

*Veritas School*  
*Student and Parent Handbook*  
**2022 - 2023**



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*This Handbook contains basic information about Veritas School.  
If you have a concern or question that is not addressed by this publication,  
please contact the administration at 250-635-3035.*

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# CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS, DIOCESE OF PRINCE GEORGE (CISPG)

## Our Purpose/Mission

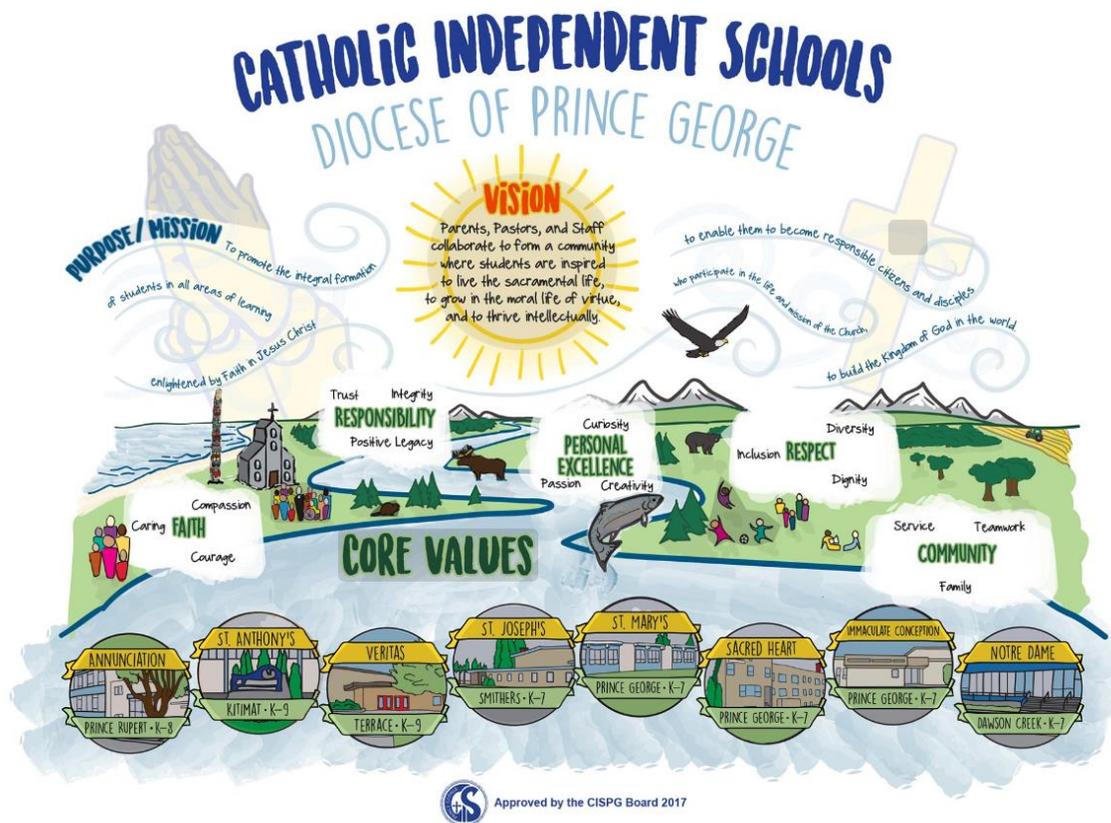
To promote the integral formation of students in all areas of learning enlightened by Faith in Jesus Christ to enable them to become responsible citizens and disciples who participate in the life and mission of the church to build the Kingdom of God in the world.

## Our Vision

Parents, Pastors, and Staff collaborate to form a community where students are inspired to live the sacramental life, to grow in the moral life of virtue, and to thrive intellectually.

## Our Values

- Faith: caring, compassion, courage
- Responsibility: trust, integrity, positive legacy
- Personal Excellence: passion, curiosity, creativity
- Respect: inclusion, diversity, dignity
- Community: service, teamwork, family



## **VERITAS SCHOOL**

### **Our Purpose/Mission**

The primary aim of Veritas School is to enable children to grow in their knowledge, love, and practice of the Catholic Faith, and to achieve their full potential in all the talents God has given them.

### **Our Operation**

Veritas School is one of eight Catholic Independent Schools of the Diocese of Prince George (CISPG). The school is classified by the BC Government as a Group 1 Independent School, which means that all teachers and the principal are British Columbia certified and all Ministry of Education curriculum standards are met. Authority for the operation of all Catholic Schools within the Diocese of Prince George is vested in CISPG, a legal body incorporated in 1957 as a Society. CISPG includes the Bishop, a Board of Directors, and the Superintendent of Schools.

