

December 2025 and January 2026

# ★ St. John's Newsletter ★

## CHRISTMAS CLOSURE:

Please remember that we are closed inclusively from **Monday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2025 to Friday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026. School will reopen on Monday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026.**

No fees will be charged for those closure dates

### **DATES TO REMEMBER:**

Dec. 5<sup>th</sup> – Oak and Maple families early pick-up by 12:15pm

Dec. 19<sup>th</sup> – last day of school for 2025

Dec 22<sup>nd</sup> to Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> – School is Closed for Christmas Break

Jan 5<sup>th</sup> – Welcome back to school

Jan 13th and 14th – Pajama Day

Jan 27<sup>th</sup> – Literacy Day! Bring a book to share

Jan 30<sup>th</sup> – school closed for parent connection day

## PORTFOLIOS:

We encourage families to take your child's portfolio home over the holidays. Inside you will find the amazing documentation of the learning that has been taking place in your child's classroom. Please feel free to add photos or stories of your holidays to the portfolio so your child can share them with their friends when everyone returns to school. Don't forget to bring the portfolio back in January.



## WEEKLY MENU:

Dec 1-5	Week # 1
Dec 8-12	Week # 2
Dec 15-19	Week # 3
Jan 5-9	Week # 2
Jan 12-16	Week # 3
Jan 19-23	Week # 4
Jan 26-30	Week # 1

- **New snack menu will start on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Please find a copy attached and it is also posted on the parent board in the front entrance.**

## EARLY PICK-UP FOR THE OAK AND MAPLE FAMILIES:

On **Friday, Dec 5<sup>th</sup>** the St. John's team will be having their Christmas Lunch. We are asking all Oak and Maple families to please pick up your child by **12:15pm** instead of the usual 12:30pm. We would like to close the school quickly and allow our educators time to get to our 1:00pm reservation. If your family cannot pick up by 12:15pm that day, please let Christine know. We will be feeding the children earlier so they will still have lunch done by 12:15pm. Thank you so much for your cooperation.

## FAMILY TREE:

You might have noticed our family tree in the hallway by the office. We would like this tree to be a representation of all the families here at St. John's, so we are asking every family to add something to our tree. This can be an ornament, photo or small object that represents your family. Take a few minutes to put your family item on the tree with your child so they can share it with others. Please remember to label your item so we are able to return it in the new year.

We are really looking forward to seeing how our family tree comes together!



## OUTDOOR CLOTHING:

Just a reminder that now that the weather is starting to change, your child will be wearing different clothing that we might not recognize. Please remember to label each piece of clothing as it is hard for the educators to keep track of who's is who's without your help. Please also include a pair of indoor shoes that can stay in your child's cubby during the wet winter months. We are looking forward to all the fun adventures and enriched learning that will be happening as the season begins to change.

## OUTDOOR WINTER PLAY DAY WITH BIENENSTOCK!!

This year we will be hosting our Outdoor Family Fun Day on **Saturday, Feb 7 from 9am to 11:30am**. Bienenstock Playgrounds will be joining us for the event. This event will be fun for the whole family, and all our welcome to join us. We will explore the opportunities that winter has to offer while showcasing the importance of outdoor unstructured free play. Let us take advantage of what 'mother nature' has so generously provided; cold weather, snow and ice and learn how to keep children engaged, happy and warm. We will focus on the tools and loose parts that are needed to support big body play, problem-solving and social skills during the winter months. Activities include repurposing Christmas trees, creating shelters, converting mud kitchens into snow and ice utopias, turning slippery surfaces into manageable learning experiences, and being creative with our playground's snowy palette. Work with what we have and be amazed by the children's engagement and smiling faces!

## ARE YOU LOOKING TO FIND A NEW HOME FOR YOUR LIVE CHRISTMAS TREE?

We have discovered the value in exploring families discarded Christmas trees on our playground. We appreciate your help in creating an outdoor environment that promotes problem solving, curiosity, risk taking, engagement, connection to nature and fun for the winter months ahead. You are welcome to drop off the trees during the Christmas closure. You can just throw the trees over the fence on either playground. Thank you in advance! We REALLY want those trees!

