

Cogito

Parent Handbook 2019 - 2020

I behave as though this is the day
I will be remembered for.

iLearn

iDream

iLead

We succeed!



Elmer S. Gish Elementary Junior High School

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Foundational Principles

Cogito is a highly structured learning environment with clearly defined standards of achievement. The Cogito Program is dedicated to helping students maximize their academic potential. *Cogito* (**kō gi tō**) is Latin for *I reason*.

The program is designed for the student who is willing to work to achieve a high level of academic excellence, in a knowledge-based program, and in an atmosphere of structured and sequenced learning. Critical thinking is stressed. Students work in an environment that encourages self-discipline.

This set of foundational principles defines the parameters of the Cogito Alternative Program in St. Albert Public Schools.

In St. Albert Public Schools, the Cogito Alternative Program:

- Upholds academic rigour for all students. Standards of achievement are clearly and consistently identified for each grade level, forming a strong foundation for future learning.
- Fosters an environment focused on learning. Expectations are set for dress of students and staff, classroom organization, and communication to families.
- Provides a solid foundation for literacy and numeracy, as well as other fundamental academic skills, including learning French as an additional language.
- Challenges students to always produce their best work. Students complete regular homework that is meaningful and in measured amounts to reinforce the learning.
- Provides clear and timely reporting of students' learning in relation to the provincial curriculum, as well as the approved Cogito Alternative Program curriculum. Student marks will be reported as letter grades or percentages at appropriate grade levels.
- Recognizes work ethic and scholastic achievement generate confidence, motivation, and engagement in learning.
- Emphasizes whole group, teacher-directed instruction with gradual release of responsibility to the student (I do, we do, you do).
- Recognizes parents as valuable partners in their child's education.

Academic Expectations

Students enrolled in Cogito strive to meet high standards, both academically and in building the Cogito environment, in which

- students are always challenged to produce their best work with accuracy and precision in oral and written work are expected
- work habits and organizational skills are valued
- an orderly structured environment is followed
- student uniforms contribute to perceptions of success
- students become increasingly responsible for their learning

Linking the Foundational Principles to Cogito Classrooms

	Description	Indicators
Academic Excellence	Cogito upholds academic excellence for all students, and encourages and expects their best possible work. Standards of achievement for each outcome are clearly described for each grade level as a foundation for future learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic excellence • students do their best work • achievement standards clearly defined for each grade level
Orderly Environment	Cogito fosters an environment focused on learning. Expectations are set for dress of students and staff, classroom organization and communication to families.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • orderly learning environment • standard of dress for students and staff (see Appendix C for uniform requirements) • classrooms organized with desks in rows • minimal disruptions to learning • group work is engaged and on-task
Emphasis on Literacy and Numeracy	Cogito provides a solid foundation for literacy and numeracy, as well as other fundamental academic skills,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • foundational literacy skills, with an emphasis on phonics • basic facts in math • French as an additional language beginning in Gr 1

including French as an additional language.

Regular Homework

Cogito challenges students to produce their best work. Students complete regular homework that is meaningful and in measured amounts to reinforce learning.

- students challenged to always produce their best work
- homework is meaningful and in measured amounts
- students consistently complete homework; teachers mark and return homework in a timely manner

Timely Reporting of Student Progress

Cogito provides clear and timely reporting of students' learning in relation to the provincial curriculum, as well as the approved Cogito Alternative Program curriculum. Student marks are reported as letter grades or percentages at appropriate grade levels.

- reporting is a clear and timely representation of student achievement
- students in Gr 1 and 2 receive letter grades; students in Gr 3 and beyond receive percentage grades
- elementary students are also assessed on identified Key Learner Outcomes, using the district achievement scale

Time of Task and Engaged Learning

Cogito recognizes work ethic and scholastic achievement generate confidence, motivation, and engagement in learning.

- classroom environment is structured to promote students' working hard, spending time on task and engaged in their learning
- build student self-esteem through diligence, effort and achievement
- students and teachers are prepared for learning

Whole Group

Cogito emphasizes whole group, teacher-directed instruction with gradual release

- whole group, teacher-directed instruction

Direct Instruction

of responsibility to the student (I do, we do, you do).

- Lesson structure to promote learning, including:
 - ongoing check for understanding
 - steps provided as scaffolding, not memorization
 - modelling and narrative demonstrations (think alouds)
 - higher level questioning
 - immediate corrective feedback
 - teacher walking around room, monitoring student progress
 - high expectations for student learning

Parents as Valued Partners

Cogito recognizes parents as valuable partners in their child's education.

- parents have an active stake and interest in their child's education
- parents act as valued partners in their child's education
- consistent communication is an essential component of engaging parents
- teachers and school administration foster the active involvement of parents

Uniforms and Dress Code

Students in the elementary Cogito Program wear a uniform on each school day. The uniform protocol was updated for September 2019; please see the attached sheet.

