



St. Patrick Catholic School

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Principal

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Hello Parents!

Please let me introduce myself. My name is Lisa Venne and I will be your child's French teacher this year. I'd like to share with you why I became a teacher and what my goals are for this year.

I was not a born teacher. I did not line up my dolls to read them books or turn my bedroom into a classroom. No one in my family was in education. In fact, my parents never went to university and both were very successful in their lives. My dad ran his own business as a sign painter/musician and my mom took night school classes when I was little to become a bookkeeper/accountant. My sister never pursued post-secondary education and chose to be a stay-at-home mom and foster parent as her career. I wanted to be an artist. My parents discouraged this for fear that I would never be able to pay my bills. Ironically, it was through my art that I earned much of my money to pay for my university degree in Mass Communications and French.

When I was 15, I went on a student exchange to France for one year. When I arrived (after 6 years of French classes in school) I could not communicate. I could barely even ask someone what their name was to make a friend. It took me 4 months to be able to understand what people were saying in French and 6 months before I felt comfortable responding in French. When I returned to Canada my abilities in French had completely surpassed my classmates' and in University, I earned a scholarship to return to France to study. My ability to speak French has opened many doors, from my first career as an operations manager for an educational tour company, to becoming a flight attendant for Canadian Airlines and then Air Canada to my shift into teaching. I had been volunteering with a French Teacher (2003) when they went on an emergency leave and I was offered their job without a teaching certificate. I was then accepted to teacher's college.

When I was a flight attendant, I took courses in Spanish and Japanese. This experience as an adult showed me that learning a language really has very little to do with verb conjugation. As children we learn to speak before we read or write. If we can't speak a language, how can we expect to read or write it? When I teach, I expect students to speak chorally with me as a class. This way students never feel centered out and with the 'noise' of everyone speaking, we can all practice the sounds of new words and learn to use new vocabulary by practicing it in a variety of sentences and scenarios. Once students are comfortable using the language, I then point out the grammar rules that they have already been using correctly orally. This is how I learned Japanese. After only 3 separate weeks of instruction, I was able to order food, ask for directions, talk about my family and career in Japanese! After 6 weeks of instruction in Spanish I was able to hold a 2-hour conversation at a party in Mexico! These experiences have greatly impacted how I teach French.

I do everything I can to make students feel comfortable to participate in front of their peers. Having a second language (any language) doubles your opportunities in life. As a teacher my job is to help students see their potential and build on their skills. The reality is that we spend so many hours a day with the students that our primary role has become helping them to navigate interpersonal relationships, build self-esteem and manage the ups and downs of uncontrollable events that affect their lives.

I want students to feel safe and look forward to their 50min./day with me. There are regulations put in place to protect everyone's health and safety (i.e., wearing a mask and maintaining a safe distance from each other) and I will expect these to be adhered to with no exception. I have taken extensive training to ensure that I am offering my students best teaching practices. My goal is to move students forward from wherever their language skills are. I can only do this with their participation and cooperation. Not everyone learns the same way or at the same speed. I will not tolerate behaviors that are detrimental to a positive learning environment for others. I want children to want to come to school and feel safe when they are there.

I am certified in the AIM (accelerated integrated methodology) for 2nd language teaching. This methodology is used in many different countries to teach a variety of languages. You can learn more about the methodology at aimlanguagelearning.com

I will have a French section on your child's homeroom Brightspace page. This will normally be found on the right-hand side of your teacher's announcements. In this section, I will post any updates or information you may need. If you need my direct assistance, please email me at Lvenne@bhncdsb.ca with a contact phone number and the best times to reach you. I will get back to you as best I am able since this year I am teaching French to Grades 1 – 8 at St. Patrick as well as one section of French at Christ the King School.

As children in Grades 1-3 are not mandated to wear a mask, I will wear a gown so as not to transfer potential droplets between cohorts. Here is a picture of me to share with your child.



Yours sincerely,

Mme (Lisa) Venne
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