### Possible Activities when using Discarded Christmas Trees:

1. Fort making: Use whole trees and/or sticks and their cut branches to make structures. Fort making is a great way to reinforce the concepts of structures and different habitats.
2. Giant bird feeders: Replant whole Christmas trees and hang pinecone seed feeders, popcorn and cranberry strands. This is a great activity for revisiting what some of the children did over the holidays as they decorate the tree for their feathered friends. It's also a great way to observe which birds, and other animals, stay home for the winter and adapt to the climate during the colder months.
3. Bird shelters: Place and fasten two or more Christmas trees along a fence. The trees will act as a nice shelter from the wind and cold for many of the birds that don't migrate for winter.
4. A giant, child-sized nest: Use cut branches to make a nest on the ground.
5. A magical forest: Plant small groupings of Christmas trees in any area of the playground. Teachers and children can trim the bottom two feet of branches for better supervision.
6. Snow creatures: Use the trees' cut branches and needles to make snow creatures.
7. Heavy work opportunities: Having children move the Christmas trees around the playground is a fantastic way to provide heavy work opportunities which, in turn, support core strength, co-ordination, balance as well as body awareness and self-regulation.
8. Sensory-rich experiences: Playing with discarded Christmas trees provides several sensory-rich experiences. By moving a heavy tree around, children can take in the smell of its aroma. By jumping and rolling on the trees, children experience the touch and feel of their branches and needles. The more sensory rich an activity is the more cognitively engaged the children will be.



## THIS HOLIDAY SEASON:

We have reflected as a staff, and we would like to ask that families do not gift our educators with personal gifts for the holiday season. Other ways to show educators holiday spirit is purchasing an item from our amazon wish list. [https://www.amazon.ca/hz/wishlist/ls/3K9ZBWIDU9HU9?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.ca/hz/wishlist/ls/3K9ZBWIDU9HU9?ref=wl_share) These items benefit our programs in many different ways. Thank you for considering helping out our programs here at St. John's this holiday season.

## POINSETTIA FUNDRAISER:

This year we have raised \$1100.00 from our poinsettia fundraiser! This year the money will go towards a new walkie talkie system for the educators. We use our walkie talkies every day to communicate with each other. The cost to upgrade them will be approximately \$6000. A big thank you to all who contributed to making this a successful fundraiser and the volunteers who helped making this happen. A special thank you goes out to Doreen and Rick for all the behind-the-scenes work. The poinsettias will be ready for pick up on **Friday, November 28<sup>th</sup>**. Please make arrangements to pick them up that day, as we don't have room to store them over the weekend. They will be available for pick up anytime between 9am and 3pm. Plants will be in the chapel, entrance to chapel is in the front entrance hallway.



The children will be spreading some Christmas cheer to the seniors at Luther Manor on November 28<sup>th</sup> as well. The Seedling, Oak and Maple children will deliver a card along with a poinsettia plant to all the residents on this day.

## CHILD DEVELOPMENT:

It can be challenging to know how your child's developmental milestones are progressing. Here at St. John's we have access to several services who can help with children's overall development. These services are free and are a valuable aid to Educators and parents alike. We encourage anyone to take advantage of these services as we know early intervention is the key to helping development. If you have a concern about anything, big or small, please speak with an Educator about which services you and your child could benefit from. This includes, speech and language development, eating habits, sleep habits, social behaviour, cognitive development, gross or fine motor development, muscle tone, sensory issues or anything else you might have questions about. We understand that these services can seem over-whelming, but we would just like to remind you of the importance of early intervention. These free resources are often not available once a child enters the school system, and wait times are considerably shorter when referrals are made through us. **Referrals for children off to school in September 2026 need to be made before February 2026 to ensure your child is seen before we close for the summer.** If you think your child could benefit from a referral please speak to your child's educator or Christine.

## PARENT CONNECTION MEETING:

The centre will be **closed on Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>** for parent connection meetings. The meetings will take place between 9am -12pm and 1pm-3pm. Please email Marianne [admin@stjohnsns.ca](mailto:admin@stjohnsns.ca) to book a time to meet up with your child's educator. Meetings will be 15 minutes in length, giving educators enough time to connect with every family throughout the day. We will be offering childcare in the sensory room during your meeting or we can offer a phone call meeting if that works better for your family. The educators are looking forward to having this time to connect with you about your child and their development.

