December 2026 and January 2027

St. John's Newsletter

CHRISTMAS CLOSURE:

Please remember that we are closed inclusively from Monday, December 21st, 2026 to Friday, January 1st, 2027. School will reopen on Monday, January 4th, 2027.



WEEKLY MENU:

Nov 30–Dec4	Week # 1
Dec 7–11	Week # 2
Dec 14–18	Week # 3
Jan 4–8	Week # 1
Jan 11–15	Week # 2
Jan 18–22	Week # 3
Jan 25–29	Week # 4

DATES TO REMEMBER:

Dec. 11th – Oak and Maple families early pick-up by 12:15pm

Dec. 18th – last day of school for 2026

Dec 21st to Jan 1st – School is Closed for Christmas Break

Jan 4th – Welcome back to school

Jan 27th – Family Literacy Day! Bring a book to share.

Jan 28th – family connection meetings 4–7pm

Jan 29th – school closed for family connection day meetings from 9am–12pm and 1–3pm

EARLY PICK-UP FOR THE OAK AND MAPLE CHILDREN:

On **Friday**, **Dec 11th** the St. John's team will be having their Staff 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.



Dec. 4–12
Hanukkah is an eight night Jewish winter festival.



Dec 21
Winter Solstice marks the shortest day and the longest night of the year.



Jan 13
Lohri is a winter harvest and folk festival celebrated in northn India by Hindus and Sikhs.



Dec 25
Christmas is celebrated as a religious holiday and a cultural holiday full of traditional celebrations with family and friends.



Dec 26 – Jan 1
Kwanzaa is an African American cultural holiday celebrating community, family and the seven principles of Nguzo Saba.



Dec 31 – Jan 1
Celebrating the start of a new calendar year, the new year is celebrated globally with countdowns and fireworks.

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.

After 29 wonderful years at St. John's Christian Nursery School, Heather is retiring!



For nearly three decades, Heather has been part of the lives of so many children and families in our community. Through the years, she has helped create meaningful childhood memories, supported children as they learned and grew, and contributed to the warm and caring environment that makes St. John's so special.

It is hard to put into words the impact one educator can have over 29 years. We are incredibly grateful for her dedication, care, and commitment to our program and the many families who have been part of the St. John's community along the way.

Please take a few minutes to write your well wishes for Heather on the kudoboard. Please click on the link below and it will take you to the virtual greeting card.

While we will certainly miss seeing her here, we are excited for her as she begins this next chapter and wish her all the happiness and wonderful new adventures that retirement brings! Heather's last day with us here at St. John's will be on Friday, December 18th.

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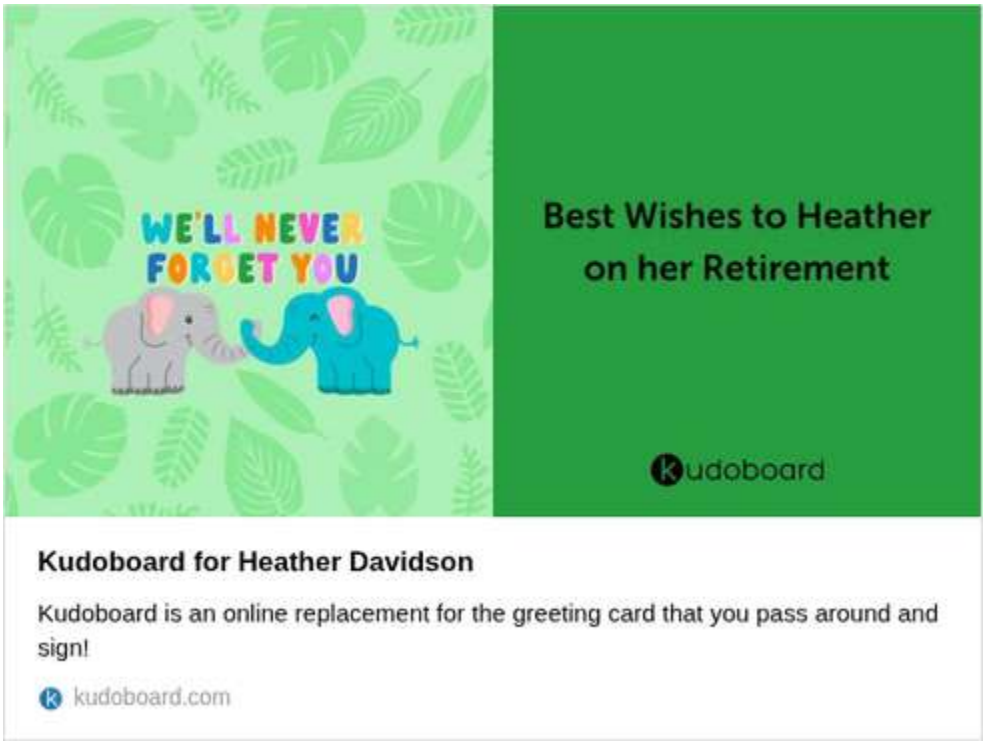


