts of God, are called to grow in the Spirit as they learn, work and play with one another.

Our parents, who are the primary educators, are called to plant the seeds of the Spirit and the love of learning in their children.

Our staff, as Catholic Christian educators, are called to value and to nurture the gifts of the Spirit within each student and in all other members of our school family.

Together, ***we echo the Spirit***, as we become life-long learners and responsible, caring contributors in God's world.

"Echo the Spirit"

OUR TEAM

Administration

Principal

Mrs. Gina Anstruther

Vice Principal

Mrs. Helen Jackson

Homeroom Teachers

Kindergarten (Full Day)

Mrs. Katelyn Semple

Kindergarten (AM)

Miss Jessica Linehan

Grade One

1A

Mrs. Maureen Offenberger

1B

Ms. Helen Cyr

1C

Mrs. Susan Baird

Grade Two

2A

Mrs. Linda Tamano

2B

Mrs. Nicole Wenger

Grade Three

3A

Ms. Corey Fester

3B

Mrs. Trish Lema

3C

Mrs. Denise Rooyakkers / Miss Jessica Linehan

Grade Four

4A

Mrs. Laura Dodsworth

4B

Mrs. Corene Mudryk

Grade Five

5A

Mr. Mathieu Loiselle

5B

Miss Kendra Gillis

5C

Mr. Ryan Harrison

Grade Six

6A

Mrs. Annette Holterman

6B

Mr. Scott Raypold

6C

Mr. Raphael Bonot

Music

Ms. Mark/Mrs. Atkinson

French

Mrs. Sims

LSF

Mrs. Jodie Atkinson

Counselor

Mrs. Heather Chyzowski

Support Staff

Educational Assistants

Ms. Barb Schonewille

Mrs. Tammy Curial

Mrs. Nancy Demers

Mrs. Tracy Lindstrom

Mrs. Lori Victoor-Morris

Librarian

Mrs. Laurie McDonald

Secretaries

Mrs. Jennifer Anderson

Mrs. Donna Kuzio



J. J. Nearing Bell Schedule for Grades 1-6

****Students are expected to be in their seats at 8:55 a.m. for our morning-prayer and announcements.**

First Bell	8:50 a.m.
Morning Registration/ Announcements	8:55 - 9:00 a.m.
Period 1	9:00 - 9:40 a.m.
Period 2	9:40 - 10:15 a.m.
Period 3	10:15 - 10:50 a.m.
Recess	10:50 - 11:05 a.m.
Period 4	11:10 - 11:45 a.m.
Period 5	11:45 - 12:20 p.m.
Recess	12:20 - 12:45 p.m.
Lunch	12:45 - 1:09 p.m.
Period 6	1:13 - 1:50 p.m.
Period 7	1:50 - 2:25 p.m.
Period 8	2:25 - 3:00 p.m.
Period 9	3:00 - 3:34 p.m.
School Day Ends	3:34 p.m.

Kindergarten Bell Schedule



Kam	8:50 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.
K-Full	8:50 a.m. - 3:34 p.m.
K-Full lunch recess	11:42 a.m. - 12:14 p.m.
K-Full lunch	12:14 a.m. - 12:42 p.m.

**** The last day for ALL kindergarten children is Friday, June 19, 2020**

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Morning Prayer

In keeping with our Catholic school philosophy, we begin our day with a reflective song and a prayer. These are chosen to relate to the Church liturgical calendar. We feel that these moments of shared prayer and reflection draw us together as a Christian family and provide a special start to our school day.

Arrival and Attendance at School

At J. J. Nearing School, we operate a *School Attendance Check Program* designed for the safety of all students and to ensure that all students are accounted for each day. If your child is going to be absent, please call (780) 418-6330 or go to our website at www.jjn.gsacrd.ab.ca and click on the school absence link. Any notes regarding appointments or special holidays should be sent to **both** the office and your child's teacher. Students arriving after 8:55 a.m. or 1:08 p.m. must report to the office upon arrival to obtain a late slip. We ask that students be in class and in their seats at 8:55 a.m. to minimize disruption of learning and prayer times.

We ask students who do not take the bus to arrive at 8:45 a.m. If your child needs supervision between the time you leave for work and 8:45 a.m., we kindly ask you to find appropriate care. There is a before and after school care program operating at our school, please contact SIGIS at (587)873-9502.

Entrances and Exits

Our entrances and exits are assigned to specific grades to alleviate congestion during arrival and dismissal times. Students use their designated entrance when arriving and leaving the school. Their outer footwear will be stored at this entrance.