As a Group 1 school, Veritas School receives 50% operational funding from the government and no capital funding. Tuition fees make up a portion of the remaining funding required to operate the school. In order to retain its standing as a Group 1 school, the school is evaluated regularly by the Ministry of Education. These reports have been consistently very positive. The 50% funding received from the Ministry is dependent on Veritas School meeting and exceeding the basic curriculum, as well as other physical and safety requirements.

The expectation of our Catholic community is that all our children participate or be respectfully present in the religious life of our school both in the classroom and at religious celebrations held at the school or at Sacred Heart Parish.

### **Veritas Staff**

The dedicated staff of Veritas School includes British Columbia certified teachers and principal, qualified education assistants, and, where necessary, contracted specialists. We are dedicated to fully implementing the BC curriculum in a Catholic environment. A listing of our staff and contact information can be found on our school website ([www.veritascatholicschool.ca/meet-our-teachers](http://www.veritascatholicschool.ca/meet-our-teachers)).

### **Veritas School Council**

Veritas School Council, along with all the school councils in the Prince George Diocese, is constituted by the authority of CISPG and is directly responsible to CISPG and the Bishop. The Council consists of a minimum of six members and the pastor or Bishop's delegate. Council members are elected for a two year term, may complete up to three consecutive terms, and must be practicing Catholics. The Council is responsible for all areas of the management and operation of the school in accordance with the constitution, bylaws, guidelines, directives, policies and regulations of CISPG.

Parents/Guardians are an integral part of the school community and are invited and encouraged to become involved in the activities and endeavors of the school. The School Council is the primary avenue for involvement of parents/guardians in the school. It is the responsibility of the School Council to approve and direct any parent group working or acting on behalf of the school.

Regular monthly meetings are held and are open to parents/guardians, with the exception of in-camera sessions, which focus on confidential matters. If you wish to make a presentation as an individual or group to Council, you must make your request, in writing, at least one week prior.

The officers of the Council are Chairperson, Vice-Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. Subcommittees may include Finance, Tuition, Maintenance, Parent Participation Program, Retention and Recruitment, as well as various ad hoc committees. You do not need to be an elected member to work on the subcommittees. If you are interested in volunteering for any of the subcommittees, please contact the Council Chairperson.

Please visit our school website [www.veritascatholicschool.ca](http://www.veritascatholicschool.ca) under Our School, School Council for names and contact information for the Veritas School Council members.

## **Our History**

Veritas School opened in 1959. The original site of the school was on Lakelse Avenue in the current Skeena Mall location. The original eight classrooms were moved to the present site in 1973 and attached to the newly built administration wing, classroom (the current kindergarten classroom), and gymnasium. A new classroom (the current music room) and staff room were built in 1981. A new wing was added in 1997 containing the current library, another classroom and the learning assistance room.

Veritas School was staffed for many years by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Toronto and by Frontier Apostles. The school presently relies on lay teachers and offers complete academic programs for Kindergarten to Grade 9. Veritas School's academic curriculum fully follows the guidelines of the British Columbia Ministry of Education. Our students receive a solid grounding in Religious Education, Language Arts, Science, Mathematics, Social Studies, Physical Education, Core French in Grades 5 to 9, Computers & Technology, Music & Band and Art. Learning Assistance is provided both within and outside the classes. We also offer Applied Skills in Grades 7 – 9, and many extra-curricular sports activities and clubs.

The religious dimension of the school climate is expressed through the celebration of Christian values in Word and Sacrament, individual behavior, and friendly and harmonious interpersonal relationships. The Pastor of Sacred Heart Parish plays a special role in promoting the spiritual dimension of the school.

## **ADMISSION POLICY**

All students wishing to enter Veritas School must fill out an application package. Registration will be considered when the application form is complete and the required documents are submitted.

CISPG Policy 501 dictates the priorities for admittance into CISPG Schools:

1. Students presently enrolled in the school.
2. Students with siblings presently enrolled in the school.
3. Students whose families are parishioners (defined as practicing Catholics – for the purpose of this policy, “practicing Catholics” shall mean those individuals who are registered in a parish and attend Sunday Mass faithfully).
4. Students whose families are not practicing Catholics, but accept the goals and philosophy of the

school and sign the Family Statement of Commitment.

Catholic student/family applications must be accompanied by Baptismal, First Communion and/or Confirmation certificates where applicable. While priority is given to the children of Catholic families who participate in the faith life of Sacred Heart Parish, we welcome children of other faiths/beliefs, provided their families accept their child's participation in our religious activities. The final decision to admit a child lies with the Admissions Committee and is conditional upon an interview with the parents/guardians and the student. Every child's needs are complex. As stated in CISPG's Family Statement of Commitment, Veritas School reserves the right to re-evaluate your child's enrollment if their learning needs are not being met despite our best efforts.

Each February, current families are required to complete a re-registration form declaring their intent to return to Veritas School in the following school year. This enables staffing decisions and budget considerations to be made in preparation for the coming school year.