STAFFING UPDATE:

Sarah has been working as a supply educator at St. John's. She accepted the position in the seedling when Heather leaves. Sarah will be joining the Seedling team starting on January 4th. We are excited to welcome her to our seedling team. She will be job shadowing Heather the week of December 7th. Welcome Sarah!



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.

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.

A SEASON OF GIVING:

As we approach the winter break, we want to thank you for your ongoing partnership and support throughout the school year.

Please know that holiday gifts for educators are never expected. Having your child come to school eager to learn, grow, and share in our days together is the greatest gift of all! If you do wish to share a token of appreciation, a heartfelt drawing or handwritten thank-you note from your child means the world to our staff. This year, rather than gifts for educators, we would love to embrace the spirit of giving by coming together to support families within our own St. John's Nursery School community.

We will be hosting our own Angel Tree, with gift ideas and needed items added to the tree to help support our own St. John's families during the Christmas season. Families are invited to choose an item from the tree and help make the holidays a little brighter for another family in our community. If your family is able to participate, please choose an item off the Angel tree, and bring back the item unwrapped with the tree tag attached to the school office by **Friday Dec 11th**. We will wrap the items and deliver the gifts to the family's home. Every act of kindness, big or small, makes a difference.

Thank you for helping us celebrate the season through kindness, generosity, and the spirit of community.







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. A giant, child-sized nest: Use cut branches to make a nest on the ground.

3. 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.

4. Snow creatures: Use the trees' cut branches and needles to make snow creatures.

5. 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.

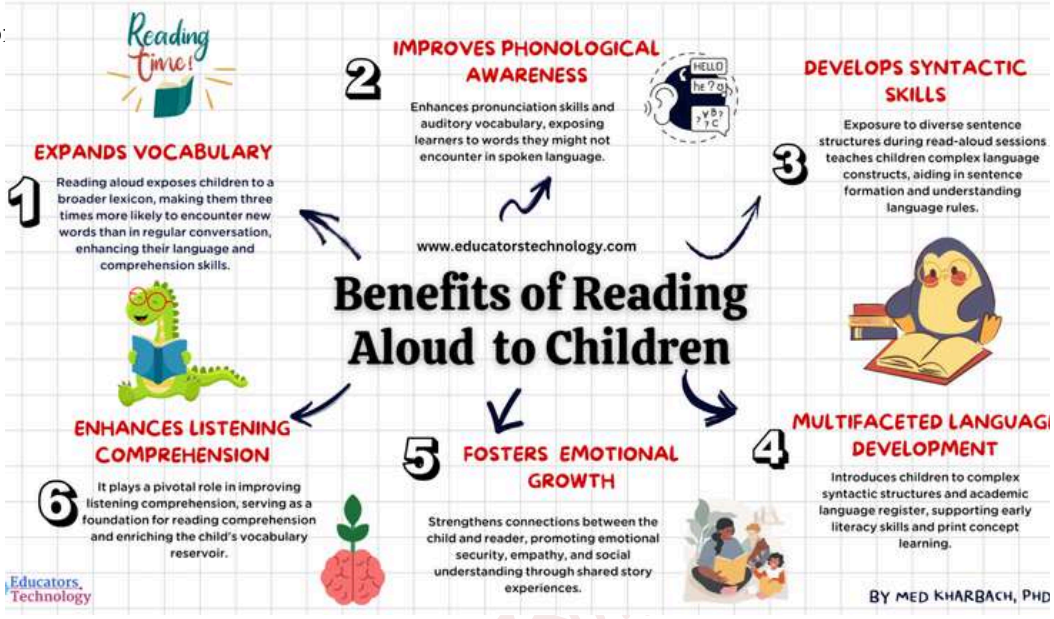
6. Sensory-rich experiences: Playing with discarded Christmas trees provides several sensory-rich experiences. By moving a heavy tree around, children can take in the smell of its aroma. By jumping and rolling on the trees, children experience the touch and feel of their branches and needles. The more sensory rich an activity is the more cognitively engaged the children will be.