At the conclusion of morning announcements, all exterior doors are locked with the exception of the front entrance, which remains unlocked at all times. Students arriving late should enter through the front door and pick up a late slip at the front office for entry to class.

Safe Access for Students on Arrival and Departure at School

We ask parents to join us in being diligent about student safety when bringing children to and from school. Please note the areas where there are designated 'school zones' on Deer Ridge Drive and Hogan Road. The speed limit is 30 km in these zones. We have a crosswalk at the intersection of Deer Ridge Drive and Dubonnet Way and this is staffed by grade five cross guards ten minutes before the beginning of classes in the morning and ten minutes after classes at the end of the day.

- We ask **parents to model the legal manner to cross roads** by using the crosswalk with their children.

We also ask that our crosswalk guards be respected and that **vehicles not be parked in the crosswalk**. Parents are asked to ensure safe routines for their children at this crosswalk.

Students Leaving School Premises During the Day

Student safety is a prime concern for us. Therefore, we ask that students do not leave school premises during the day without written permission or a phone call from parents. We ask parents to inform homeroom teachers of their child's lunchtime routine so that the teacher knows where the child is expected to be. Periodically if your child goes home for lunch, a note needs to be presented to their homeroom teacher. All students require a note from their parents to leave the school premises when not accompanied by a guardian. In addition, we ask that parents come into the school office and sign their children out when leaving early.

Lunch Policy

Grace is said at the beginning of lunch. During lunchtime students are expected to behave appropriately so that there is a pleasant and safe environment for all. Paid adult lunch hour supervisors monitor hallways and students, with a staff member on call. In addition, in the grades one, two and three classes, grade six students assist as lunch-time monitors, helping children and reminding them of appropriate lunch time behavior. Students are expected to follow lunchtime expectations so that all may enjoy their break. Parents will be contacted if their child continues to have difficulties during lunchtime.

Milk Sales

At our school, milk is for sale on a daily basis. For your convenience, coupon sheets valued at \$20.00 each are available. Each sheet contains twenty-five coupons. Ticket sales are offered on School Cash online and will be ready for pick up in the office the next day. Alternatively, we will take cash or cheque, but no single ticket sales. Distribution of milk will take place in classes at the beginning of the lunch period. Please address any questions about milk sales to Mrs. Anstruther, our Principal.

Emergency Contacts & Student Illness

As part of the school registration package, we ask you to complete a family information card for emergency purposes. You are asked to provide the names of two people who should be available to pick up your child and who have the authority to deliver him/her for medical treatment if you cannot be contacted. Should a child become ill at school, we will first try to contact parents. If we are unable to reach the parents, we will then call the emergency contacts listed on your emergency card. Therefore, it is important to keep all contact information current for this reason.

If children are ill, we encourage them to stay home until they are well. Unfortunately, we do not have adequate facilities for taking care of sick children. In special circumstances, where a condition makes it necessary to be inside at recess, the child will be asked to read quietly at the office. Please send a written note when this is necessary.

Create an Emergency 'Pick Up' Family Plan

Please create a family emergency plan should an emergency require you to pick up your children from the school within fifteen minutes (in the case of fire, disaster...). Most times, you will have more than fifteen minutes as we are well trained in Incident Command Emergency Response and will have the children contained in a safe area ready for pick up. But in the event that you work far away and cannot

get to the school quickly, who will be authorized to pick up your children? See our website for Emergency Response Protocol.

Student Allergies

In our school, at this time, we have a number of children with severe allergies to nuts. These cases are such that there is constant danger of anaphylaxis. As noted in our registration packages, we ask that parents provide snacks and lunches, which exclude nut products. When sending birthday treats or party snacks, these also must exclude nut products. Some students require an Epi-Pen, which contains emergency medication needed in case of severe reactions. These Epi-Pens must be provided by parents, kept up to date and carried on the child's body to facilitate quick action in an emergency. We are thankful for the cooperation of all to ensure the good health and safety of students who have these serious allergies. This level of caring for others is consistent with our Catholic school philosophy.

Medical Concerns and Prescribed Medical Treatment

It is very important that parents contact the school principal if there are medical concerns about a student. In the event that a student must have a prescribed medical treatment during the school day to maintain physical and mental well-being, a parental request must be made to and approved by the principal. Following authorization by the administration for such treatment, the parent must complete specified forms in accordance with Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division policy. This policy also prohibits our staff from administering any medical treatment or medication without completion of these forms. Once again, please contact our school principal if such medical concerns apply to your child.