## **TUITION, SCHOOL SUPPLIES, AND FEES**

Tuition is collected to assist with the operation of Veritas School. Amounts are set by the Veritas Council and are reviewed annually. One month's notice is required if you withdraw your child from the school. If this notice is not received, you will be charged for an additional month's tuition.

### **Tuition Fees for the 2022-2023 School Year**

<b>Children</b>	<b>Monthly Tuition</b>	<b>Annual Tuition</b>
<b>1 Child</b>	\$315	\$3150
<b>2 Children</b>	\$405	\$4050
<b>3 or More Children</b>	\$440	\$4400

Each family must choose a payment method and complete the appropriate form at the school office:

- Pre-authorized debit payments (1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of each month)
- Pre-authorized credit card (Visa/MasterCard, 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of each month)
- Post-dated cheques (10 cheques dated the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month)
- E-transfer to [veritasaccounting@cispg.ca](mailto:veritasaccounting@cispg.ca) (1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of each month)
- Cash payments at the Veritas School office
- One-time payment (full tuition due 1<sup>st</sup> day of school)
- Other payment methods as approved by Veritas School.

Tuition Assistance requests may be made with the appropriate forms to Veritas School Council and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. These forms are available at the school office.

## School Supplies and Fees

Each student will be provided with a supply list at the end of the school year for their upcoming grade. Consumables and some art supplies are included in the fee. Students in kindergarten to grade 3 are required to purchase all their school supplies through the school office. Students in grade 4 to 9 will purchase most of their supplies as specified on the provided list at their store of choice; some supplies will be purchased through the school office. School supply fees are due each September and are non-refundable after the first day of school.

## SCHOOL TIMETABLE

### Grades K – 6

8:35 am – Welcome Bell

8:40 am – Classes Begin

10:15 – 10:30 am – Recess Break

12:00 – 12:55 pm – Lunch Break

3:00 pm – Dismissal

### Grades 7 - 9

8:35 am – Welcome Bell

8:40 am – Classes Begin

10:50 – 11:00 am – Morning Break

12:00 – 12:55 pm – Lunch Break

3:11 pm – Dismissal

## ABSENCES, LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY LEAVES

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to ensure their child arrives at school on time. Students who arrive late often miss important instruction and interfere with the learning of others. Explanation of late arrivals are required. When students arrive late, they are to report to the office and sign in.

If you wish your child to leave the school grounds any time between the welcome bell and the dismissal bell, please inform the school by phone, email ([veritas@cispg.ca](mailto:veritas@cispg.ca)), or a written note. All students must sign in and out at the office.

If your child is absent for any reason, parents/guardians must contact the school either by phone (250-635-3035) or email ([veritas@cispg.ca](mailto:veritas@cispg.ca)). After morning attendance is complete, the office staff will contact parents/guardians of absentees who have not contacted the school to ensure the student is safe.

If you plan to remove your child from school during regular instructional periods for an extended period of time (three days or more) please make arrangements with the classroom teacher well in advance of the student's absence. Please understand that, due to the social nature of learning at Veritas School, is it not possible to provide all work or instruction for home completion when absences occur.

To qualify for provincial government funding, students must be in attendance for a minimum of 600 hours of instruction from September to May 15<sup>th</sup>. A student who, because of holidays or other reasons, is in attendance for less than 600 hours qualifies for partial funding only. Parents will be expected to

compensate the school the amount lost in government funding in these situations.

## **AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

After School Care (ASC) is available and runs from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm on instructional days ASC does not operate on non-instructional days. The cost of ASC is \$12.00/hour for one child and \$7.00/hour for each additional sibling. All required forms must be completed prior to a student joining ASC. Application packages and further information regarding after school care is available at the office. Regulations limit the number of students in ASC. As such, spots are available on a first-come first-serve basis. Please ensure your child is listed for ASC by noon of the same day.

## **COMMUNICATION**

As parents/guardians are the first educators of their children, it is very important for the school and home to engage in regular communication. We strive to ensure parents/guardians are well informed about what is happening at Veritas School through monthly newsletters, weekly emails, special notices, the yearly calendar, and our website ([www.veritascatholicschool.ca](http://www.veritascatholicschool.ca)). The majority of our communication is via email; please make sure you have a current email address at the school office. Be sure to check the school website and your email regularly. Classroom teachers may be contacted by parents/guardians via a note in the communication folder or agenda, email, or by leaving a message at the school office.

Students have permission to use the telephone only at the discretion of the principal, secretary, or teacher. Parents/Guardians are not to call student cell phones as they are not to be accessed during the school day. Alternatively, parents/guardians are asked to call the school office to leave messages for students.

## **COMMUNICATING STUDENT LEARNING**

Communicating student learning occurs throughout the school year. Three written reports are issued, as well as one student-led conference and one celebration of learning is held each school year. In addition, all classrooms use the Seesaw platform to share student learning and progress. Kindergarten and grade 1 students use a communication folder to maintain communication between the school and home, while grade 2 – 9 students use a daily agenda.