## FOSTERING SELF-HELP SKILLS AT HOME:

When children are at school, they are encouraged to dress and undress independently. These are skills that most children are capable of mastering at a young age. Families can help with this by slowing down and encouraging your child to dress and undress independently. It will take practice, a lot of time and a lot of patience, but children have a sense of pride when they can do things for themselves. Supporting this skill is also part of our Illuminating Care Book Study.





## NEW FACES AROUND OUR SCHOOL:

We have two new faces that you may be seeing in your child's classroom. Lisa is joining our team as a new supply educator. She will be working when a regular educator is away. Cait is joining our team as a volunteer, spending time in different classrooms on Wednesdays. We are looking forward to having both of them as part of the St. John's team! Please welcome them when you see them around.



Lisa



Cait

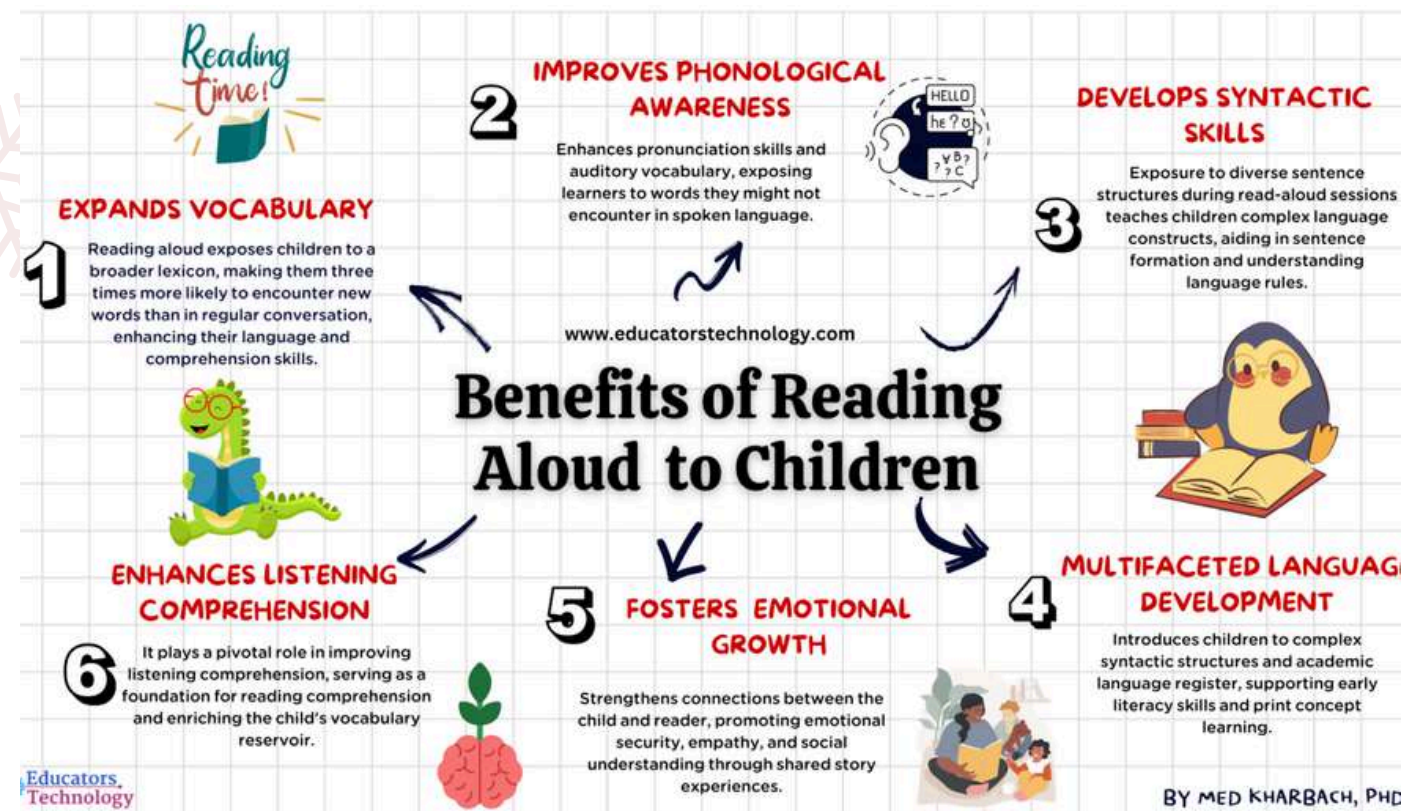
## PAJAMA DAYS:

Is it difficult to get your child out of their pajamas in the morning? No need to worry on Monday, January 13<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, January 14<sup>th</sup> we will be hosting pajama days! Please come to school in your comfy cozy jammies and we will share our favourite bedtime stories and songs.



