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January 2026

May the joy that fills us when we celebrate the birth of our savior Jesus Christ stay in our hearts as we begin a new calendar year. Looking back at the time that has passed and the journey through the past year, gives us an opportunity to reflect on our choices, realign our hearts and minds and set the course for “new beginnings”. We are filled with a sense of renewed hope as the New Year offers us the grace of God who gives us strength, courage and inspiration to begin anew.

In December we celebrated Advent with weekly celebrations. The annual Pancake Breakfast is organized by our school council and parent volunteers and will be enjoyed by all. Thank you to the many parents who are helping prepare, cook, and serve the pancakes.

Epiphany Prayer

O God
Who by a star
guided the wise men to the worship of your Son
we pray you to lead to yourself
the wise and great of every land
that unto you every knee may bow,
and every thought be brought into captivity
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

STAY CONNECTED and follow us on:

Website: <https://www.stmary.ecsd.net>

Instagram: @st_mary_elementary

https://www.instagram.com/st_mary_elementary/?hl=en

Important Dates

Please visit the **St. Mary Website** calendar for updated calendar dates stmary.ecsd.net/calendar

- January 5** Classes resume at 8:15 a.m.
- January 5-9** Grade 5A to Oilers Ice School at 8:30 a.m.
- January 6** AJM to visit Grade 6 classes
Glow Team Meets 3:00 - 4:00 pm (meet every second Tuesday)
- January 9** Grade 6 Visit Alberta Legislature
- January 14** Hot Lunch order deadline through HealthyHunger.ca by 11:59 p.m.
- January 19** Pizza Hot Lunch. Grade 1-6 only.
- January 20** Glow Team Meets 3:00 - 4:00 pm
- January 21** Grade 4/5A and Grade 5A to Royal Alberta Museum
Grade 3A Fitset Ninja Fieldtrip a.m.
- January 26** Grade 6 students visit AJM
Gr 4 students visit Edmonton Waste Management Facility
- January 28** Grade 4A, 4/5A, 5A, 6A and 6B Skiing to Snow Valley - fieldtrip forms coming home
- January 29** **NO CLASSES - Staff Professional Development Day**
- February** Black History Month
- February 2** Subway Hot Lunch Grade 1-6 only.
- February 6** Family Dance - more information to follow
- February 10** Grade 4-6 Ski at Snow Valley
- February 11** Grade 5A to Rogers Skate Day - part of Oilers Ice School
- February 11** **St. Mary Open House 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.**
- February 13** Kindergarten Puppet Tree House puppet show - a.m. & p.m. classes
- February 14** Valentine's Day
- February 16** **Family Day - NO CLASSES**
- February 17** Shrove Tuesday
- February 17-24** Alien In-line Skating (Rescheduled from November)
- February 18** Ash Wednesday Celebration 10:30 a.m.
- February 23** Pizza Hot Lunch - order deadline February 18 at 11:59 p.m.
- February 25** **NO CLASSES** - Faith Development Day for Staff
Pink Shirt Day
- February 26-27** - **Teacher's Convention - NO CLASSES**
- March 8** Daylight Saving Time Begins - turn you clock 1 hour ahead
- March 9** Subway Hot Lunch - order deadline March 4 at 11:59 p.m.
- March 10** Grade 5s to Alberta Aviation Museum
- March 11** Grade 5A to Hockey Hooky
Alien In-line Skating - last day
- March 17** St. Patrick's Day
- March 19** Demonstration of Learning
Scholastic Book Fair during Demo of Learning
- March 20** Book Fair closes at noon
- March 23-27** St. Thomas More Parish Food Pantry Food Drive
- March 26** Full day of classes - dismissal at 3 pm
- March 27** Early dismissal at noon for Spring Break
- March 30-April 3** **Spring Break**
- April 3** Good Friday,
- April 5** Easter Sunday
- April 6** **Easter Monday - NO CLASSES**
- April 7** Classes resume

ECSD welcomes Archbishop-Designate Stephen Hero



Archbishop-Designate Stephen Hero
Photo Credit: [Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton](#)

Edmonton Catholic Schools joins our city's Catholic community in celebrating the appointment of Bishop Stephen Hero as Archbishop-Designate of Edmonton.

Born in 1969, Archbishop-Designate Hero spent most of his life living in Edmonton. In a [letter to the faithful](#), he credits the belief of the priests and community for influencing and nurturing his faith as well as fostering his call to the priesthood.

