

Balanced Day Schedule at PVNC Catholic



Strategic Priorities

2025-2030



Inspire

Thrive

Connect



Vision

Rooted in community, formed in faith, ready to change the world.

Mission

We accompany students in faith-filled, safe, and inclusive Catholic schools - nurturing their God-given potential in heart, mind, and spirit.

Values



Current State

- Currently PVNC Catholic is on a traditional school schedule

The day consists of:

- 300 instructional minutes
- 60-minute lunch period - includes both indoor and outdoor time (typically 20min eating /40 min outside)
- Two additional recess periods - varying lengths
- Instructional blocks of approximately 40-60 minutes
- This has been the schedule for many years



What is the Balanced Day?

- A "balanced day" refers to the way that the school day is scheduled.
- Instead of having the traditional morning and afternoon recess and longer lunch break, the balanced day is divided into three longer instructional blocks (between 100 and 120-minute sessions) separated by two longer breaks of 40 to 50 minutes.



What is the Balanced Day?

- Different schedules can be used, as long as the instructional time for each day totals 300 minutes.
- This model is currently used in many Ontario Catholic and public boards including Kawartha Pineridge and Trillium Lakelands
- There is no change to bell times based on the implementation of the balanced day.



An Example of a Balanced Day Schedule

Balanced School Day Timetable

8:28am

Warning bell: Students will line up

8:30am – 10:30am

Learning Block (120 minutes)

10:30 – 11:15

Nutrition/Activity Break

11:15 – 1:15pm

Learning Block (120 minutes)

1:15pm – 2:00pm

Nutrition/Activity Break

2:00pm – 3:00pm

Learning Block (60 Minutes)

3:00pm

Dismissal



The Benefits of a Balanced Day Schedule

- Aligns with PVNC Catholic priority of 60-80 minute periods of instruction for math and literacy.
- Reduces time lost to transitions, maximizing instructional minutes and student time on task and supporting improved learning outcomes.
- The Balanced Day dramatically reduces the number of transitions compared to a traditional schedule (morning recess, lunch, afternoon recess), **gaining valuable minutes** back for teaching and learning every single day.
- Two longer eating breaks promote healthy nutrition, self-regulation, and social connection and improved concentration and energy levels. Traditional schedules often leave a long gap between an early morning snack and a late lunch, leading to a dip in energy and focus. By scheduling **two dedicated nutrition breaks** throughout the day, students get a necessary, timely boost to their blood sugar and energy levels, which is critical for maintaining concentration on complex tasks.



The Benefits of a Balanced Day Schedule

- Fewer transitions can lead to fewer behaviour incidents and reduced student anxiety, especially for those with diverse learning, sensory, or self-regulation needs.
- Extended breaks support intramurals, clubs, faith-based leadership activities, and student engagement opportunities that enrich Catholic school culture.
- Teachers can be provided with the required 40 minute uninterrupted lunch and still be available for a full block of supervision ensuring there are always teachers supervising.
- Teachers comment that it is easier to focus students after the second break and maintain focus. This is compared to trying to get students back on-task after a third recess.



Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I organize my child's lunch bag for two nutrition breaks?

One of the biggest challenges for parents in implementing the Balanced School Day will be ensuring that their child(ren) has both a healthy snack for the first nutrition break and a lunch packed for the second nutrition break. There are many school boards that use the balanced day. Use of a divided lunch container or labelling items meant for each break are some of the strategies you can use. PVNC Catholic will be providing best practices on lunch preparation closer to September 2026

2. How are children going to sit for the longer instructional periods?

Although the blocks of instructional time in the Balanced School Day are longer, flexibility is built into each block. What has changed is the solid uninterrupted time that teachers can use to deliver lessons. Best teaching practices find students engaged in a variety of learning opportunities during any instructional period. A Balanced School day allows flexibility for teachers to spend more time on an activity (if there is a need to do so) instead of being interrupted by the transitions.



Frequently Asked Questions

3. Will more disruptions mean more behaviour issues?

One of the key advantages of the Balanced School Day is that it actually provides fewer disruptions during the day. The longer nutrition/activity breaks give children more time to eat and more time to play. What have been eliminated from the traditional schedule are the short recess breaks and the longer lunch break, which require extra transition time. Transition is often a time when behaviour issues occur.

4. Will there be enough supervision during the breaks?

Yes, student safety is always the most important priority. The Balanced Day Schedule provides more opportunity for scheduling of staff. Each school Principal meets with staff annually to review schedules and determine the best way to ensure students are well supervised.

