



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

CATHOLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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G.R.O.W.L - WE GROW WITH RESPECT, OPENNESS, WISDOM, AND LOVE. WE ARE KODIACS AND WE GROWL!

"HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS WHEN GODS PEOPLE LIVE TOGETHER IN UNITY. " — PSALM 133:1

JANUARY 2026

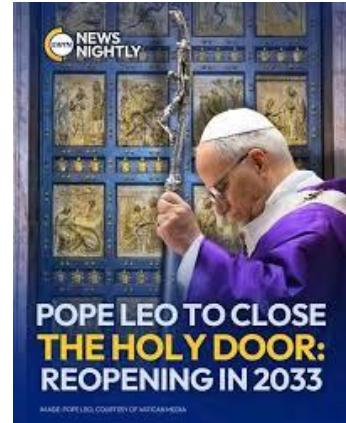
PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

Welcome back and Happy New Year 2026! We welcome a new year beginning the month of January with our focus on the virtue of Unity. We continue to unite as Catholics as we end this very special year in the Catholic church. We have just concluded the **2025 Jubilee Year**, where we walked together as **"Pilgrims of Hope."**

The Holy Father opened the Jubilee Year on December 24, 2024, with the official opening of the Holy Door of Saint Peter's Basilica. In dioceses around the world, the Jubilee Year ended on Sunday, December 28, 2025, with the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. However, in the Diocese of Rome, the Jubilee Year continues until January 6, 2026, the Solemnity of the Epiphany of our Lord, with the closing of the Holy Door.

While the Holy Doors in Rome are closing, the doors of our hearts remain wide open. The hope we cultivated over the last year was not a temporary theme, but a "seed" intended to grow into a permanent way of life for our school community.



As we step into this new year, the Church invites us to move from **giving** hope to **living** it. We move into the Year of "Missionary Hope." In 2026, our focus shifts to being "Hope-Bearers." The Pope's prayer intention for January 2026 focuses on praying the Word of God. We look forward to deepening our students' connection to Scripture, helping them find their own stories within the Gospels. As we conclude the Jubilee on the Feast of the Holy Family, we enter 2026 with a renewed commitment to our own families. We encourage more "Family Faith" time where we can all grow together.

As another year has come and gone, we start anew with a year full of hope and new beginnings. The staff at OLGC welcomes students back from the Christmas holidays! We wish Ms. Lenart all the best in her new role at the

school board and to Ms. Dabrowski who will be expecting soon! We welcome Ms. Coronas the LTO (Long Term Occasional) Teacher for Ms. Lenart, and Mr. Carty the LTO for Ms. Dabrowski.

We look forward to a year of academic excellence rooted in the daily practice of our faith.

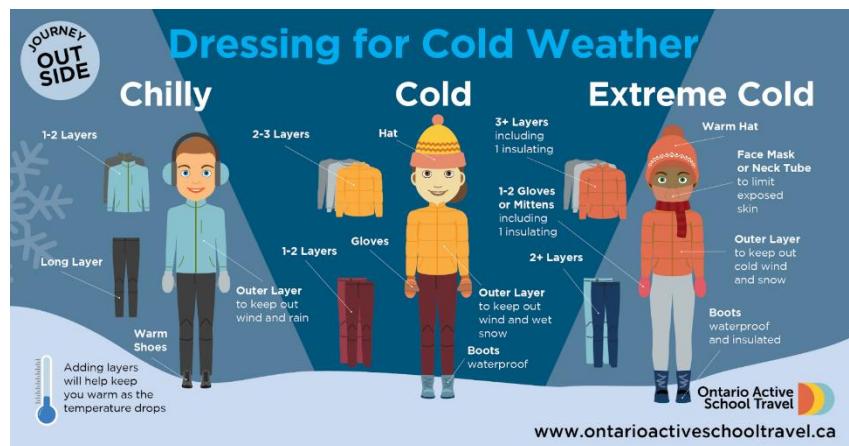
Yours in Catholic Education,

K. Quan King Thompson

Active School Travel

Welcome back! For January, we have some tips for how to get outside and still have fun in the cold, including while you're walking or wheeling to school or the bus stop.

- Being dressed for the weather is the first step to enjoying the outdoors. Here are a few suggestions on how to stay warm:
 - Wear a base layer
 - Wear an insulating layer (wool socks, shirt and pants but not jeans or cotton)
 - Wear an outer shell (windproof jacket with a hood and snow pants with elastic or Velcro fastening at the cuff)
 - Wear insulated waterproof snow boots
 - Have a hat that covers the ears (and a spare!)
 - Add a neck warmer
 - Finish with waterproof mittens
- Keep moving!
- Eat healthy snacks to keep your body going.
- Drink water! Even though it's cold, the air is dry and your body can become dehydrated.