Home and School Communication

Home and School Communication: We value excellent communication between home and school as a foundation for providing a wonderful school experience for our students. In order to facilitate this communication, we invite you to attend various events during the school year. J. J. Nearing has a monthly newsletter, which is emailed to you and posted on our website at www.jjn.gsacrd.ab.ca. Communication about student progress is done on both an informal and formal basis. Parents and teachers are asked to keep each other informed about anything that may affect student progress and achievement. Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled in October and March. As noted elsewhere in this handbook, our School Council meets monthly and these meetings provide the opportunity to hear about our school life in detail.

Reporting Procedures

In Kindergarten, student progress is demonstrated through a celebration of learning format. The first celebration is in November and a second celebration is held in March. Kindergarten students receive report cards in March and June. Grades 1-6 students receive report cards in November, March and June. Parent Teacher Interviews will be held in March. We encourage one hundred per cent participation in interviews. These interviews are another example of our home and school partnership and demonstrate to students that we share our commitment to their learning.

Homework Policy

Students are given reasonable time in school to complete all tasks. However, at times, individual students may be asked to complete unfinished work at home or work missed when they are absent. Also, teachers may ask individual students to do corrective or supplementary practice work at home.

It is generally accepted practice that students in primary grades (1-3) do not receive specific, regular homework assignments, but that regular home reading is expected.

Some teachers may assign class homework assignments to students in upper elementary grades (4-6). Your child should not be receiving more than thirty minutes per day. Please contact your teacher if your child requires more time to complete their homework.

VACATION - Family Holidays During the School Year

While we support families having wonderful experiences outside of school, taking holidays during the school year will result in your child missing valuable learning. Although our teachers are committed to helping your child progress, extended absences can be difficult for children because learning is such an experiential and social activity. If a curricular objective is covered while a student is away, it may result in an *Unable to Assess* evaluation on the report card.

Behaviour Philosophy

J. J. Nearing strives to provide a safe, nurturing, engaging learning environment that recognizes the unique gifts and inherent value of each student and staff member. As a Catholic school, our philosophy of discipline reflects Gospel values. For us, this means that we will treat members of our school family as Jesus did and we believe in the principle of reconciliation.

At J. J. Nearing we as a staff, felt the need to be proactive in establishing a behaviour plan that aligns with the recently developed Division value and belief statements. We understand that a school-wide approach to positive behaviour (as outlined in "Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools and the 40 Developmental Assets framework) is strongly supported by research to increase student achievement and provide students with a sense of wellbeing and confidence. The plan makes use of effective instructional strategies, consistent logical consequences and positive reinforcement to teach students the skills and behaviours necessary to succeed now and in the future.

We have chosen the following acronym as a framework to use with the students when talking about and teaching the behavioural expectations:

S	for Safe and caring
T	for Teamwork
A	for Accountability
R	for Respect
S	for Success

A school-wide approach to positive behaviour effectively promotes a safe, caring and predictable environment for learning and teaching. Throughout the year, the behavioural expectations will be consistently and clearly communicated to students. As a way to reinforce these expectations, staff will focus on creating opportunities to teach positive behaviours in a class, small group or on an individual basis. By embracing, modeling and teaching core values, we can create a school climate in which behavioural expectations are a natural extension of a belief in treating each other fairly and respectfully.

A positive behaviour approach provides reinforcement and rewards when students meet behavioural expectations; however, when negative behaviours occur, fair and predictable consequences will result. Examples of corrective consequences are: corrective feedback, participating in self-reflection activities, communication with parents, removal or withdrawal of preferred activities, making restitution, problem solving sessions, and office referrals.

Communication between home and school is an essential component of any behaviour approach. Please look for any related information that will be shared in newsletters, parent council and at assemblies.

Student Code of Conduct

At J. J. Nearing we focus much of our efforts on fostering a school climate where all our students can attend school in a safe and caring environment. The school will establish a culture of respect for the God given dignity of all who participate within it and pursue the common good of everyone, as we build a community of faith, hope, and love through the example of Jesus Christ.

This means we will take any bullying or harassment seriously and actively work towards a positive resolution. The new Education Act mandates that schools intervene and address bullying behavior.

Sustaining a Safe and Caring Learning Environment in Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools

Definitions:

1. Harassment refers to derogatory (e.g., excessively critical, insulting, belittling) or vexatious (e.g., aggressive, angry, antagonistic) conduct or comments that are known or ought reasonably to be known to be offensive or unwelcome. Harassment includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. any objectionable comment, act, or display that demeans, belittles, or causes personal humiliation or embarrassment, and any act of intimidation or threat;
 - b. conduct or comments involving any of the prohibited grounds of harassment and discrimination as defined in the *Alberta Human Rights Act*.

