



SEPTEMBER 2021

School Phone: 522-2035 mike.macisaac@srce.ca Please visit our school website: <http://www.smec.srce.ca>



Principal's Message:

I am pleased to welcome students, parents, staff, and school community members back to a new year at St. Mary's Education Centre/Academy! I hope the summer break has been a time of rejuvenation and relaxation for you and your family. I know the students are excited about their return to school. I am very excited to start another school year as Principal. Please feel free to contact the school at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

We had a few staffing changes since last school year. I would like to extend a special welcome to the incoming members of the SMECA family; Ms. Siobhan Chisholm-Taylor (Grade 2), Ms. Mandi MacLennan (7-12 English), and Ms. Margaret MacEachern (TA). Please join me in welcoming our

new teachers to SMECA. We have further increased supports for our students this year with welcoming Reading Recovery, additional student services support, additional Guidance, along with sustaining our Math/Lit support from last year. That being said we have a exceptional staff for the 2021-2022 school year and we are committed to delivering a strong academic program as well as fostering the physical and social well-being of all students. The entire staff looks forward to working closely with you as we deliver an exceptional educational program to your child. I encourage parents/guardians to take advantage of the upcoming "Meet the Teacher" night



scheduled for Thursday, September 23rd with a meet and greet from 5:00 – 7:00pm. Details to follow.

Our school is very much a community-based school, with many partners involved in a wide variety of programs for

the school and community. From a school perspective, we welcome volunteers as we strive to offer as many opportunities for our students as possible. Breakfast program, Lunchtime Supervisors, School Advisory Council, and many other activities are available in our school, all of which can only be as successful as the volunteers who offer their time...thank you to those who have helped in the past and continue to do so, along with any new volunteers! Please contact the school (902-522-2035) if you wish to become involved.

We would like to remind everyone use our twitter page @StMarysEdCentr1, Facebook site (SMECA) as well as our the school website (<http://smeca.srce.ca/>). It is important to review updates and information so that you are well informed of what's happening in our school. The student agenda is an excellent tool for students to organize their school activities and is an excellent communication tool for teachers, parents, and students. Positive and open

communication between all parties involved in our school community is key to our continued success as a school. All policies can be found on the new SRCE website at www.srce.ca.

In keeping with the main goal within the SRCE, our number one goal is student achievement. To that end, it is vital that all stakeholders play an active role in the education of our students. School, home and community play key roles in preparing our students for the future.

We would also like to encourage parent participation through the Student-Parent Portal. The Student-Parent Portal is a web-based, home-to-school collaboration system linking parents, students and schools with real-time information via the internet. Parents of student in grades PP through 12 have the ability to view latest grades, teacher comments, homework assignments, and attendance of their child. A link to the Student-Parent Portal is located on the school website under "Parents/Guardians" Link" as well as under "Students".

Please contact the school if you require the login information for your son or daughter. Each school year brings with it a lot of change in personnel, both with students and staff. We have a number of new students in our building this year and we welcome them with open arms. This also brings new community members, so welcome to all new families that are with us this year. Thank you to all staff

and community members who offer their volunteer time with coaching and supervising activities. Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to come and support our school at every opportunity.

Sincerely,
Mike Maclsaac

Consent Form for the Publication of Student Personal Information and Student Work

The Strait Regional Centre for Education believes strongly in the need to protect the privacy of all students and recognizes the issues around the publishing of student images and personal student identifying information, especially on the public Internet and social media sites. However, the Regional Centre also believes that the showcasing of students, their work, activities and achievements, is an important part of school life and can be a very positive experience for students. Therefore, it is the practice of the Strait Regional Centre for Education and all schools to have written informed consent from parents/guardians before any student identifying information, including name, grade, school, video/voice/audio recording, images (photos) of students and/or student work, is used in print, online and in social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), and prior to any student media interviews.

There are other times when one of our media partners may contact the school to profile a specific student, program or event that may involve a student(s) being interviewed, photographed, video recorded and/or audio recorded.

Please complete the *Consent for Publication of Student Personal Information and Student Work* attached to indicate if you do or do not consent to your child being identified in the manner described above.

All requests, and associated contact with students, are carefully considered before being approved. We do our best to ensure that the personal privacy of students is protected and respected.

Anti-SPAM

A CEM is an electronic message sent to an electronic address that encourages the recipient to participate in a commercial activity, even if it is not-for-profit. Under CASL, CEMs can no longer be sent without the recipient's prior written consent.

When sending CEMs, the following requirements must be met:

obtain the written consent of the individual who will receive the electronic message.
provide identification information as set out in CASL about the sender; and,
provide an unsubscribe option as part of the electronic message.

Some examples of CEMs that you may receive from our

school (including teachers, school administration, student councils and school advisory councils) and/or the Strait Regional Centre for Education may include emails, text messages and the use of social media to inform students, parents/guardians and community members of promotions, advertising or offers of **sales of school pictures, field trips, fun fairs, yearbooks, team uniforms and equipment, event tickets, school fees, events with an entry fee, cafeteria offerings, fundraising events, etc.** The difference between a CEM and another message is that a CEM is used to encourage participation in a commercial activity. A commercial activity includes any type of act or conduct of a commercial nature, whether or not there is an expectation of a profit. **This means you will not receive reminder emails of any of the above outlined.**

Allergies

The Strait Regional Centre for Education makes every effort to support students and staff with severe allergies and scent sensitivities through staff training, various accommodations, and information-sharing within our school communities. As we begin a new school year, we are asking for your ongoing cooperation to foster a safe and healthy learning environment for all students and staff. Throughout schools in the Strait Region, there are several students and staff who have

severe and life-threatening allergies to food and scents. At our school, there are allergies to peanuts and nuts and scent sensitivities to Therefore, we are asking that you avoid sending nut products to school and avoid using scented products including perfumed laundry detergent, fabric softener, deodorant, perfumes/aftershaves, to name a few.