## FAMILY LITERACY DAY:

**January 27<sup>th</sup> is Family Literacy Day.** Let's promote the love of reading and celebrate this day together! Please have your child choose their favourite book and send it to school with them. Throughout the week of January 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> we will take time to share your child's story with the class. Please remember to label the book with your child's name so that we can make sure it is returned to the right family. In addition, please let your child's educator know that they have brought a book to share as we don't always check their backpacks. Thank you.



## **BOOTS AND SHOES NEEDED:**

We are in need of size 8, 9, 10 and 11 shoes and boots to have on hand as extras here at the school. If your child has outgrown their shoes or boots and you would be willing to donate them to us, we would be grateful. We are often trying to find shoes or boots for the children to wear if theirs are forgotten or sometimes get wet. Right now all the children in the preschool program, seem to be in this size range and we do not have many available. Thank you in advance for helping out if you can.

## **2026-2027 REGISTRATION:**

For families already attending St. John's a link will be sent out to you in March to reserve your child's spots for the upcoming school year.

## **CLASS COMPOSITES:**

A big shout out to Marianne for taking the time to create the wonderful class composites that your child will be receiving. These are a wonderful keep sake for all the families. It is a great way for your child to talk about their friends from school. Your classroom educators will be handing them out in December.

## **FENCE PROTECTION:**

You have probably noticed our black fence fabric around both playgrounds. We have put the fabric up temporarily for the winter months to help with the wind. This will allow us more time outside in a protected area.



## **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**

When there is inclement weather in the region, you can find out if St. John's is closed for the day by checking **City News 570** for cancellations. We will also update our outgoing voicemail and add an update to our school Facebook page, along with sending an SMS Alert message through Kindertales by 7:00am.

We follow the school board regarding snow closure decisions. St. John's will be closed when schools are closed. We will remain open if just the buses are cancelled.







## Parenting can be a stressful time at the best of times.

Kids misbehave and it can be hard to know how to manage. You might feel as though other parents don't have these challenges. Or you might simply want to learn more parenting strategies to support better relationships and a happy family.

## Positive Parenting can help.

Contact the CMHRT to find out more about the 8-week **Triple P Group** (Positive Parenting Program) offered in person at the University of Waterloo on **Tuesdays** from **Jan 13 to March 10, 2026, from 6 to 7:30 pm.**

Please contact [cmhrtintake@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:cmhrtintake@uwaterloo.ca) if you would like to participate in the program and to discuss whether it is suitable for your family. Space is limited. For more information, please see <https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-research-treatment/clinical-services-resources/parenting-services>

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## Triple P Positive Parenting Program at the CMHRT

### What is Triple P?

- **Group parenting program** based on research evidence and used in 35 countries
- Opportunity to meet other parents in similar situations
- Provides tips and strategies to suit the individual needs of your family
- Includes a handy workbook with parenting tools and information
- Includes video and demonstrations to put ideas into practice

### When does it start?

- **Tuesday evenings from 6 to 7:30pm from January 13 to March 10, 2026**
- 6 in class group 90 min sessions: Jan 13, Jan 20, Jan 27, Feb 3, Feb 10, Mar 10
- 2 individual 30-minute video conference sessions: week of Feb 24 & March 3
- No class during the week of Feb 17, 2026 (UW Reading Week)

### Who is it for?

- **Parents of children ages 3 to 11 years**
- Parents seeking strategies to manage challenging child behaviors
- Parents wanting to learn new ideas, to reduce parenting stress, or to feel more confident in their parenting

### What does it cost?

- The group program fees are \$200 for the 8-week program, per family
- There is an additional cost of \$30 for the parent workbook, per family
- Subsidies are possible

### How do I sign up?

- Interested parents should email the UW CMHRT at [cmhrtintake@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:cmhrtintake@uwaterloo.ca) and should say that they are interested in Triple P. Spaces are limited.
- We will arrange a short telephone call to discuss your parenting goals and to determine whether this program can best meet your needs.