Any form of harassment may be caused by a single incident or a series of events.

2. Sexual Harassment includes comments, gestures or physical conduct of a sexual nature where an individual knows or ought reasonably to know that the behaviour is unwelcome and personally offensive. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. inappropriate or derogatory comments, humour, insults or behaviour based on gender and/or gender expression, gender identity;

- b. inappropriate, lewd, or sexually offensive written, graphic or behavioural displays on school board property;
- c. inappropriate, lewd, or sexually offensive slogans or graphics displayed on clothing worn on school board property or during school-related activities;
- d. inappropriate conversation, physical touching, or leering that could be construed to be a sexual advance;
- e. inappropriate conversation regarding an individual's sexual behaviour;
- f. unsolicited and/or unwanted requests to engage in sexual activity;
- g. reprisal or threat of reprisal against an individual for rejecting a sexual solicitation or advance.

3. Bullying refers to repeated and hostile or demeaning behaviour by an individual where the behaviour is intended 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 occurs in circumstances where one party endeavors to maintain power and control over another based upon systemic inequalities within a social setting.

Harassment and Bullying Codes of Conduct

The school does not support Harassment and Bullying in any of its schools and/or sites or at all. To this end, the Greater St. Albert Catholic School Division has implemented (and revised) the following Administrative Procedures which will serve as the basis for addressing matters pertaining to Harassment and Bullying:

- a. Student Discipline Framework, Administrative Procedure 350
- b. Harassment Administrative Procedure 460 (Employees)
- c. Harassment Administrative Procedure 358 (Division Students)
- d. Safe and Caring Learning Environments Administrative Procedure 359
- e. Code of Conduct Review to Address Bullying Behaviour Administrative Procedure 360
- f. Accommodating and Respecting Gender Identity and Expression Administrative Procedure 361
- g. Revised Use of Technology Administrative Procedure 140
- h. Revised Social Media Administrative Procedure 149

Staff will refer to these documents when making decisions for acting upon matters of Harassment and Bullying.

District Expectations

- 1. No action toward another student, regardless of the intent of that action, will or is intended to cause harm, fear, or distress to that student.
- 2. No action toward another student within the school community will or intend to diminish the student's reputation within the school community.

3. Any action that contributes to a perception of Bullying, whether it occurs during school time, or after school hours, or whether by electronic or other means, will be addressed by the school if it is determined that the actions impact the well-being of the alleged victim within the school community.
4. Any action that humiliates or contributes to diminishing the reputation of a student because of race, religious beliefs, colour, gender identification, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, ancestry, age, place of origin, marital status of parents, source of income of parents, family circumstances, or gender expression, or gender identity of a student.
5. No report by a student that he / or she is being “harassed” or “bullied” will be ignored by a school official. The official will report the incident to the school principal who shall investigate the matter and act in accordance with Harassment Administrative Procedure 358 (Students) as required.
6. In establishing consequences for bullying, teachers and principals will use corrective interventions that consider the context of the circumstance, the behavioural history of the students involved, and the age / stage of development of the student.
7. If in the opinion of the teacher or principal an act of Bullying has occurred, interventions will be applied dedicated to stopping the behaviour in the future, and supporting the victimized student. Those disciplined for their involvement in bullying will be communicated what to “stop” doing, and “start” doing in order to further a safe and caring culture within the school.
8. Incidences of Bullying that adversely impact the safety of individuals or are an affront to the common good of the school community may be addressed through application of applicable administrative procedures and practices, including Harassment Administrative Procedures 358 (Division Students) and 460 (Employees).
9. Students will not be discriminated against according to the application that the Alberta Human Rights Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has to the School Board as a Catholic Separate School Division.
10. All actions by students that impact the safety and well-being of students or staff will be addressed through the Student Discipline Framework AP 350 and the Harassment AP 358 (Division Students) as appropriate.
11. The expectation for students in all their school-related interactions that pertain to the School Division is that they:
 - a. conduct themselves in a manner which upholds the dignity and worth of all members of the school community;
 - b. be aware of and adhere to their school’s code of conduct; and
 - c. be aware that these expectations form the school’s and division’s standards for creating a safe and caring school.

12. No report by a student that s/he is being “bullied” is to be ignored by a school official, who will report the matter to the school principal as required by Harassment AP 358 (Division Students).

13. In establishing consequences for Bullying, teachers and principals may use corrective interventions that consider the context of the circumstance, the behavioural history of the students involved, and the age / stage of development of the student.

