

2024-2025 École Mother Teresa Handbook



École Mother Teresa School

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools
79 Old Boomer Road, Sylvan Lake, Alberta T4S 1Z4
Phone: (403) 887- 6371 Fax: (403) 887-6373
Website: ecolemotherteresa.ca

Welcome to our School!

On behalf of our entire community, welcome to École Mother Teresa School. Our school has a strong Catholic Christian focus and all members of our school community work collaboratively to assist students in achieving personal and academic success in an organized and safe and caring environment. Our goal is to develop and preserve in each student a sense of self-worth, self-confidence, and resiliency. École Mother Teresa School has approximately 375 students from grade 5 to grade 9 in both English and French Immersion programs.

Commitment to Catholic Education

Parents are the primary educators of their children. A quality Catholic education involves a foundation of mutual respect between home, school, and parish. We look forward to parental support and involvement at École Mother Teresa School as well as at Our Lady of the Assumption Parish.

Our Catholic faith is continually nurtured and experienced in Religion classes, all curriculum, celebrations, and prayer. Students are actively involved in our parish through masses at the church/school, through visits by our parish priest and youth minister, and through our middle school youth group. There are many opportunities for parents to join in both school and classroom celebrations of the Catholic faith.

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Sacramental Preparation

The school supports the parish in regards to sacramental preparation. Although it is the responsibility of parents to make arrangements for their children to receive any sacrament, the school will support you in doing this. If you need any assistance in helping to coordinate with the parish, please contact the school.

Opportunities for Student Learning

Core Programs include: Religious Education, Language Learning (English Language Arts and French Language Arts), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, and Exploratory Subjects.

Exploratory Courses (name may vary)

Exploratory courses are a way to extend the students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned in core courses to a variety of themed subject areas. Exploratory courses carry the same responsibilities as regular core classes.

Exploratory courses are offered from grades 6-9 and will vary from term to term, and all fit into the provincial Career and Technology Foundations curriculum. Some examples may include Outdoor Education, Construction, Food Studies, Makerspace, Foods, Sewing and Band.

Middle school students will indicate their preferred exploratory courses and/or area of interest. However, some courses have limited access because of safety procedures (Construction and Foods) and we also must ensure equitable class sizes. We strive to provide every student with a variety of courses throughout the year and we will ensure students receive at least 1 of their top three choices throughout the year.

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Special Programs

French Immersion Program – École Mother Teresa School offers a rich language-centered French Immersion program. French Immersion permits the child to become fluently bilingual at a time in their life when language is easily acquired.

Inclusive Education – Academic support is offered to assist students who require additional assistance with Language Arts and Mathematics or offer enrichment to students who are excelling in a particular subject. The majority of academic support occurs within the regular classroom through clustering for small group instruction or assistance by a co-teacher.

School Counselors – Teachers, parents, or students may refer students (themselves) to a counselor. Referrals are made directly to the counselors via the school staff, email, or telephone. Goals of the Comprehensive Guidance Program at École Mother Teresa School are to continue building and expanding a counseling program that enhances all students' growth and development in the following areas:

1. Help students interact effectively with others.
2. Help students maximize their academic, social and emotional potential.
3. Help students acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and habits required to successfully respond to high school expectations.
4. Help students gain the skills to cope with personal problems and concerns that may impede educational achievement and personal/social growth.
5. Request the assistance of parents, teachers and other school personnel in identifying the personal, social and intellectual needs of students.

Important Phone Numbers

- ✓ Alberta Mental Health Board Helpline 1-877-303-AMHB (2642)
(24HR line for critical crisis calls relating to suicide and other immediate mental health issues)
- ✓ Sylvan Lake Community Health Center - 403-887-2241
- ✓ Kids Help Phone - 1-800-668-6868
- ✓ Child Abuse Hotline - 1-800-387-5437
- ✓ Red Deer Crisis Centre - 1-866-956-1099 or 1-403-356-1099
- ✓ Bullying Helpline – 1-888-456-2323
- ✓ Suicide Hotline - 403-342-4966

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Absences/Lates

Whenever your child will be absent from school (either morning or afternoon), please call or email (Tara.spotter@rdcrs.ca) the school at 403-887-6371. If you phone before office hours, you can leave a message. If the school has not been notified, the Administrative Assistant will contact the parent through SWIFT K-12. In the case of an extended period of absence, please contact the teacher regarding homework. Should your child be late arriving at school, he/she must report to the office to avoid being marked absent.

Learning Commons

The Learning Commons strives to provide resources and support for educational excellence to our students and to instill a passion for reading that will inspire them to be lifelong readers, and therefore lifelong learners. We are also developing this space to incorporate maker space learning activities. Makerspace is identified as one of six important developments in educational technology for K-12. This space provides an atmosphere for engaging learners in creative, higher order problem-solving through hands-on design and creation.