In addition to the Cogito uniform, students are expected to wear

- close-toed black shoes (no heels, embellishments, sandals, crocs or boots)
- hair accessories and jewellery must be understated and coordinate with the Cogito colours

The exceptions for the dress code are on

- Spirit Days – on early dismissal day each month, student council chooses a theme such as crazy hat day, jersey day or tacky sweater day. Students in the Cogito Program may choose to participate in the theme day and wear non-uniform attire or wear their uniform
- last two weeks in June

Junior High Dress Code Expectations

- All students are expected to wear clean, neat clothing that demonstrates personal pride.
- Collared shirts or tops and T-shirts are acceptable.
- Jeans and casual fitted pants are acceptable.
- Pants must be fitted. Boxers and underwear cannot be showing
- Shoes must be fitted properly. For example, runners must be kept tied up and laces not left loose.
- Hair must be clean, neat, and well-kept.
- Logos and sayings must be respectful and school appropriate. School staff has final word.
- Hats are to be removed and kept in lockers.

Physical Education Change Out

Students in all grades are expected to have running shoes for Physical Education classes. Starting in Gr 3, students are expected to have a change of clothes (T-shirt and shorts or track pants) for regular Physical Education classes.

Homework Expectations

Students are expected to complete regular homework that is meaningful and in measured amounts to reinforce the learning.

Division 1	Division 2	Division 3
15 - 40 minutes	30 - 60 minutes	45 - 90 minutes

- homework is assigned by Monday of each week and communicated to families
- homework expectations will be adjusted if it is a shortened week
- homework will not be assigned during Christmas holidays and Spring Break; and all homework ceases for the last two weeks of June
- if time permits, students may begin homework in the classroom

Parent Involvement in Homework

Parents are a valuable support for students in meeting homework expectations. Parents assist in creating the consistent expectations students produce their best work by providing

- **time and place for homework**
 - Routines are established to support student success in homework
 - Feedback is provided to the teacher regarding limitations, success, and clarity
- **supervision and discussion**
 - Parents discuss homework with the student
- **attention to home/school communication**
 - Tools such as agendas, Friday envelopes, newsletters, websites, and notes are used to ensure that parents have information regarding assignments, expectations, and procedures
- **support for the school's practices and programs**
 - Consistency between expectations of the home and school are actively pursued by both the teacher and the parent; questions for clarification are welcomed.

Transition Points

Penmanship

Penmanship is an important part of our program. Students focus on proper letter formation, consistency in size, spacing and overall neatness.

Cursive Writing

Cursive writing is introduced in Grade 3. In subsequent grades, students are expected to use cursive writing for class notes and submitted assignments.

Saxon Math (Grades 4 to 9)

The expectations for math and the pace of learning changes significantly in Grade 4.

- students use a textbook instead of completing a math page, and students record their answers on graph paper.
- a math terminology component is added to student expectations
- parents should expect an increase in the quantity of homework assigned and the amount of time students will need to complete the work

The Saxon Math textbook is available for download. This will be available on the class website for students and parents to access on demand.

Cellphone Policy

At E. S. Gish School, we recognize advances in technology are inevitable and cell phones make student-parent contact much easier. However, one of the foundational principles of the Cogito program is to foster an environment focused on learning, in a structured classroom with limited distractions to enable students to work diligently to produce their best work. To this end, cell phones do not belong in the Cogito classroom.

Students will be allowed to have a cell phone at school, but may not bring them into their classroom. This includes having the phone in class with the ringer off, using the cell phone to check the time, using the cell phone as a calculator, or receiving or sending text messages in class.

Students are allowed to access their cell phones before classes start, on breaks, and at lunch. During class time they are to put their cell phones away in their lockers. **Students are not to bring cell phones into the classroom.**

Any student who is caught with their cell phone during class time will receive a warning, and be asked to put their phone in their locker. If the student is caught a second time, they will receive a detention, and their phone may be stored in the office until the end of the day.

Uniforms (updated September 2019)



St. Albert Cogito Uniform



To be worn on every day of the week. This uniform code is effective September 2019.
 Exceptions: Early dismissal theme days, Gish Spirit Day, or as requested by principal or teacher.

ACCEPTABLE (with Cogito emblem – no other logo)				NOT ACCEPTABLE AT ANY TIME		
<p>JACKETS</p>  <p>Cogito cardigan or</p>  <p>Cogito vest or</p>  <p>Cogito pullover or</p>  <p>Cogito jacket or</p>  <p>Cogito Hoodie</p>	<p>BOTTOMS</p>  <p>Dress pants or</p>  <p>Dress shorts or</p>  <p>Skort or</p>  <p>Tunic (K-Gr3) or</p>  <p>Kilt (Gr 4-6)</p>	<p>SHIRTS</p>  <p>Short sleeve dress shirt or</p>  <p>Long sleeve dress shirt or</p>  <p>Short Sleeve golf shirt with logo or</p>  <p>Long Sleeve Golf shirt with logo</p>	<p>ACCESSORIES</p>  <p>Leggings or</p>  <p>Tights or</p>  <p>Socks</p>  <p>Ties optional</p>	 <p>Jeans</p>  <p>Cargo pants</p>  <p>Leggings</p>  <p>Sweat pants</p>  <p>rugby pants</p>  <p>non-uniform sweaters (colour or pattern)</p>  <p>team sport shirts</p>  <p>coloured or patterned tights or socks</p>		

Please note: Substitutions are not allowed. All orders are to be placed through TOP MARKS @ 1-800-667-7105, or online @ <http://www.topmarks.ca/>