14. If in the opinion of the teacher or principal an act of Bullying has occurred, interventions may be applied dedicated to stopping the behaviour in the future, and to providing reasonable supports to the victimized student.

15. Appropriate interventions and supports will be provided to the student who has engaged in wrongdoing to ensure that the student establishes productive, positive behaviors in the future.

A specific Code of Conduct for Students at J.J. Nearing to support these expectations is as follows:

Student Code of Conduct

J.J. Nearing School affirms the joint responsibility of home and school in guiding students to behave in acceptable, positive ways. Students are expected to demonstrate responsibility in meeting both individual and group expectations.

Expectations for student behaviour are outlined in government legislation. Section 31 of the Education Act (2019) defines responsibilities of students as follows:

A student, as a partner in education, has the responsibility to:

- a. attend school regularly and punctually,
- b. be ready to learn and actively engage in and diligently pursue the student’s education,
- c. ensure the student’s conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment that respects diversity and fosters a sense of belonging,
- d. respect the rights of others in the school,
- e. refrain from, report and not tolerate bullying or bullying behaviour directed toward others in the school, whether or not it occurs within the school building, during the school day or by electronic means,
- f. comply with the rules of the school and the policies of the board,
- g. cooperate with everyone authorized by the board to provide education programs and other services,
- h. be accountable to the student’s teachers and other school staff for the student’s conduct, and
- i. positively contribute to the students’ school and community.

The following list provides possible responses to discipline situations:

- Teaching/Re-teaching/Rehearsal of appropriate behavior with staff guidance
- Time Out or removal from the immediate environment, i.e. classroom, playground

- Student is given increased staff guidance or supervision or a special routine to help them behave appropriately, i.e. walk with a supervisor during recess
- Loss of privileges, i.e. recess
- Reflective writing or drawing activity
- Involvement of parents, school staff and possibly the student, to develop a Behavior Support Plan to assist the student
- Making a restitution for property damage
- Making a commitment for future actions (apology, if student is sincere)
- Assignment of cleanup duties around the school
- Communication with parents to form a partnership to assist children with learning and displaying appropriate behavior
- Temporary removal from class or activity
- In-School or Out-Of-School suspension

In dealing with unexpected behavior, an attempt is always made to relate the incident using logical consequences and restorative justice practices maintaining the dignity of the person. The school will attempt to assist those students who have difficulty with punctuality, attendance, completion of assignments, or inappropriate behavior. Parents/guardians will be advised of difficulties if the need arises and a plan will be developed.

Our priority is to ensure that all of our students are provided with a safe and caring school environment where they can excel and be healthy and productive learners. Collaboration among administration, staff, students and parents is key to helping achieve our goal to eradicate bullying from our school environment.

This code will be reviewed for its effectiveness in meeting Division expectations annually. Please note that Section 32 of the *Education Act*, specifies the following reminder for parents:

A parent has the prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be provided to the parent's child, and as a partner in education, has the responsibility to:

- a. act as the primary guide and decision-maker with respect to the child's education,
- b. take an active role in the child's educational success, including assisting the child in complying with section 31,
- c. ensure that the child attends school regularly,
- d. ensure that the parent's conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment,
- e. co-operate and collaborate with school staff to support the delivery of supports and services to the child,
- f. encourage, foster and advance collaborative, positive and respectful relationships with teachers, principals, other school staff and professionals providing supports and services in the school, and
- g. engage in the child's school community.

J.J. Nearing Catholic Elementary School values your participation within our school community to support the safety, well-being, and success of all our students.

Should you wish to view the Education Act in more detail with respect to bullying, student conduct and parent and school responsibilities, it can be found online at:

http://www.qp.alberta.ca/1266.cfm?page=e00p3.cfm&leg_type=Acts&isbncln=9780779786855

Dress Code

At J. J. Nearing in the spirit of respectfulness for oneself and for others we dress appropriately. School is a place of learning and we know that clothing with offensive messages or clothing that reveals undergarments or straps distract from learning. Staff will take appropriate steps to ask the children to cover up, or to phone home to have more appropriate clothing brought to the school. Shorts/skirts should be at least mid-thigh and shoulders should be covered with straps of at least one inch width. Hats will only be allowed in school for special occasions.