Avoiding the allergen is key to preventing an allergic reaction.

Therefore, the best way to provide a safe environment is to enlist the support of our students, staff, and parents/guardians. There are several measures that you and your child/children can take to ensure the safety of all members of our school community:

Wash hands with soap and water before eating, and wash hands and rinse mouth after eating (including breakfast and snacks);
Read food labels and learn how to identify allergen ingredients. If you are unsure about a product, choose something else. For information on the many common names that identify allergen ingredients on food labels, refer to the Health Canada Fact Sheets at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-nutrition/food-safety/food-allergies-intolerances/food-allergies.html> In addition, please refer to the Food Allergy Canada (formerly Anaphylaxis Canada) website at <http://foodallergycanada.ca/>;

Teach your child not to share food, drink, or utensils with classmates.

Encourage your child to help clean their eating area after meals and snacks.

Allergies are serious! Never play tricks or dare friends with allergies to try foods.

Avoid products that have a scent/odour. For more information and resources, please visit the Canadians for a Safe Learning Environment website at <http://www.casle.ca>; and

Get help if your friend with an allergy or scent sensitivity doesn't feel well.

We recognize that creating and maintaining an allergy-aware and scent-aware school takes effort and diligence on everyone's part. Thank you for your cooperation and assistance as we work together to make SMECA a safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environment for all students, staff, and families.

School Insurance Program

Every eligible child attending public school in Nova Scotia is automatically insured by the School Insurance Program's Basic Plan student accident coverage. This coverage is provided without deductible and at no cost. Basic Plan coverage can cover things such as physiotherapy, dental and medical equipment expenses, up to policy limits.

However, if parents/guardians wish to purchase additional coverage, the Gold Plan increases the time that your

child is covered to 24/7 including summer vacations. Many of the specific loss accident payments are triple those of the Basic Plan. Please visit www.sip.ca for more information.

You can help put money back in the classroom!

It's simple: Your school will get \$2 for every Gold Plan policy sold during the 2021/22 school year.

Not only will students be better protected against mishaps at school, you'll have some cash to use as you see fit. **Win-Win**

For more detailed information on the Gold Plan, please visit www.sip.ca or call us toll free at 1.855.480.2179

SIP
Not for Profit

*Plan covers ages 24-77 including pre-natal care and only 14 (1 student), 12 (2 students), 135 (1 or more students)

Information Sharing Agreement with Department of Health and Wellness

Annually, students across Nova Scotia are offered services delivered by Public Health including the Grade 7 School Immunization Program, Pre-school Screening, Enhanced Vision Screening Program, and the Fluoride Mouthrinse Program. Public Health works with the education system to distribute information about these programs and to obtain consent for student participation.

Occasionally, Public Health practitioners may need to contact parents/guardians of students where consent information is incomplete or unclear, or when a consent form has not been returned. Public Health will not contact you if you have signed a consent form indicating you do not wish to have your child

participate in one of these programs. The Strait Regional Centre for Education takes its responsibility for the protection of personal student and family information seriously and will share limited information such as names of parents/guardians and students, with Public Health for the purposes of operating these public health services for students.

All Regional Centres for Education in Nova Scotia share certain personal information about students and parents/guardians with the Department of Health and Wellness, for the purposes of operating these programs. This information sharing is required by the Public Health Protection Act and is permitted by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIPOP) Act and an Information Sharing Agreement signed by the Regional Centre.

Please contact your local public health office if you have any questions about these public health programs. If you have any questions about how your information is shared, please feel free to contact your respective school or our Regional Centre's Information Access and Privacy Manager at 902-625-2191.

All-Gender Care Products in Schools

The Strait Regional Centre for Education provides free all-gender care products in all schools with Grades 5 to 12 students. These products are in

all female and all-gender washrooms.

Helping Your Child Manage Their Back-to-School Worries

Deena Jewers – School Counsellor

The return to a new school year can be a very exciting time for most students; however, there are some that struggle with going back. They worry about the unknown, and the last two school years have been anything but “normal”, which may be amplifying their concerns. To help alleviate some of that worry and help your child to have a successful start to the school year, here are some things that you as a parent or caregiver can try:

- Check-in with yourself – Are you doing anything to contribute to their worry? Kids are very good at reading us. If we are worried, they quite often pick up on it and become worried themselves. Managing our own stress is a good way to help our children feel calmer and more relaxed.
- Listen to your child – if they are feeling nervous, don't tell them that “everything will be okay”. They may be young, but they have big feelings that need to be validated. Let them know that you understand how they are feeling and that you will help them get through it. This is a great opportunity to help them work through how they will handle things that may be making them nervous. Helping them problem-solve will build

their self-confidence. Role playing is a great way to do this.

- Focus on the positive – Ask your child about their day by using questions that focus on the positive – What made you smile today? Did you laugh today? Did you make someone laugh or smile today? What was the best part of your day? What was the most interesting thing you learned today?

- Set-up routines – Children like structure (even the older ones), they like consistency and they like to know what is going to happen next. The beginning of a new school year is a great time to establish some new routines. Eating meals together, limiting screen time, and setting a consistent bedtime routine are great places to start!

- Don't be afraid to reach out – If you feel that your child is not settling in at school after some time, reach out! You can contact the classroom teacher, school administration, or the school counsellor to help you.