"I am very humbled and grateful for the trust placed in me to take up this new mission in the Church and to serve in a community that is already close to my heart"

He was ordained for the Archdiocese of Edmonton, taught at Newman Theological College, and served as rector of St. Joseph Seminary.

In 2021, the late [Pope Francis](#) appointed him Bishop of Prince Albert. Four years later, he returns home where he is excited to begin a new chapter of service.

"Although I have a knowledge of the people and history of the Archdiocese, I look forward to returning, listening, and discerning with you how the Holy Spirit is calling us to move forward together"

He will be formally installed as Archbishop of Edmonton on Friday, January 23, 2026 at St. Joseph's Basilica. You can learn more about the Archbishop-Designate on the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton's [website](#).

ST. THOMAS MORE CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Mass Time

Christmas Eve: December 24 - 3 pm / 5 pm / 7 pm / 9 pm / 10:30 pm / midnight

Christmas Day: December 25 - 9 am / 11 am

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Mass

December 31: 5 pm

January 1: 9 am and 11 am



CHRISTMAS BREAK

*Thursday, **December 18** is a switch day with a full day of classes
with dismissal at **3:00 p.m.***

(Kindergarten attend school Thursday for their regular class times)

*Friday, **December 19**, Early Dismissal*

*Children will be dismissed at **11:59 a.m.** (No Kindergarten today)*

Classes Resume Monday, January 5, 2026

ECSD ANNUAL SATISFACTION SURVEY - return deadline January 23, 2026

The ECSD Annual Parent/Guardian Survey has now come home with your child. Our school uses your feedback and this survey information to plan for success.

Don't miss the chance to shape the future of Edmonton Catholic Schools. Your insights and feedback are important in guiding our decision-making. Please take a moment to complete the ECSD Annual Survey. **The deadline to return the survey is January 23, 2026.** Returning your completed survey is easy! Just send it back to school with your child or mail it back using the provided prepaid envelope. Every survey counts!

OILER ICE SCHOOL - Grade 5A - January 5-9

On the first day back to school after the Christmas Break, Grade 5A students will be going to Oiler Ice School at Rogers Place. Fieldtrip forms will have come home with your child. Students will travel by bus daily, to and from Rogers Place. Please ensure your child arrives to school on time so as not to miss the bus to their fieldtrip. Oiler Ice school ends with a skate day at Rogers on February 11, and priority tickets to Hockey Hooky on March 11.

VISIT TO ALBERTA LEGISLATURE - Grade 6 - January 9

On January 9, 2026, all grade 6 students will be visiting the Alberta Legislature. Please watch for fieldtrip forms coming home with your child. Please pay your fieldtrip fee on line through the Powerschool Portal. The only cost for this fieldtrip is the bus cost.

SCHOOL COUNCIL HOT LUNCH in JANUARY

January 19 - Pizza Hot Lunch

- Order deadline through Healthy Hunger - Wednesday, January 14 at 11:59 pm

Please have your child bring their own plate and cutlery to minimize the amount of garbage.

Thank you to our School Council and parent volunteers for organizing and serving our hot lunches!

ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM - January 21 - Grade 4/5A & 5A

On January 21, Grades 4/5A and 5A will be visiting the Royal Alberta Museum. Please watch for a fieldtrip form coming home with your child.

FITSET NINJA - January 21 - Grade 3A

Students in Grade 3A will be visiting FitSet Ninja on January 21, 2026. Please watch for a fieldtrip form coming home with your child.

GRADE 4 - Waste Management Fieldtrip - January 26

On January 26, all grade 4 students will be going on a fieldtrip to the Edmonton Waste Management. Please watch for fieldtrip forms coming home with your child.

JANUARY SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETING

Please watch for a notice in January for the date of the next School Council meeting.

SNOW VALLEY SKIING

Students in grades 4A, 4/5A, 5A, 6A and 6B will be going skiing at Snow Valley Ski Club on

Friday, January 28 and Wednesday, February 10

Fieldtrip forms will be coming home with your child. A few notes:

- Please review your child's account in Powerschool to indicate their ski or snowboard preference and to make your payment of fees.
- An email will come home asking you to link into Snow Valley directly to provide sizing information for your child. Please ensure this is completed in a timely fashion as late information charges were applied by Snow Valley in past years.
- A reminder that all students skiing with the school **MUST** ride the bus **to** and **from** the ski hill unless a parent expressly signs out their child to the teacher at the end of the day. They will not be allowed to stay and ski on their own.
- Students bringing their own equipment can bring it into the school the morning of skiing and call take the equipment on the bus to the ski hill.
- All students are required to take the ski lesson as part of the Snow Valley ski trip, regardless of their ability.
- If a child does not take part in the school ski fieldtrip and comes to the hill on their own to ski, they are the responsibility of the parent for the day and not under the supervision of the school.

STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY - January 29 - NO CLASSES

ST. MARY OPEN HOUSE - February 11, 2026 6:30 p.m.

As we begin preparations for the upcoming new school year, our **Open House will be on Wednesday, February 11 at 6:30 p.m.** We invite all parents and prospective new students to visit our school. Please pass our Open House information along to anyone who may be interested for Kindergarten through Grade 6.

WE WILL BE ACCEPTING REGISTRATIONS FOR

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 6

as of FEBRUARY 2, 2026

REGISTRATIONS FOR 2026-2027

New Students- On February 2, 2026 families new to Edmonton Catholic Schools can begin registering for the 2026-2027 school year for ***Pre-k thru to returning grade 12's***. In order to register, they will need to know what school they are hoping to attend (school finder) and create a School Engage account. They can find out more information on our [New Student Registration page](#). Children eligible to register for Kindergarten must turn 5 on or before December 31 of the year they have started Kindergarten.

Current ECSD Students- On February 2, 2026 pre-enrolment for returning students will open in School Engage in the [PowerSchool](#) parent portal. Pre-enrolment is key to helping us understand how many students to expect in September 2026. We need families to share their plans for next September regardless of if they are staying with their current school or transitioning into kindergarten, junior high, or high school.

BUSSING 2026-2027



All NEW applications, changes to bussing addresses, cancellations or replacement bus pass requests **must** be completed online through the following link

<https://ecsd.mybusplanner.ca/>

Parents are asked to monitor their Powerschool Parent portal weekly to obtain their child's route information and check for any changes to the schedule. Bus pass fees for 2025-26 are all \$50.00 for both Yellow bus and ETS, with no additional family plan discount. Eligibility for bussing this school year, as changed by the Alberta Government, requires access for bussing to be at least 1.6 kilometers from the school.

Bus Passes This school year there will be no bus passes issued to students. Bus drivers will take attendance of their passengers according to their updated running boards.

Bus Delays Bus delays are posted on the division website through the BusPlanner website

<https://ecsd.mybusplanner.ca/Alerts> or can be accessed through the bus delay app BusPlanner Delays App on your mobile phone. Students are encouraged to be at their stop at least 5 minutes before their pick up time. If a bus does **not arrive within 10 minutes** of its scheduled time, please ensure your child knows to notify an adult. No matter how late a bus runs behind schedule, the driver finishes the route. But we do recommend that after 20 minutes, you make other arrangements.

Any questions on bussing can be directed to our Transportation Department directly at 780-441-6078.

ADVENT at ST. MARY



St. Mary students gathered at St. Thomas More parish on Wednesday, December 3 to celebrate the first Sunday of Advent. Students worshiped, prayed and sang together in preparation for the birth of Jesus. Weekly Advent celebrations were held as we continued our Advent journey.

Preparing for the birth of Jesus within our parish community is wonderful way to realize the true meaning of Christmas.

Staff Donations - During the season of Advent, the staff at St. Mary took part in a number of activities raising funds for families in need.

SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE at St. Mary

Thank you to St. Mary families for your very generous support of several social justice initiatives throughout the fall and Advent/Christmas season. A special Thank You to the parish of St. Martha in Rimbey, Alberta who held a very generous winter outer wear drive for the St. Mary Winter Clothing Drive. Our students have also been busy making and delivering Christmas cards to residences in the community.

ECS FOUNDATION HOLLY LEAF CAMPAIGN



Throughout the month of December, students decorated a Holly leaf with Spiritual Advent Wishes. Families donated \$610.50 in cash plus direct online donations in support of the Edmonton Catholic Schools Foundation which supports children in need.

Thank you for your support!

CHRISTMAS COZY MORNING PANCAKE BREAKFAST

A special Thank You to our school council and parent volunteers who are organizing, preparing, cooking and serving a special pancake breakfast treat for our students on the second last day of school. Thank You for all you do to support our school!

THANK YOU!

MONTHLY REMINDERS

PARKING

Drop Off & Pick Up

Please do not park in the bus lane at any time.

The church across the street allows parents to use their lot before after school.

You are welcome to use the DROP & GO lane if you are stopping to let out students only

this is NOT for parents who wish to get out of their vehicle.