FAMILY LITERACY DAY:

January 27th 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 25th to 29th 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 it returned to the right family.

Please let your child's educato know that they have brought a book to share as we don't always check their backpacks.

Thank you.



OUTDOOR PLAY SPACES:

You may have noticed the black fence fabric surrounding both of our playgrounds. We have put this fabric up temporarily for the winter months to help block the wind and create a more protected outdoor space. This will allow the children to continue enjoying more time outside, even during the colder, windier days. We have also built new igloos on the preschool playground to provide more warming areas for the winter months

We also wanted to give a big shout-out to Matt for creating such a warm and cozy space on the preschool playground for the children to enjoy!

Matt has put so much thought and effort into transforming the wooden playhouse. He added wooden walls, new built-in benches, curtains on the windows, artwork, and lighting to make it a welcoming little retreat. This cozy space gives the children a sheltered spot to escape the wind, sit and read, or enjoy playing together.

Thank you, Matt, for all your hard work and for creating such a special place for the children to enjoy!



LOOSE PARTS DONATIONS:

You may have seen on the board outside the office, a display of loose parts. Katie, a student from Conestoga College, has been working on a small project on loose parts. We are encouraging families to donate any loose parts materials that you may have around your house, that the children could us in their play. These loose parts help to enhance play in many different ways. At the end of the newsletter you will find that article that Katie create explaining what loose parts are and how they can be used in our program rooms. Please take a few minutes to read this, and if you are able to, bring in an item or two to add to our collection.

Thanks so much.



POINTSETTIA FUNDRAISER:



This year we have raised **$704** from our poinsettia fundraiser! 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 27th**. 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 27th as well. The 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 2027 need to be made before February 2027 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**.

CAR SEAT SAFETY:

Carly Kolpean is a Child Passenger Safety Technician. She runs car seat clinics, provides educational resources and will check your child's car seat to make sure that it is installed properly in your car right at her home in Waterloo. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to her anytime by phone or email. If you would like any additional information we have a pamphlet and business cards in the office.

PHONE: 519-546-4023
EMAIL: ckolpean.cpst@gmail.com

FAMILY CONNECTION MEETING:

Family connection meetings will happen on Thursday January 29th from 4–7pm and Friday, **January 30th between 9am –12pm and 1pm–3pm**. Please email Marianne 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.
Just a reminder that the school will be closed on Friday, January 29th so that the educators can connect with families. Thank you for your support and understanding.

GIVE AND TAKE FOOD DRIVE:

We have set up a Give and Take Box, a community basket was created to support members of our St. John's community who may need a little extra assistance with food throughout the year. The basket is located at the main entrance of the school and we invite families and community members to help keep it stocked by donating non-perishable food items.
If you or someone you know could use a little extra support, please feel free to take what you need.
Give when you can. **Take what you need**. **Help keep our community cared for**.

2027–2028 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:

Your child will be receiving a class composites in December that was created using the photos we have here at school. These are a wonderful keep sake for everyone and they are a great way for your child to show you their friends from school.

PAJAMA DAYS:

Is it difficult to get your child out of their pajamas in the morning? No need to worry on Wednesday, January 13th and Thursday, January 14th 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.