If a parent/guardian has any concerns regarding their child’s progress at any time, they are encouraged to contact the teacher via email or by calling the school. All appointments must be made in advance.

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS**

- To support and respect the religious program of the school and Catholic Faith.

- To respect and comply with the school and CISPG policies.
- To cooperate with staff for the welfare of all children.
- To participate in school activities and events (religious, academic, social, athletic).
- To attend any meetings and parent-teacher interviews as scheduled.
- To support the school financially through timely payment of tuition and fees.
- To refrain from public defamation of Veritas School and staff (including social media).

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN CONCERNS**

It is easier to handle a concern before it escalates to become a serious problem. As such, parents/guardians and teachers are expected to contact one another over any behavior, academic progress or policy concern they may have. When parents/guardians have a concern it is imperative that they confer with the teacher first. If the concern cannot be resolved here, the principal will be informed so the best solution can be reached for the sake of the student.

The following Policy 473 mandated by CISPG outlines the formal procedure used to address parental complaints against school personnel:

- Step 1 A parent or guardian representing a student and having a complaint about personnel should contact the person in question as the first step to resolution.
- Step 2 If a resolution is not attained or if the parent or guardian does not wish to meet with the person in question, the parent or guardian shall request a meeting with the principal. A record of the meeting shall be made by the principal.
- Step 3 The principal will then investigate the complaint or refer the complaint to an outside agency, at their discretion.
- Step 4 The principal will then decide either to facilitate a meeting between all parties or refer the complaint to CISPG. The principal or parents/guardians, in writing, can request the matter be presented to the CISPG office. The principal is to keep the School Council aware of any serious situation.
- Step 5 If the parent or guardian does not receive satisfaction from the CISPG office within Step 4, an appeal, in writing, can be made to the CISPG Board of Directors.
- Step 6 The CISPG Board of Directors will arrange for an investigation of the appeal (refer to Policy 470) and will provide a decision on the matter in writing and communicate this to the parent or guardian in a timely basis.

Please appreciate that as professionals, all teachers must adhere to a Professional Code of Ethics and cannot discuss teachers, staff, students, and issues that do not relate directly to their teaching assignment and/or your child.

Parents/Guardians are to refrain from any kind of public defamation of Veritas School and Veritas School

Staff. This includes, but is not limited to, social media. The families of parents/guardians who repeatedly engage in public defamation may be required to leave Veritas School.

## **VERITAS PARENT SUPPORT GROUP**

The role of the Veritas Parent Support Group (VPSG) is to support the principal and school staff in meeting the needs of the students at Veritas School.

Financial and Physical Support shall be provided by:

- Conducting fund raising functions and programs to aid in the provision of additional educational, recreational and cultural development for the students of the school.
- Involving as many parents or guardians of the students as possible and encouraging new parents/guardians to become a part of the school community.

The VPSG operates under the following limitations:

- The actions of the VPSG shall be in accordance with the policies established by the Veritas School Council.
- The VPSG shall not be involved in the day-to-day operation of the school. These matters remain the responsibility of the principal and the teaching staff.
- The general membership shall be free to make suggestions regarding expenditures. However, in order to avoid conflicts, all fund raising projects and the disposition of funds raised for the school will be subject to the approval of the principal and the school council.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

CISPG Policy 501 Section B states: “Once a student has been admitted to the school, parents/guardians will be required to participate in the various activities of the school, including fundraising”. Volunteers are necessary and very much encouraged within the school and in a variety of ways: classroom, hot lunch, field trip, fund raising, and driving, to name a few. All volunteers must complete the CISPG volunteer application form (available at the school office and included in the student application form), submit a Criminal Record Check and other applicable forms (driver’s abstract, vehicle insurance and driver’s license).

Volunteers must abide by the *Volunteer Code of Conduct*, which states that all Veritas School volunteers understand that:

- I will be supervised by a school employee and must follow that person’s directions.
- I must adhere to the policies of the school and CISPG and the rules of the school in which I am volunteering.
- I must treat staff, parents and students with politeness and respect.

- I must deal judiciously with students and defer to the teacher's authority in all matters relating to the classroom.
- If I am uncertain about my role or any other matter, I will seek advice from the teacher with whom I am working or the principal, as appropriate.

Volunteers must also abide by the *Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement*, which states that all students, staff and others working in the school have a right to expect that information about them will be kept strictly confidential by volunteers. Therefore:

- I will not communicate anything I learn about any student or anything that I observe in the course of my volunteering to anyone other than appropriate school employees.
- I will not share information about students, even with others who may be genuinely interested in a student's welfare, such as social workers, recreational leaders, family friends, physicians, etc. except when legally required to do so.
- I will keep anything I learn about school employees or other volunteers strictly confidential.
- If I am asked for information concerning a student or staff member(s), I will refer the request to the teacher or principal.
- If I am in doubt about whether I may divulge information concerning a student or staff member, I will consult with the school principal.