Students are encouraged to return and borrow books by any of the following methods:

1. During their regularly scheduled literacy block time or during class time (with teachers' permission);
2. At recess or lunch time;
3. Before or after school.

The Learning Commons is open to students and staff from 8:31 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Middle School Textbook Policy

- Each student will sign out textbooks from the Learning Commons as required by their teachers. (The student's name should be written in all texts issued to them.)
- Each student will be held accountable for all textbooks issued to them - it is your child's responsibility to keep these books in good condition.
- When not in use, textbooks should be kept in the student's locker or backpack.
- Textbooks used by students and not returned at the end of the school year will be billed to the student or the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) at the current replacement cost.
- Textbooks assigned to students which have been damaged will be assessed for the extent of the damage and a cost determined that is proportionate to the current age of the material, period of remaining usefulness to the school, and other factors deemed appropriate by the school administration.

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School Bussing

All students can be provided bussing within their designated catchment area through Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools Transportation Department. Bus rules will be sent home with bus students at the beginning of the year. Repeated infractions will result in suspension from riding the bus. If your child rides the bus, please download the bus app at <https://www.rdcrs.ca/schools/school-bus-information>. To contact the transportation department call (403) 309 - 8801.

School Pictures

Photographs of each student are organized through Lifetouch and are available in different packages prior to Christmas. We may also offer Spring photos. Parents are not required to purchase these photographs. Information brochures will be sent home with all students.

Cell Phone Expectations and Procedures

In order to ensure the very best climate for learning, students are restricted from using cellphones in class. Students have access to chromebooks, computers, laptops, and iPads during classes to support their learning outcomes. Procedures are listed below:

1. Cell phones should be **'off and away'** in lockers during the entire school day. If any phone is seen or heard in class, the student will be asked to take their phone to the office. Phones should not be tucked in clothing, in bags, or in binders.
2. Phones delivered to the office will be returned to students at the end of the day in the first and second instances. Should there be a third occurrence, a call will be made home requiring a parent/guardian to collect the student's phone.
3. Students are still able to use their phones prior to school and after school. ***Parents should contact the school*** in the event they need to contact their child during the school day. Cell phone restrictions remain in place at all other times including locker breaks.

Please note that in the case of any special needs or family emergencies, we have a landline that is answered from 8:00am - 4:00pm.

School Fees

- There are school fees, field trip fees and extracurricular fees. Please see our School Fees tab for the most up-to-date yearly fees and information.
- All school fees can be paid for on RYCOR

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Lunch Hours

All students eat their lunch in their classrooms and are expected to follow lunch rules. A teacher or educational assistant will supervise during eating times and outside during recess.

Our school policy is that we are a **closed campus** during the day and students are to remain on school grounds. **We do not allow students to leave the school grounds during the lunch break to go home for lunch unless parents/guardians pick them up.** The parent/guardian will be required to sign the student in and out at the office. This policy is in place for the protection of our students. In the event of a fire drill or school lockdown, we need to be able to ensure that all students are safe and accounted for.

Communication

All families are highly encouraged to follow École Mother Teresa School on Facebook and Instagram, as well as use our website as an important source of information. They are all updated daily with many pictures and write-ups of the great things that are happening in the school.

Weekly on our school website, ecolemotherteresa.ca, parents may access our Week at a Glance document. Updated weekly, it gives families important information and weekly events in our school. It is posted and sent each Friday via email, highlighting the next week.

Parents are given a login code from the school to access the Parent Portal of Schoology. This will allow parents to check on their child's attendance and grades. Parents are also encouraged to contact teachers directly if necessary. They may do this by phoning the school at 403-887-6371, or via email. Teacher email can be accessed on our school website, ecolemotherteresa.ca.

Volunteers in the Classroom

If a parent wishes to volunteer at the school, they must have a current criminal record check on file at the office. These are available at the local RCMP office for free with a letter from the school. A new procedure for RDCRS requires all criminal record checks to be updated every 3 years, and all criminal record checks need to be submitted to the school within **30 days of receiving the document from the RCMP.**

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Daily School Opening and Closing

The school office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. each day. Beginning at 8:20 a.m., elementary and Middle School students will be supervised on the playground and outside.

Grades 5 and MS School Schedule

Grade 5 and 6 lunch recess will be the opposite of Gr. 7-9.

	Monday to Friday
First Bell	8:31 am
Classes Begin	8:36 am
Morning Recess	9:57 - 10:11 am
Lunch and Lunch Recess	11:32 am - 12:27 am
Afternoon Classes Start	12:27 pm
Dismissal Time	3:15 pm

Reporting Process

Elementary school parents and Middle school parents access Schoology throughout the year to check student progress and teacher comments. This provides students and parents with a summary of all assignments, tests, and teacher comments for each course. Missing, late, and excused assignments will be indicated on your Schoology account.