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 out-going 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 so St. John's will be closed when schools are closed. We will remain open if just the buses are cancelled.



Volume 5 • Number 1 PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

GET SMART Newsletter

January 2017

Cold Weather Outdoor Play Boosts Immune System!

By:Anne Dodds, KeystoneSTARS Child CareHealthConsultant



Cold weather, outdoor play- It's not onlyfor children, but adults too!

Think layers – adults and children alike!Adults should wear layers of lightweight clothing to stay warm. Don'tforget gloves and a hat! Because children's bodies can lose heat faster, young children and babies should be dressed in one more layer than an adult. Make sure their head andneck are covered as well as a warm pair of gloves.

Winter fresh air is good for everyone!

Outdoor winter play has long been blamed for colds and the flu. Our parents told us to "bundle up or you'll catch a cold," and their parents probably told them the same thing. But winter play gets a bad rap. Although going outside unprepared for the elements is unwise, viruses that are spread by other human beings and cause colds and the flu are indoors.

The indoor circulation of germs and bacteria is much more harmful to your child than playing outside. There are plenty of excellent references for winter safety tips, such as this article by the American Academy of Pediatrics that explains proper clothing, winter health and more. With the right preparation and understanding of winter weather, your child can have as much fun in the cold as he or shedoes inthe sun!

Here are Four Benefits of Outdoor Winter Play

Breathe fresh air

It's no secret that most parents blame winter air as the cause for colds and the flu. Although the viruses that cause flu and colds are more common in the winter months, the circulated air in closed environments is the main cause of your child getting sick. All of the bacteria, dirt, dander, and other germs simply get recycled through the air vents over and over. The more time you spend inside, the more you are exposed. Nothing is more refreshing than that first deep breath of cold, winter air before starting hours of fun with outdoor play. In fresh, outdoor air, children do not have to rebreathe the germs of the group, and the chance for spreading infection is reduced.

Strengthen immune system

Playing outside allows your child an escape from indoor germs and bacteria. This will not only be good for the healthy bunch; the sick kids benefit from the fresh air as well. Just make sure they are properly bundled up and moving around to capture and generate warmth. Being outside more often also allows your child to develop a stronger autoimmune system and a resistance to allergies. Studies have shown that children in rural areas or those who are active outside have the best overall health.

Engage in physical exercise

Just because it's cold outside doesn't mean your children have lost their energy or desire to play. In fact, the California Childcare Health Program states outdoor winter play "gives children an opportunity for a change of environment, a balance in play and routine, and large muscle activities (gross-motor development)." You must remember your child is still growing during these months, and prolonged sessions of inactivity are not conducive to their muscular development. Physical activity gives your immune system a power surge for a full 24 hours. A stronger immune system leads to less illness and less use of antibiotics.

Stimulate the imagination

The winter also offers a variety of ways to stimulate your imagination through play. Does your child like to build things? Build a snow fort in the backyard with tunnels and a home base. Do you have access to a park? Go for a wildlife hike and look for birds and other woodland creatures. With all of the technological advancements of the past decade, many children are using their imaginations less and less. Something as simple as building a silly snowman utilizes problem solving and imaginative skills they would not be using while sitting on the couch.

Remember:
Hand washing is the single most effective way to reduce illness!



Kids' Section:

Making a Snow Volcano



Science experiment and photo courtesy of Science-Sparks.com

What do you need?

☐ Empty water bottle
2 spoonfuls of baking soda
1 spoonful dish soap
☐ A few drops of food coloring (red makes it look like lava)
1 ounce of vinegar

Next steps:

☐ Make a volcano in the snow with hole in the center to hold the water bottle.
Add everything except the vinegar to the water bottle.
Add the vinegar and watch the eruption!

Tip: If it doesn't work so well, add a bit more dish soap and vinegar.

Why is this science?

Vinegar (an acid) and baking soda (an alkali) react together to neutralize each other. This reaction releases carbon dioxide, a gas which is the bubbles you see, these bubbles make the dish soap bubble up to give the reaction.

If you have any ideas or would like more information, please contact us. To unsubscribe, email knowwhentosayno@pa.gov.