The *Volunteer Application Form*, which includes the *Volunteer Code of Conduct* and the *Volunteer Confidentiality Agreement* must be signed by all volunteers and approved by the Veritas School Principal.

## **VERITAS SCHOOL CODE OF CONDUCT**

*Reference: CISPG Policy 502 - Student Discipline*

Veritas School, as part of CISPG, is committed to a Bully Free School that strives to ensure every child feels safe, accepted, and respected. All classes engage in anti-bullying lessons throughout the school year, which focus on developing healthy friendships, encourage reporting of harmful behaviours, and support affected students.

The Student Code of Conduct is in place to ensure each student can learn in a safe and caring environment. The code of conduct supports respect from students and staff and regard for the personal dignity of each individual. We expect students to maintain an attitude that is cooperative, courteous, and respectful. Students exhibiting behaviours that impact student learning or violate the best interest of any individual in the school community will not be tolerated.

### **Be Respectful of Yourself**

- Always strive to do your best.
- Be punctual and ready for school with all required materials and assignments.
- Use the provided agenda or communication folder to record homework and school events.
- Participate in all curriculum areas and school-related events.

## **Be Respectful of Others**

- Be polite (no rude or offensive language, gestures, or remarks).
- Follow the directions of all staff and volunteers.
- No fighting, rough play, or striking another student.
- Walk quietly in the hallways.
- Be honest and tell the truth.

## **Be Respectful of Property**

- Use school property, equipment, books, etc., appropriately and under supervision.
- The personal use of electronics, including cell phones, is not permitted during the school day.
- Clean up after yourself and others, if necessary.

## **Be Safe**

- Sharp or dangerous objects are not allowed in the school or on school property.
- Show concern and care for those around you.
- Report dangerous situations to school staff.
- Any wheel items, such as bicycles, scooters, and skateboards must not be ridden on school property.

## **CONSEQUENCES OF A VIOLATION OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

*Reference: CISPG Policy 502 - Student Discipline*

Parents/Guardians will be informed of repeated or serious infractions and the principal may be involved. When a student is referred to the principal for recurring and/or serious infractions, the following may occur:

**First Referral**            Incident is recorded. Consequences such as detention, loss of privileges, etc. will be given at the discretion of the principal.

**Second Referral**        Incident is recorded. Consequences such as detention; loss of privileges, school trips, intramurals, extracurricular activities; in-school suspension, etc. will be given at the discretion of the principal.

**Additional Referrals**    Incident is recorded. Parents/Guardians are informed. Appropriate consequence will result, at the discretion of the principal, up to and including suspension from school (as per CISPG policy).

## **Severe Cause**

Criteria for Severe Cause Includes:

- Willful disrespect or disobedience of a teacher/supervisor or severely disrupting a learning

environment.

- Willful infliction or threat of physical harm or severe insults towards another person.
- Intentional defacement, damage, or destruction of property.

A student meeting one or more of the above criteria for severe cause will face appropriate consequences at the discretion of the principal, up to and including expulsion from the school.

If a student exhibits repeated behaviours that intentionally harm or disturb another student, it will be considered bullying. The student will be referred to the principal and his/her parents/guardians will be contacted. Loss of privileges or suspension from school will be determined at the discretion of the principal. A behaviour plan will be agreed upon by the principal, teacher, parents/guardians and student to support behavioural change while protecting the well-being of other students and staff.

## **INTERNET/TECHNOLOGY**

Parent/Guardian permission must be obtained prior to students having access to the internet. Internet use is monitored by the teachers at all times. Access to the internet allows students the opportunity to learn and share new information and concepts.

Veritas School is equipped with an iPad cart of 30 iPads shared between kindergarten to grade 5, as well as a laptop cart with 30 laptops shared between grade 4 to grade 9.

Veritas School may monitor use of technology, including all sites accessed by the user. Users must not expect privacy regarding their use of internet or email. Incorrect use of the internet and technology may result in student privileges being restricted or suspended at the discretion of the teacher and/or principal. All students must have a signed Internet Use Agreement Form on file in the school office.

### **Improper Activities**

Students may not share, spread, or knowingly receive harassing, bullying, sexually explicit, threatening, or illegal information, including offensive jokes or cartoons, through any technology. Technology may not be used to access, create, transmit, print or download information that is derogatory, defamatory, obscene, or offensive, including information that is based on race, colour, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, or political beliefs. Technology must not be used to record (audio or video) any individual (students or staff members) without their expressed permission and only for purposes related to learning activities.