In addition to ongoing, live reporting, Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held in November and March.

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Honour Roll

Middle School Honor Roll is recognition of outstanding academic performance.

Middle School Honour Roll Criteria (based on [Administrative Procedure #350 - Student Evaluation](#))

- Students average of 80% or better in all 5 Core subjects (English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social and Religion with no mark in any class (core or other) lower than 70%.
 - Honor with Distinction = 90% average or higher and no mark below 80%
- a Proficient (P) or higher in PE, Health, and Exploratory
- a Pass in any course graded using a Pass/Fail system of assessment

Final Exam Exemptions

Students in Grades 7 and 8 who have achieved honors/honors with distinction for the entire year, may apply to be exempted from one final exam in June. Each year the student must rotate the subjects from which they are exempted. Gr. 6 & 9 students complete Provincial Achievement Tests which do not apply to this exemption policy. These exemptions will be at the discretion of the classroom teacher and administrative/inclusive team. **Exemptions are not guaranteed.**

Homework

Any assignment that a student does not complete in the allotted school time will be sent home for completion. In addition, extra drill, review, study and research are seen as a part of homework. Your assistance in seeing that your child completes homework and returns it to school on the next school day is appreciated. As well, one of the most valuable activities a student can participate in is 10-20 minutes of nightly reading.

NHI club

NHI club will be held once during the 5-day cycle over the lunch hour. Students who have not completed their work will be signed up by their teacher and will be expected to come to the Learning Commons to complete their work.

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Extra-Curricular Sports

École Mother Teresa School offers students the privilege of participating in inter-school sports. The Crusaders are involved in cross-country running, volleyball, basketball, ski club, badminton, and track & field. Our athletic programs are very successful in their leagues. Students who are participating in these sports teams that are run outside of school hours are required to attend all practices unless any issues arise and have discussed the problem with coaches. ***Students are required to be in good academic and behavioral standing in order to participate in extracurricular sports.***

Gym Strip

All middle school students are required to change for Physical Education and to wear indoor runners (no black soles) while in the gymnasium. No one will be allowed to participate in the gym without proper footwear. Dress code is in effect during PE class.

Crisis Response Procedures

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools has implemented a School Division Safety Plan to create and maintain safe and caring schools. This plan includes a Crisis Response Manual through Hour Zero which outlines procedures and guidelines for managing a critical incident. Staff is trained in these procedures and practice exercises early in the year for students and staff will ensure we are able to deal with a critical incident in a safe and effective manner.

If your child becomes acutely ill or is seriously hurt at school, staff will make every effort to contact you at home or at work. **(Please notify the school immediately if you have a change of address, home, or work phone numbers, emergency contact, or the contact's phone number.)** If these efforts fail, we will attempt to contact the "emergency contact" numbers you give us. Failing this, if we evaluate the situation as serious enough, we will call 911 and have your child transported to the Health Care Centre. In the interim, your child will be attended to in the school health room.

Hour Zero Emergency Procedures

Procedures are practiced throughout the year to prepare your child for various emergency situations. 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.

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Inclement Weather

Our students and staff go outside in the morning, at morning recess, at lunch recess and for educational activities up to and including -25oC with the windchill. We use the Weather Network to determine the temperature. If the temperature is below -25oC, students will remain inside for recess.

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Bill 10

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools 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.

École Mother Teresa School Conduct Code

MISSION STATEMENT:

Our students are positive and caring people who can demonstrate responsibility for themselves and others within a Catholic school environment.

PHILOSOPHY:

We, at École Mother Teresa School, in partnership with home and community, believe in the principle of discipline with dignity. We recognize the inherent right of each individual to be safe and be treated with justice and respect.

PRINCIPLES:

École Mother Teresa School believes that all children have the right to learn in a positive, cooperative, orderly school environment. Our goal is to help students see themselves as being responsible for their behavior and in control of themselves. Any behavior that infringes on the right or well-being of others is unacceptable in our school. (See appendix A- Alberta School Act). Students must understand that they are responsible for their own behavior. While the majority of students behave in a responsible manner most of the time, we recognize that on occasion, a student may err in judgment regarding his/her behavior. The staff and parents share the responsibility for teaching students ways to handle their errors in judgment in a more acceptable manner.

Support will be provided for all students in order to promote the internalization and practical application of these principles in daily life. **High expectations for positive conduct will be held for all students at École Mother Teresa School.**

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Responsibilities of Individuals at École Mother Teresa School

1. I WILL arrive at school on time and be prepared for class because I have a right to learn in this school.
2. I WILL listen to instructions and do my work to the best of my abilities.
3. I WILL listen when others are speaking because everyone has a right to hear and be heard.
4. I WILL be considerate of everyone so that we all feel happy and wanted at our school because everyone has a right to be respected.
5. I WILL play and act safely at all times because everyone has the right to be safe.
6. I WILL accept each other's right to privacy of thoughts, feelings and personal property because everyone has a right to privacy.
7. I WILL listen to feedback from others because everyone has the right to receive assistance and support in their academic, spiritual, physical, emotional and social growth.
8. I WILL keep our school clean and be a good ambassador for our school because everyone has the right to take pride in our school, both the building and the spirit within.
9. I WILL accept each other's differences as special gifts from God because we all have a right to be a unique child in God's family.