As the cold months approach us the time spent outdoors is often limited. When the cold weather hits it is common for parents to want their kids to stay indoors and for youth to not want to go outside. However, there are many benefits to being outdoors in the winter including:



- Encouraging creative play
- Increase in exercise using different muscle groups
- Getting fresh air and avoiding illness from bacteria indoors
- Improving problem-solving skills and exposure to vitamin D.

Let's bundle up, get outside and be active! Active School Travel is simple and can easily be added into your daily routine!

- Walk and/or wheel to school or to the bus stop
- Park and walk a block to school
- If Active School Travel every day is a challenge, choose one or two days a week to try and make a change.

Sincerely,

YCDSB Active School Travel Team

Winter Walk Day!

Winter Walk Day is celebrated by schools across Canada on the first Wednesday of February each year. Walking and wheeling to and from school is fun every day, so we encourage you to journey outside throughout the entire month of February!



Family Literacy Day~ January 27, 2026



learning time.

Family Literacy Day takes place every **January 27th** to raise awareness about the importance of reading and engaging in other literacy-related activities as a family.

Since 1999, schools, libraries, literacy organizations and other community groups across the country have taken part in the initiative. ABC creates free learning and promotional resources for anyone that wants to get involved.

Taking time every day to read or do a learning activity with children is crucial to a child's development, improving a child's literacy skills dramatically, and can help a parent improve their skills as well.

Family Literacy Day 2026 Theme: Make mealtime family learning time.

Preparing for mealtime is a fun (and tasty) way for families to learn together. Whether it's following recipes, making shopping lists, or sharing stories at the dinner table, make your mealtime family

Celebrate Family Literacy Day Virtually with Honorary Chair,

Barbara Reid

Award-winning Canadian author and illustrator, Barbara Reid, is the *Family Literacy Day Honorary Chair*!

On Thursday, January 22, 2026, Barbara will be doing a demonstration on how to use clay to create a picture. This event is ideal for families with children in grades 1 to 6.

Register here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/QG1ap3yfQlq4aqn_gHHwpg



EQAO Update 2026

EQAO is pleased to provide achievement highlights of our school's results on the provincial EQAO Test taken last spring. We will be reviewing our detailed EQAO results along with other school assessment data to build on our strengths and address areas requiring improvement. Students who participated in the assessment received their individual results in December. For more information on this and other province-wide assessments, please visit www.eqao.com.

Please note that the Grade 3 and Grade 6 EQAO results reflect students who participated in person and met or exceeded the provincial expectations. It does not include students who provided no data due to absence, medical reasons, etc.

Since the 2021-2022 school year, EQAO assessments have been conducted online, establishing a new baseline for student achievement in Ontario. Due to the shift to an online format and updates to the Ontario curriculum for Mathematics and Language, these results are not meaningfully comparable to those from previous years when the assessments were completed on paper.

Percent of Grade 3 & 6 Students Achieving or Exceeding the Provincial Standard (Levels 3 & 4)						
2024-2025 Results	Grade 3 Reading (L3,4)	Grade 3 Writing (L3,4)	Grade 3 Math (L3,4)	Grade 6 Reading (L3,4)	Grade 6 Writing (L3,4)	Grade 6 Math (L3,4)
School	79.2%	79.2%	66%	78.8%	78.8%	38.5%
Board	79%	72%	69%	92%	91%	60%
Province	74%	65%	64%	86%	85%	51%

EQAO is offering free webinars for staff, administrators and parents/guardians. Please visit <https://www.eqao.com/school-outreach/> to register for these webinars. Various parent/guardian webinars include:

EQAO Literacy Session for Families: Focus on Reading – January 20, 2026 – 6:00pm

EQAO Math Session for Parents/Guardians of Primary Students – January 22, 2026 – 12:00pm

Webinar: EQAO Math Night for Parents and Guardians – January 28, 2026 – 12:30pm, January 29, 12:00pm

EQAO Math Session for Parents/Guardians of Junior Students – February 3, 2026 – 12:00pm

EQAO Literacy Session for Families: Focus on Writing – February 3, 2026 – 6:00pm, February 10, 2026 – 12:00pm

These free live webinars provide information on how EQAO assesses students' reading, writing and math skills at key stages of their education. EQAO staff will discuss prompts and questions from various components of the primary- and junior-division assessments. Participants will hear how these prompts and questions help assess the skills students are learning in class. Staff will also highlight valuable insights and resources that can help parents and guardians support their child's learning.



York Region Public Health Dental Screening



York Public Health will be conducting dental screening for students in grades JK, SK, 2 and 7 on Monday, January 26th and Wednesday, January 28th at Our Lady of Good Counsel. Dental screening will be conducted by a Registered Dental Hygienist from York Region Public Health. Please read the York Region Public Health Dental Screening Parent Letter (attached to the email) for more information. You can also visit <https://www.york.ca/health/dental/dental-screening> for more information.