Students engaging in improper activities with any piece of technology may have their devices confiscated and may lose internet and technology privileges. If necessary, CISPG Policy 502 – Student Discipline may be followed.

## **CELL PHONES**

If brought to school, cell phones are to be kept in the student's locker (grades 6-9) or in the student's backpack (grades 5 and under). If not properly stored or if used for the wrong purpose, cell phones will be confiscated by the teacher and may be given to the principal. Cell phones will be returned to the student on the first confiscation of the school year; subsequent confiscations will require a parent or guardian to collect the cell phone from the principal. Continued violation of cell phone policy will result in that student not being allowed to bring their cell phone to school, and may include a loss of access to all technology at school. If necessary, CISPG Policy 502 – Student Discipline may be followed.

The use of cell phones in classrooms is solely for the purpose of supplementing and complementing learning activities and is at the discretion of the teacher. A teacher may decide that students can access their cell phones for a learning activity and will inform the students of such.

Veritas School assumes no responsibility for loss or damage of student cell phones.

## **LOCKERS**

Students in grades 6 – 9 are provided with a locker and lock. Students may go to their lockers before homeroom block in the morning, during their morning break, at lunch, and after school. Students are expected to arrive at class with the necessary texts and supplies. Students are expected to anticipate their needs for classes and carry supplies to their Block 1 and 2 classes together and to their Block 4 and 5 classes together (grades 7-9). Students may not go to their lockers when classes are in session.

We recommend students keep their lockers secured at all times. Students are supplied with a lock, the combination of which is kept with their homeroom teacher. Students must have permission to bring in a different lock and must give the combination or a copy of the key to their homeroom teacher.

Lockers must be kept clean and organized. Lockers must be kept free of food overnight.

With due cause, the school administration may open a locker at any time.

## **SMOKING/VAPING**

Smoking or use of vapour devices is prohibited on all Veritas School and Sacred Heart Parish property and on or during any school sponsored activity. Any student found smoking, vaping, or with smoking or vaping materials will receive a minimum of one day suspension from school. If the problem persists, the length of suspension will escalate, up to and including expulsion. If necessary, CISPG Policy 502 – Student Discipline will be followed.

All vaping devices or products will be considered and treated as smoking paraphernalia and thus subject to the same restrictions and consequences.

## **DRINKING/DRUGS**

Veritas School observes a policy of zero tolerance towards illicit drugs. Any student involved with or in possession of illicit drugs at school or a school sponsored event may be expelled. This includes cannabis, which is illegal for use by youth under the age of 19.

Any student who is under the influence or in the possession of alcohol while at school or a school sponsored event may be expelled.

## **FAIR NOTICE**

Veritas School, as part of the Provincial Erase Bullying Program, accesses outside agencies at times where there is any threat to a student's safety. These agencies, such as Safer Schools Together, do online searches of social media accounts on behalf of the school. These searches are looking for content that may help the level of severity of any possible threats to student safety.

### **What behaviours initiate a student threat assessment?**

A student threat assessment will be initiated when behaviours include, but are not limited to, serious violence or violence with intent to harm or kill, verbal/written threats to harm/kill others, Internet website and/or social media threats to harm/kill others, possession of weapons (including replicas), bomb threats and fire setting.

### **Duty to report.**

To keep school communities safe and caring, staff, parents, students and community members must report all threat-related behaviours.

### **What is a Threat Assessment Team?**

Veritas School has a Threat Assessment Team which is multi-disciplinary. The team may include the principal, CISPG's Safer Schools Coordinator, school counsellor, police, and youth mental health personnel.

### **What is the purpose of a student threat assessment?**

The purposes of a student threat assessment are:

- To ensure the safety of students, staff, parents and others.
- To ensure a full understanding of the context of the threat.
- To understand factors contributing to the threat makers' behaviour.
- To be proactive in developing an intervention plan that addresses the emotional and physical safety of the threat maker.
- To promote the emotional and physical safety of all.

### **What happens in a student threat assessment?**

All threat making behaviour by a student shall be reported to the Principal who will activate the protocol for the initial response. Once the team has been activated, interviews may be held with the students(s), the threat maker, parents and staff to determine the level of risk and develop an appropriate response to the incident. Intervention plans will be developed and shared with parents, staff and students as required.

### **Can I refuse to participate in a threat assessment process?**

It is important for all parties to engage in the process. However, if for some reason there is a reluctance to participate in the process by the threat maker or parent/guardian, the threat assessment process will continue in order to promote a safe and caring learning environment.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **Illness/Accidents**

Veritas School has staff trained in Community Care First Aid. Minor emergencies will be cared for at the school. In the event of a serious injury or illness, parents/guardians will be contacted; if parents/guardians are unavailable, the authorized emergency contact will be contacted. If necessary, emergency services will be called. Please ensure all phone numbers are current at the school office.