Bikes, Roller Blades, Skateboards, Longboards and Scooters

Safety for students is always a prime concern for us. When riding bikes to school, we ask that they be walked across the playground. Bike racks are provided and bikes should be locked at all times. We also suggest that bike accessories be removed during the day. Again, for safety reasons, students with skateboards and scooters are asked to carry them once they enter the school grounds. Those on roller blades are asked to proceed slowly and cautiously and to remove the roller blades in the boot room. For the safety of all students and staff, **these items must be secured outside or in the student's locker.**

Electronic Devices

Students in grades 4-6 are encouraged to bring their own robust devices. When we say robust we mean a device larger than a phone or iPod with a better fit for learning. Tablets can be difficult to integrate and we have learned that Chrome Books seem to be the most user friendly and economical for students and families. Students are lent school locks for the year and are required to lock their devices in their lockers during recess and lunch.

Footwear

Our school is our home away from home. In our efforts to provide a pleasant learning environment, we want to have a clean and neat school facility. We ask that everyone have a pair of indoor shoes for school use. This also demonstrates caring and respect both for our school and each other.

Maintaining a Productive Learning Environment

In previous years, prior to lunch and dismissal times, there have been parents waiting in the hallways outside of classrooms for their children. We feel that this does have an effect on the learning environment as children notice your presence in the hallway. At times, some parents are conversing with others while they wait or preschoolers are chatting, which does increase the noise level in our hallways.

We are asking parents, if you arrive a bit early to pick up your children, to please wait outside your child's designated dismissal door. As our hallways are fairly congested at dismissal time, this will also leave more space for the children to get ready for home and will increase their level of independence. Being able to get ready for their day and home time on their own builds confidence in children and helps them get off to a great start. We appreciate your assistance in helping us maintain a productive learning environment until the end of the school day.

Operational Days (No Classes for Students)

Operational days refer to those days when school staff work but students do not attend classes. Following a survey of school division stakeholders, our Board of Trustees dedicated one day per month to staff meetings and professional development in September, November, December, January, March, April, May and June. In October and February students will be dismissed at 12:13 p.m. to allow for staff meetings. Other operational days will include Blueprints Day (our faith development day for staff); Fall Institute Day (a division wide professional development day sponsored by A.T.A. and our division); Parent Teacher Interviews; and Teachers' Convention. These days provide some of the time required for the necessary professional development of staff to respond to student's needs and meeting the needs to operate the school. They will also be announced in our school's newsletter.

School Pictures

School pictures are offered in the fall of the new school year. The School Council, in conjunction with the school administrative team, engages in a selection process to choose a photographer to take our school pictures. Information concerning the packages offered will be sent home in advance. Purchase of these pictures is **optional**.

Lost and Found – Please Label Student Items

Please mark your children's clothing and supplies carefully with their full name. All items found in the school will be placed in the Lost and Found shelves located in the portables. Parents and students are encouraged to check these regularly. We do display lost and found articles at the time of parent-teacher interviews. Three times a year, unclaimed articles are given to charitable agencies.

School Bus Transportation

School bus service is provided to students living in areas designated by Greater St. Albert Catholic Regional Division for bus transportation. Students ride buses under a bus pass system and must have bus passes with them at all times. Application for bus passes are made through our Transportation Office at 39 Sunset Blvd. (back of the building) or please call (780-459-7711). Information concerning bus stops and times is issued with bus passes, along with a brochure outlining school bus regulations. Please be proactive and discuss these regulations with your child. Students may **only** ride the bus to which they are assigned. Students must provide a note from their parents to the school and bus driver if there is a change to their normal bus stop.

The support of parents and the cooperation of students will ensure safe and pleasant transportation to and from school. Student courtesy is expected at bus stops and on buses. Should inappropriate behaviour occur, bus drivers will report to the school administrative team and we will contact you to

assist us in the correction of the problem. Continued misbehaviour may result in suspension of bus riding privileges.

School Division Cold Weather Policy

Cold weather may make it difficult for the school busses to run on schedule. Please inform the students that in severe weather they are to wait no longer than ten minutes. If the bus has not arrived they are to return home.

The current divisional policy regarding the closing of schools is as follows: During an emergency, the Superintendent has the authority to close the schools in the event of mechanical failure in the school plant, unsafe road conditions (e.g. fog, ice), blizzards, or threat of major disaster. Schools do not close because of cold weather but parents should use discretion when sending young children to school under adverse conditions.

The practice of the district, except in the most extreme conditions, is: Schools are always open, buses always operate. Exceptions will be announced on the GSACRD website at www.gsacrd.ab.ca. The final decision with regard to attendance at school during adverse weather conditions is the responsibility of the parent.

Please contact the school to report your child's absence even if the buses are not running.