OLGC Student Council/Luke 4:18

During the last week of school, OLGC families contributed to the Christmas Spirit Week Fundraiser in support of the St. Vincent de Paul Society. Thank you for your generous donations! We raised \$425.00! The St. Vincent de Paul Society is so grateful for your donations. Thank you!



Have you been organizing and cleaning out your closets this Holiday break?

The Student Council and Luke 4:18 are ringing in the New Year with another Winter Clothing Drive that runs from January 19th to January 29th, 2026. OLGC is partnering again with Leeder Place, a subdivision of Blue Door, a family shelter in East Gwillimbury to provide clothing to those in need.

They are looking for the following **FOR ALL ages and sizes, gently used, clean and undamaged:**

- * coats/ jackets
- *snow-pants
- *hats
- *scarves
- *mittens/ gloves
- *sweaters or hoodies

Please look for further information in our weekly updates and on Instagram. A BIG THANK YOU in advance for your support from the OLGC Student Council! Together we can help those in need in our community to stay warm during the Winter!

Catholic School Council (CSC) News

Thank you to our CSC Members for their work from September to December to engage parents by providing opportunities for parents to volunteer at school. Our next Catholic School Council will be held this Thursday, January 8th 6:30pm in the library. The council will review our constitution, hear updates from the Principal, staff and committees and discuss parent engagement initiatives. The council continues to run Hot Lunches and Fundraisers throughout the year. We look forward to starting the Dough Drops Fundraiser next week. Thank you to our parent volunteers for helping with fundraising, snacks and lunches.



Bell Let's Talk Day~ January 21, 2026

Bell Let's Talk Day 2026 is set for January 21, 2026, marking the 16th annual event focused on mental health awareness, with the theme "Taking a moment for mental health" to encourage reflection, connection, and action for

well-being. On this day, Bell donates \$10 million to Canadian mental health initiatives, and people participate by sharing messages and actions online, helping to raise funds for organizations supporting mental health services and research. Our Lady of Good Counsel CES supports Bell Let's Talk Day and hopes to also bring awareness to youth mental health in school and in our community.

Student/Staff Wellness: Seasonal Illness

As with other times of the year, but more predominantly during the winter months, students and staff may battle colds/flu. During the cold winter months, we spend more time indoors, leading to increased respiratory illnesses such as colds, the flu, COVID-19 and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV).

Parents are encouraged to continue to help their children to practice proper hand and respiratory hygiene (e. g. washing hands, disposing of used tissues, sneezing into the elbow). In the event of illness, allow for the opportunity to rest and recuperate at home. This will also serve as a preventative measure to maintain the health of students and staff.

Respiratory infections are spread by:

- Respiratory droplets that come out of your nose and mouth when you breathe talk, cough or sneeze;
- Aerosols, which are tiny respiratory droplets that can stay in the air longer;
- Close contact with other people in crowded indoor spaces is a common way that viruses spread through respiratory droplets;
- Touching something with the virus or bacteria, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes.

Prevention strategies include:

- Getting the flu shot and/or staying up to date with your COVID-19 vaccination. Information on where you can get vaccinated can be accessed [here](#).
- Monitor yourself for [symptoms](#) if you are not feeling well
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
 - Use hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available. When your hands are not visibly dirty, then a 70-90% alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used.
- Practice respiratory etiquette
 - Cover your mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose
 - Put used tissue in the garbage
 - If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not in your hands
 - Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces

What to do if you have symptoms?

- You should stay home until:
 - Your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if you have gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea), **and**
 - You do not have a fever, **and**
 - You do not develop any additional symptoms

Date	Upcoming Events
January 5	First Day of School for 2026!
January 6	Epiphany of our Lord, End of the Jubilee Year
January 8	CSC Meeting 6:30pm
January 12	Jr. Boys Volleyball @ POP
January 13	Jr. Girls Volleyball at OLGC, CSC Dough Drops Fundraiser begins
January 15	Intermediate Ski Trip, York Hills Program various Junior classes
January 16	PA Day – No School
January 19	Winter Clothing Drive begins
January 21	Bell Let's Talk Day – "Take a moment for Mental Health"
January 22	Scientists in School – FDK, Ms. Hamaoui's Gr. 3 Class to the STREAM Centre, York Hills Program
January 23	Scientists in the School - FDK
January 26	Dental Screening JK, SK, 2 and 7 (See attached PDF in email for more info)
January 27	Family Literacy Day - Make Mealtime Family Learning Time! CSC Dough Drops Fundraiser ends
January 28	Dental Screening JK, SK, 2 and 7 (See attached PDF in email for more info), Gr. 3 Trip to Pioneer Village
January 29	Intermediate Ski Trip, York Hills Program, Winter Clothing Drive ends
January 30	PA Day – No School

You may also visit us at <https://olgc.ycdsb.ca/> for important dates and events listed on the right-hand side under upcoming events.