### **Medication**

Veritas School Staff cannot administer any over-the-counter pharmaceuticals (Tylenol, Advil, etc.) to students unless written (including emailed) consent from the parents/guardians has been obtained. In this case, only the designated office staff will administer medications. If a student requires prescribed pharmaceuticals throughout the school day, they must be delivered to the designated office staff in the original container with the students' name and clear instructions visible and must be accompanied by written consent from the parents/guardians. Under no circumstances should any pharmaceuticals be in a student's possession (backpack, locker, desk, etc.) during the school day.

### **Anaphylaxis**

Any students with anaphylaxis requiring the use of an Epi Pen must have proper consent forms (Emergency Medical Plan) completed and signed by a parent/guardian prior to the start of each school year.

### **Allergen Aware School**

Veritas School is an Allergen Aware School. There are students with severe life threatening allergies at Veritas School. As such, Veritas School requests that parents/guardians do not send foods to school that contain nuts. A list of nut-free lunch and snack ideas is available from the school office.

## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Students are instructed and required to practice emergency preparedness procedures (fire, earthquake, and lock down drills) in a safe environment throughout the school year. Each classroom is equipped with a red safety backpack that includes first aid supplies, emergency contacts, health information and other pertinent personal information.

In the event of an emergency, parents/guardians will be alerted via the local radio station, mass emails and/or the school website. We require that, in an emergency, parents/guardians refrain from calling the school as phone lines must remain open for emergency personnel.

## **SECURITY, VISITORS AND INTERRUPTIONS**

Any persons entering the school must be buzzed into the school at the front entrance by a staff member. For the security and safety of everyone, all visitors (including parents/guardians) must report to the office before visiting a classroom or using our facility during school hours. Entry to the school through any other door is not permitted. All visitors must sign in and wear a visitor's tag unless otherwise informed.

Parents/Guardians may leave lunches, homework, etc. at the school office. Students will be called to the office to collect items at a time that does not interrupt the classroom instruction.

If your child is to be picked up after school by anyone other than the parents/guardians, please notify the school office via phone, written note, or email.

Parents/Guardians must make prior arrangements with the teacher to visit their child's classroom during the school day. If parent/guardian wishes to speak to a teacher during the school day they must leave a message at the school office. The teacher will return the call as soon as possible.

## **SUPERVISION**

A staff member is available outside for morning supervision beginning at 8:20 each instructional day. The morning supervision does not include the front playground. As such, students are requested to wait near their class entrances where they can be properly supervised. Students are supervised by staff during recess, lunch, and after school until 3:15 pm. Parents/Guardians are required to assume responsibility for their children prior to and following supervision.

## **WEATHER**

In the event of temperatures below -20°C (including wind chill factor), students will remain inside the school building during recess breaks and will be invited in to their classrooms at 8:20 am. In these

situations, students must remain in their classrooms or in the assigned location and will be supervised.

In case of severe inclement weather resulting in unsafe road conditions, a decision will be made by the principal about whether or not to offer instruction for that day. This decision will be broadcasted on local radio stations, notification will be provided on the school website, and a mass email will be shared as soon as possible.

It is the parents/guardians responsibility to ensure students are dressed appropriately for weather conditions. Students do go outside for recess during rain, snow, and any temperatures above -20°C and are expected to be appropriately prepared.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips are an important part of our education program. Parents/Guardians complete a student permission form as part of the application package providing permission for local day field trips. Parents/Guardians will be informed by the classroom teacher prior to any field trips. All field trips will be adequately supervised.

Any field trips outside of the normal instructional day and outside of the Terrace/Thornhill area will require completion of an additional form specific to the field trip.

## **BICYCLES, SCOOTERS, AND SKATEBOARDS**

Students riding bicycles, scooters, and skateboards to school are required to wear proper helmets and to obey the traffic safety rules. Students are expected to walk their bicycles, scooters, and skateboards when on school property. Please ensure that bicycles are secured with a lock as the school is not responsible for lost or stolen bikes. Please remember that anything with wheels follow these same rules at school.

## **TRAFFIC AND PARKING**

Everyone is required to follow traffic rules and patterns on Veritas School property. Extra attention must be given at the beginning and end of the school day, when students are entering and exiting the property. The drop-off lane is a moving area; no vehicles may park in this lane before or after school. If your child is not ready to be picked up, please exit the parking lot and circle back in. Older students are encouraged to be picked up behind Veritas School on Soucie Avenue.

## **LOCAL SCHOOL POLICY**

Veritas School adheres to all CISPG policies. These policies can be viewed online at [www.cispg.ca](http://www.cispg.ca).