École Mother Teresa School Dress Code

At Mother Teresa School we expect students to dress reasonably and **modestly** for the various activities and seasons. The following guidelines should be adhered to for student dress.

- Clothing must **NOT** display slogans or advertising which is controversial, obscene, offensive or depict drugs, smoking or alcohol.
- Shirts/Tops must be modest and meet the following criteria:
 - Shirts must have straps that are wider than spaghetti straps.
 - Shirts are to be long enough that midriff or chest is not exposed
- Shorts and skirts need to be long enough that underwear and private parts are completely covered at all times
 - Short shorts are not permitted

Should a student's clothing be seen as inappropriate they will be asked to change into another item of clothing at school, teachers will notify parents, and students may be sent home to change or have parents bring a change of clothes to the school.

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Your assistance is appreciated in ensuring student clothing reflects the values of a Catholic School.*

Discipline Policy Process – Offences

Minor Offences will be handled “ON THE SPOT” by the staff member. Students will be explained what the specific infraction was and will be helped to formulate more acceptable alternatives for the future.

Discipline Policy Process – Consequences

When a student chooses to behave inappropriately, consequences will be followed to help reinforce that students are expected to exercise good judgment in their conduct. The student will be assisted to choose and use more acceptable alternatives. Interventions will focus on problem-solving. It is essential that all understand the consequences of unacceptable behavior. The flexibility of choosing from a range of consequences ensures that each child will be treated individually and fairly.

The following are examples of *MINOR OFFENCES*

- Rough play: pushing, hitting, shoving or wrestling.
- Wearing headwear inside the school
- Wearing outdoor footwear inside the school
- Running in the hall
- Playing outside of designated areas
- Riding bikes on the school grounds
- Leaving school grounds without consent from parents/guardian
- Not following bus and lunchroom expectations
- Inappropriate dress (please refer to Dress Code above)
- Having cell phones devices during class
- Using scooters, longboards and skateboards at school

The following are examples of consequences for *MINOR OFFENCES*

- Reminders and or discussions
- Restitution/community service
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact/involvement
- Detention
- Action plans & contracts
- Class suspensions
- Office referral

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- Informal/formal conferences
- In-School suspension

Major Offences: Major offences are behaviors that interfere with or threaten the orderly functioning of the school and the safety or dignity of students or staff.

The following are examples of MAJOR OFFENCES

- Verbal abuse, threats, derogatory comments, name-calling, sexual innuendos and personal harassment
- Constant disruption of class proceedings
- Open defiance, resisting and disregarding adult requests
- Abusive or suggestive language gesture or dress
- Destruction/vandalism or theft of school/personal property
- Repeated minor offences or refusing to carry out responsibilities for learning

The following are examples of consequences for MAJOR OFFENCES

- Action plans & contracts, detentions
- Documentation sent home to be signed
- Parent involvement/parent meeting
- Class or in-school suspension
- Out-of-school suspension
- Referral to outside agencies
- Restitution
- Counselling

As might be expected, the more serious the misconduct, the more severe the consequence. The following are considered “severe” acts of misconduct and will be dealt with by parent meeting, suspension, referral or expulsion.

The following are examples of serious behaviors which result in serious consequences

- Possession of a weapon or an item on school property designed to cause harm to a student or staff member
- Students under the influence and or in possession of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, paraphernalia or inhalants at school
- Willful or planned assault on others
- Physical abuse or dangerous behaviors that could harm others or self

The following are examples of **consequences**:

- Parent contact/meeting
- Out-of-school suspension

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- Referral to outside agencies

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 acceptable conduct at École Mother Teresa School. Bullying behaviors are a form of aggression and can be:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Social
- Cyber

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.

Definition of Conflict in Relationship

Conflict in Relationship occurs through “single episodic acts of breakdowns in relationship between students. Conflict is an inevitable component of students learning to grow within social relationships. Disagreement and misunderstanding between parties are at the heart of conflict. However, conflict does not constitute premeditated efforts to cause harm, fear or distress.” (Administrative procedure No. 103 Safe and Caring Learning Environment for Students)

When a **conflict** occurs at EMTS we ensure that our focus is on three important factors:

1. Accountability and learning of socially appropriate behaviors
2. Appropriate and meaningful consequences
3. Reconciliation

***If your child is experiencing any issues at school your best course of action is to contact the classroom teacher as soon as possible. We are here to help!**

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