Please follow the link <https://arcg.is/1H4ieS1> or use the QR code to view the map explaining which zones are for parking and which are for driving through only. Parking is available in the church lot during pick up and drop off.

SICK

STAY HOME WHEN SICK



As students and staff return for another exciting school year the health, safety and well-being of all students and staff remains a top priority.

*Parents are asked to please continue to monitor your child for symptoms daily before coming to school. This is one of the most effective ways to prevent the spread of illness. **Anyone who is exhibiting symptoms of illness, including fever, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, new or worsening cough, or shortness of breath, should remain at home until their symptoms have improved and they***

have been free of fever for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication, and they feel well enough to resume normal activities. If your child becomes sick at school, parents/guardians will be called to pick them up. If your child is away from school for any reason, please call the school office to let us know.

At our school we are,

- Encouraging students to wash and/or sanitize their hands regularly. Hand sanitizer is available at our school.*
- Prioritizing frequent cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces.*
- Ensuring proper ventilation is extremely important to us. We have installed the ASHRAE-recommended MERV 13 filters in our school, and our HVAC systems are running for extended periods of time. We continue to reference and implement ASHRAE guidance where practicable within the limitations of existing infrastructure across the Division.*
- Respecting individual choice regarding masks. Our priority is supporting a welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe learning environment.*
- Reporting illness to Alberta Health Services when school-wide student absentee rates are over 10% due to illness so they can investigate and advise. This has always been our division practice.*

The health, safety, and well-being of our students and staff remain our top priority.

VACATION

LEARNING WHILE ON VACATION

St. Mary School recognizes that a child's educational experience is not confined to the school building and that vacation trips can be enlightening and valuable to a child's intellectual growth. Please keep in mind that the learning and teaching that is missed cannot easily be replicated outside the classroom or in a worksheet and your child may miss parts of the curriculum. Teachers structure their classes for both instruction and assessment according to the regulations established by the provincial government. Teachers are not required to provide assignments for vacations but could share topics being covered so you include them in your daily discussions. Google classrooms may allow for completion of assignments but opportunities for interaction and questions will be impacted as well as feedback for assessment. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call the school.

SCHOOL FEES - Have you paid your child's School Fees?

Please review your child's fee account in the Powerschool Parent Portal. If you have **NOT** yet paid your child's school fees, please make your online payment today.

LUNCHES

LUNCH drop offs

We encourage children to bring their lunch with them as they arrive to school in the morning as to limit disruption to learning and work flow. **Noon drop offs of fast food items are discouraged.** All essentials for eating their lunch should be packed as the school does not provide disposable supplies - cutlery etc. for student use. Healthy lunches are encouraged together with reducing disposable waste.

BIRTHDAYS & Healthy Food Choices at School

Edmonton Catholic Schools is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's well-being, and the ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Any food and beverages served at school for special celebrations will be from the "Choose Most Often" or "Choose Sometime" categories as outlined in the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (2008). Along with this, parents will be notified in advance so they may inform the teacher if they would not like their child to consume the food provided. To respect and support parents in their role as providers for their children and in consideration of severe allergies, we ask that **NO food be sent to school for birthdays or to be shared with other students at any time.** The office and teachers will acknowledge birthdays in their own way and we will leave the birthday parties for home. Thank you for your support with this.

CANCELLATION of YELLOW BUS SERVICE - Weather

Please be advised that the following Radio and TV Stations will carry announcements with respect to transportation cancellations due to inclement weather conditions.

RADIO STATIONS

880 CHED	AM 930 The Light CJCA	CBC
CISN FM 103.9	SHINE 105.9 FM	CHFA 90.1 FM (French)
THE CHUCK FM 92.5	TSN 1260	CFCW 840 AM
INews 880 AM	95.7 CRUZ FM	The Breeze 96.3
KISS 91.7	The Bear 100.3 FM	K97 97.3
UP! 99.3 FM	SONIC 102.9 FM	02.3 NOW! Radio
PLAY 107	104.9 VIRGIN Radio FM	

TV STATIONS

CITYTV CTV Edmonton GLOBAL Edmonton CBC TV

Every effort will be made to have messages broadcast commencing no later than 6:30 a.m.

Daily bus delays can also be checked at <https://ecsd.mybusplanner.ca/Alerts>

CHRISTMAS BREAK

Thursday, December 18 is a switch day with a full day of classes

with dismissal at 3:00 p.m. (Kindergarten attend school today)

Friday, December 19, children will be

dismissed at 11:59 a.m. (No Kindergarten today)

Classes Resume Monday, January 5, 2026

MERRY CHRISTMAS