Additional local school policies are as follows:

- Any cell phones must be turned off and remain in the student's locker throughout the school day, unless special permission has been granted by a teacher for academic purposes. Parents/Guardians wishing to contact their child can call the school office. The school is not responsible for damage or loss of cell phones.
- Students are not to bring electronic devices such as video games, tablets, etc. to school unless they are approved by the teacher and/or principal for academic work. The school is not responsible for damage or loss of any personal electronic devices.
- Defaming, harmful, or unfavorable posts on any social media platform about staff, students, or personnel of Veritas School is not allowed. Parents/Guardians will be asked to remove their child from Veritas School if such harmful behaviour occurs. This is at the discretion of the principal.
- Students are required to have written permission from parents/guardians prior to participating in extracurricular activities or field trips.

## PERSONAL INFORMATION AND PRIVACY POLICY

A Personal Information and Privacy Policy regarding employees, volunteers, parents/guardians and students took effect January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004. CISPG has implemented a policy that meets the standards set by the British Columbia Personal Information and Protection Act (PIPA) and models policies set by the Federation of Independent Schools Association (FISA). All students are required to have a signed PIPA form on file in the school office. This form is a part of the Veritas School application package.

Veritas School's Personal Information Privacy Policy outlines the *Ten Privacy Principles* that govern the operation of the school in regards to personal information. Below is a brief summary of each principle:

1. **Accountability:** I act as the Privacy Officer and I am responsible for ensuring Veritas School complies with the policy and the ten principles.
2. **Identifying Purpose:** The purpose of collecting personal information will be identified before or as the information is collected.
3. **Consent:** Veritas School will obtain consent of individuals for the collection, use, or disclosure of personal information (except where the law states otherwise).
4. **Limiting Collection:** The collection of personal information will be limited to that which is identified as necessary by Veritas School.
5. **Use, Disclosure, and Retention:** The use, disclosure, and retention of personal information will be solely for the purpose of which it was collected, unless consented otherwise.
6. **Accuracy:** Procedures will be followed to ensure personal information collected is accurate and complete.
7. **Safeguarding Personal Information:** Veritas School utilizes security safeguards appropriate to the information collected.
8. **Openness:** Information regarding the policies and practices of the management of personal information is available to individuals.
9. **Individual Access:** Upon request, Veritas School will provide access to an individual's own personal information in accordance with the law.

**10. Complaint Process:** Individuals may question compliance with the above principles.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Every student enrolled at Veritas School participates in a religion program, which is approved by the Prince George Diocese. The values and atmosphere supported by this program are reflected throughout the school. We strive to integrate religious education in all aspects of the curriculum. Students may not be exempted from our religious program. A family life program complements our religious program, and parents/guardians will be informed by the teacher of the content of this program prior to implementation.

### **Masses and Celebrations**

One of the most integral parts of our school community is the celebration of Masses. School Mass is usually held on the last Wednesday of each month. Students in each grade have an opportunity to play an active role in Mass throughout the school year. Parent/Guardian attendance at school Mass is strongly encouraged whenever possible.

### **Sacramental Preparation**

Veritas School assists Sacred Heart Parish in the preparation of students to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation (grade 2), First Communion (grade 2) and Confirmation (grade 6). We strongly believe that receiving sacraments is a meaningful event for the children, and as such, support preparation in every way possible. Parents/Guardians are required to be a part of sacramental preparation.

## **HOMEWORK**

Homework assignments are purposeful and contribute to the educational growth of the student while maintaining parental knowledge of and involvement in their child's education. A limited amount of homework is expected from primary (kindergarten to grade 3) students. Homework generally consists of unfinished classwork, re-doing unsatisfactory assignments and, in the case of grade 7 - 9 students, larger projects. Students are expected to complete homework as assigned. Parents/Guardians are expected to contact the teacher if they have any concerns regarding homework.

Parents/Guardians may request homework for students if class time is missed due to illness or injury and if the parent/guardian feels the child is well enough to complete the work. The type and amount of homework provided is the discretion of the teacher. Should parents/guardians choose to remove their child(ren) from school for an extended vacation, teachers will not be responsible for preparing work for the student prior to the vacation. Teachers will record missed work/assignments and students will be responsible for catching up on missed work in a timely manner. Parents/Guardians must understand that, due to the collaborative nature of our learning environment, the students may not be able to complete all missed assignments, which may be reflected in your child(ren)'s learning.

## **DRESS CODE**

Veritas School requires professional dress of all staff, students, and volunteers as we do not have school uniforms. As such, all clothing must meet the following specifications:

- Clothing must always cover the backside, midriff, and all undergarments during all movements.
- Only inside, non-marking footwear is to be worn in the classroom and gym.
- Clothing must be free of violent, derogatory or discriminatory logos and messages.

### **Clothing for Physical Education**

Students in kindergarten to grade 3 do not require special gym clothes. However, proper gym shoes with non-marking soles are required. No jewelry may be worn during PE classes.

Students in grade 4 to grade 9 are required to have separate gym clothes consisting of a t-shirt and sport shorts. A cloth bag large enough to hold gym clothes and marked with the student's name is required.