Staff at J. J. Nearing pays close attention to weather conditions. We do not send our children outside if conditions are not appropriate for an enjoyable recess break.

Recess

Recess is important to children in that it provides a break from regular school routine, a chance to get some fresh air, and an opportunity to run off excess energy.

We will only cancel recess when Environment Canada determines that the temperature is below the limits of the following information during the winter, or on very wet or rainy days in the spring or fall.

The expectation for students to remain indoors is when the temperature is -20 degrees Celsius or colder, or when the temperature and wind chill factor are -20 degrees Celsius or colder. The source used for determining the local temperature shall be Environment Canada. St. Albert schools consult the Edmonton region.

Whenever recess is cancelled outdoors, an inside supervised recess break will occur.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Religion

As a Catholic school, we strive to develop each individual to his/her optimum, spiritually, academically, artistically, socially and physically. Religion is taught as a subject and we also focus on developing a welcoming, Christ-centered, learning environment throughout the entire school day. We appreciate the support of our parents and parish in this most important endeavour.

Though sacramental preparation is the primary responsibility of parents, our religion curriculum at the following grade levels partially supports the preparation of children for these sacraments.

Grade 2 Reconciliation and First Communion

Grade 6 Confirmation

J. J. Nearing Catholic Elementary School is located within the St. Albert Parish boundaries. The parish and our school work together to provide information evenings at St. Albert Parish to assist parents in preparing their children to receive the sacraments. Please consult our school year calendar for the dates and times of these meetings.

The Family Celebration Masses are another joint project between St. Albert Parish and the Catholic schools within its boundaries. Usually two or three of our classes host a mass and there are opportunities for both children and their parents to participate in the liturgy. Dates and times are announced in our J.J.N. school year calendar and in our monthly newsletters.

Fine Arts

Our music specialist teaches our music program to students from kindergarten to grade six. The program gives all students the opportunity to acquire music skills and the understanding to make music an enjoyable and meaningful part of their lives. Students learn to play the recorder in grades four and five and guitar in grades five and six. The school hosts a Christmas and Spring Concert. Dates are published through the newsletter and the school website.

The music teacher offers music enrichment opportunities for students in grades two to six in the areas of choral and instrumental ensembles. These programs exceed what is offered during regular music classes and focus on personal musical growth at a higher level of excellence.

Our classroom teachers teach Art. Additional cultural performances, supported by a school fee paid at the time of registration, are provided throughout the year and are reported in our school newsletter.

Physical Education

We use the Alberta Learning Physical Education Program of Studies, which is taught by our classroom teachers. The emphasis of this program is to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to lead a healthy lifestyle. Use of various community facilities (i.e., Fountain Park Pool) is made, where feasible, on a user-pay basis.

Swimming instruction is a part of our physical education program in kindergarten, grade two, grade four and grade five. Dates will be sent home later in the school year.

One ski lesson day for students in grades one through six is included in our physical education program. We have booked one day in the school program at Rabbit Hill for the upcoming year.

Upper elementary students compete in St. Albert city meets for cross-country running in the fall and track and field in the spring. We also participate in the Running Room Games. Some events are open participation, while some require students to qualify at school level meets.

Special Education Services

Under the direction of our Learning Support Facilitator, Mrs. Jodie Atkinson, we assess student needs and design flexible groupings, which may operate within and outside of the classroom. Our educational assistants will be scheduled to support a wide variety of student needs. Developing instructional programs for students with special needs is done through a team approach with input from parents, teachers, educational assistants, school administration and the Learning Support Facilitator. This results in the creation of an I.P.P., which stands for Individual Program Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about your child's needs and their educational program.

Counselor

J. J. Nearing is pleased to have a qualified teacher and trained psychologist as a counselor for our students. She will be working with students, parents, staff, administrators, and community agencies to address the developmental needs of all students. Her role as School Counselor will include coordinating and implementing preventative programs, providing support for individual student planning, individual and small group counseling, crisis intervention and collaboration with community agencies. Please contact the school if you have any questions about J. J. Nearing's Counseling Services.

Capital Health

Capital Health works together with schools and community agencies to provide a range of coordinated health and support services for school children and their families. Our common goal is to build on the health and education potential of every student. Services include: support for students with complex and chronic health conditions; vision and hearing screening; dental services; immunizations and communicable diseases follow-up; speech and language services; emotional/behavioral support; and occupational therapy. If you have any concerns or questions about your child's health, please talk to the school principal or contact your school's community health nurse at 780-459-6671.

Speech Therapist

The Capital Health Authority provides the services of a speech therapist to our school for one half day a week. We are able to make referrals for speech assessment; however, speech therapy is available on a very limited basis. Referrals are made in consultation with the classroom teacher and parents.

Occupational Therapist

We are able to make referrals to an occupational therapist on a very limited basis. The classroom teacher in consultation with parents makes such referrals. The occupational therapist acts in a consultative role by assessing needs and making recommendations in areas such as fine or gross motor development, physical management, and visual perceptual development.

Library

The students of J. J. Nearing will have access to the school library through scheduled classroom visits. Our school librarian, Mrs. Laurie McDonald, will be working with staff to acquire resources that support and complement the prescribed Alberta Program of Studies. We are excited to be in year four of makerspace stations in our library!

Field Trips

Field trips are planned by classroom teachers to provide students with experiences that will enhance their understanding of subject area outcomes. Field trips are user-pay and fees include items such as registration, materials and bus costs as they apply in each case. As a convenience to parents, field trip fees will be assessed once during each term. Letters, outlining fees, will be sent to parents by the classroom teacher. Field trip transportation is done through chartered bussing or taxi services, as appropriate. On some occasions it is

possible that the “field trip” experience may take place on our school site, with guest instructors and special materials provided. If there is a fee for these onsite programs, it will be added to the field trip levy. In accordance with the new school division policy on Field Trips, written parental consent **must** be provided for all field trips.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an integral part of our school program. We greatly appreciate the assistance of volunteers in our classrooms, on field trips, on hot lunch days and at other school wide events. The contributions of volunteers in so many aspects of our school program give us the opportunity to provide many activities and events, which enhance the school experience of our students. Volunteer help will be requested by teachers or by our School Council Parent Volunteer Coordinator. **We ask all volunteers to register and sign in at our front office.** In addition, Administrative Procedure 265 requires **all volunteers** (who work with students) to complete a Criminal Record Check and a Child Intervention Check Annually; as well as any other required school forms on an annual basis. The school can provide letters that you can present to these two agencies to waive fees normally associated with these requests. These letters are available at the school office.

School Council

Our School Council was formed during the 1998-99 school year. All parents and guardians of our students are automatically members of our School Council.

Our council meets monthly and the meeting minutes can be accessed through the school’s website. The School Council provides parents with the opportunity to be informed participants in matters relating to our school and school division.

School Council is involved in many undertakings. “Hot lunches” are offered to our students bi-weekly. This is a favorite. “Compassionate Friends” is a committee that offers support to families that are going through difficult times. They focus on promoting school community. Our “Medical Needs” committee assist the administration and staff to identify those J. J. Nearing students with medical needs and

promote practices designed to meet these students' needs. The "Yearbook" committee is responsible for collecting photos taken throughout the school year and creating the amazing J.J.N. yearbook. Many events also occur throughout the year, which may include a Halloween Toonie Carnival, Christmas Carnival and Shrove Tuesday lunch, just to name a few.

Kindergarten Workshops

The J. J. Nearing kindergarten program offers a unique opportunity for our parents. Workshops are held on topics including "reading with your child", "family fun packs" and "learning to write". The half hour sessions are a chance to meet fellow kindergarten parents and learn to support lifelong learning.

Families and Friends of J. J. Nearing Catholic Elementary School Society

Families and Friends of J. J. Nearing Catholic Elementary School Society was formed during the 1998-99 school year. The purpose of this group is to conduct fund-raising activities to raise money for items which will enhance the educational experience of students in our school. In the past, funds raised have been used to purchase a class set of iPads, new playground equipment and sports/recess equipment for all classes. Last year the focus was on enhancing classrooms with flexible seating for students.

Compassionate Friends of J.J.N.

Compassionate Friends is a group of J.J.N. parent volunteers that want to help families in our school. The Compassionate Friends Committee reflects on what it means to accept the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to share them in our school community. We want to reach out to families in both sad and happy times. We can offer our assistance in a number of ways.

- * Send a card of welcome
- * Send a card of sympathy
- * Make meals/lunches
- * Run errands
- * Shovel snow

These are just a few of the many things that the parent volunteers of Compassionate Friends will do.

Compassionate Friends will also provide practical and immediate support for families in need while maintaining confidentiality, dignity, respect and discretion. If a member of our school family is in financial need, St. Albert Parish will assist us with a fundraiser. Through their support, we can meet and take action. More information about this committee is available by contacting the school.

School Calendar

To view our school calendar please visit our website at www.jjn.gsacrd.ab.ca

This calendar is live and updated with the latest events and fieldtrips.