



Durham Catholic District School Board

# St. Wilfrid Catholic School

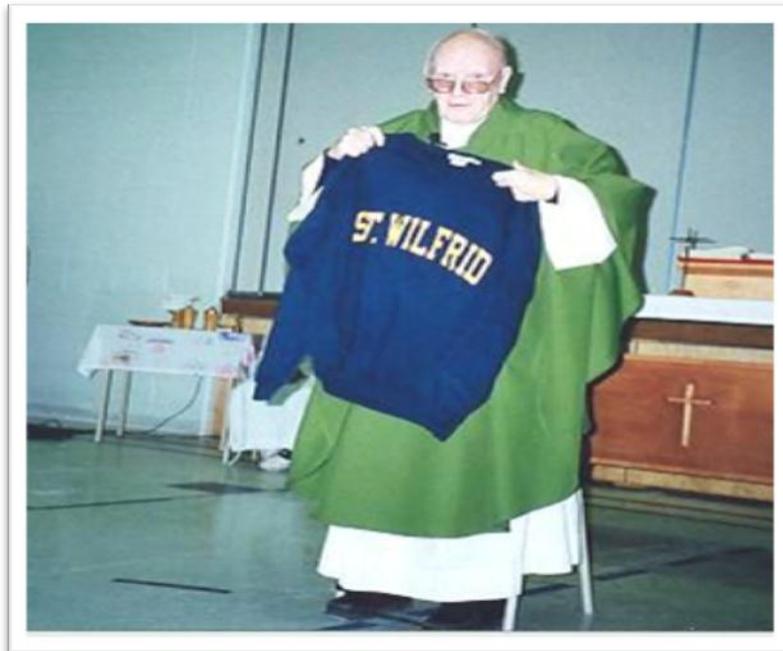
**Motto: "Excellence, Respect, and Responsibility ... Inspired by Faith"**



**In the Beginning**

In the 1980s and 1990s, the population in Pickering expanded rapidly. Many schools of the Durham Region Separate School Board were built to accommodate the families who moved here. In Pickering East, north of Kingston Road, the numbers of residents swelled. Within a short time following the openings of St. Isaac Jogues and St. Anthony Daniel Catholic Schools, a school known as Pickering East School was planned for a new subdivision at Rossland and Brock Roads on Southcott Road. It was to be opened in 1994 on former farmland owned by the Featherstone family.

Since the school population would be coming from the newer Pickering parish of St. Isaac Jogues and the more historic parish of St. Francis de Sales, now part of Ajax, the committee formed to choose a name for the new school included the beloved Father Bolger, long-time parish priest of St. Francis de Sales. Father Bolger was influential in encouraging the committee to choose the name of St. Wilfrid for the school.



*Presentation of a school jersey to Father Bolger at a school Mass  
in appreciation for his support for St. Wilfrid School*

Using the Catholic archives in Toronto and the documents of St. Francis de Sales Parish, it was found that St. Wilfrid was the patron saint of the very first Catholic parish established in Pickering in 1848. The land was purchased in June 1845 and the wooden building was erected in 1849. This site was south of Kingston Road, on what was originally Station Road and is now called Notion Road (the present division between Pickering and Ajax). In 1860, the parish of St. Wilfrid's was established with Father P.D. Laurent in residence. He built a small rectory and made repairs to the church. The deteriorating wooden church, which had to be propped up, became too small for the growing Catholic population. The parishioners joined in building St. Francis de Sales Church on Church Street; it opened in 1871. St. Wilfrid Church was demolished after the new church was completed. Today, a few original headstones and a commemorative plaque mark the location of the church and cemetery on the east side of Notion Road.

After acquiring the information about this historic background, the newly formed staff of St. Wilfrid Catholic School collaborated to provide the students with new symbols for the school. The felt banner of St. Wilfrid represents him in the ecclesiastical robes of Bishop using the school colours red, blue and gold, as voted on by the staff. The crest was designed with the letter “W” superimposed, with a stylized ship topped with a cross to represent the faith and missionary travels of St. Wilfrid. The staff members also worked together to compose the school song and the prayer, following in the footsteps of St. Wilfrid. Celebrations are held annually on his feast day, October 12.



From the beginning, its historical location and heritage meant that the school has been blessed to be served by priests from both St. Francis de Sales and St. Isaac Jogues parishes. The staff worked closely with Father Bolger prior to his retirement, and as a feeder school for Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School in Ajax, students and staff attend monthly Masses and other liturgies in the Ajax parish church. Father Canning and Father John Henry of St. Isaac Jogues were also supporters of the staff and students, so that all students involved in sacramental preparation receive the sacraments as members of the Pickering parish. The students take part in the Rosary Apostolate, the Catholic Women’s League speech contest, and the Knights of Columbus Free Throw basketball competition.

The staff has been instrumental in keeping the spirit and faith of St. Wilfrid alive in the mission of the school. The students are involved in many charitable causes, both locally and globally, such as ShareLife, food drives, Denise House, Rose of Durham, Sick Kids Foundation, and Ryan’s Well Foundation.

It was decided to build a daycare centre attached to the school; the centre is run by the YMCA. This facility has always provided the parents with support, as both centre and school staffs have always worked in cooperation to care for the children.

As the number of students grew, portables were added. Then the Board built a two-storey addition, which resulted in an inner courtyard with a Jubilee garden donated and built by parent volunteers in June 2000. The courtyard is a peaceful location, especially when the flowering vegetation and the

birds encourage groups and individuals to frequent it for meetings, classes and meditation.

Sports have always been important to the students and staff. The school has always shared the soccer field and baseball diamond with the City of Pickering. The name for the athletic teams, the Wolverines, was chosen by the opening staff because it is alliterative with Wilfrid. The Wolverines have won a number of pennants in tournaments.

#### **Our Patron Saint**

The English saint Wilfrid (633–709) – his name means “Firm Peace” – was an appropriate patron for this area of Ontario. Wilfrid’s diocese included the towns of Scarborough, Pickering and Whitby – place names also found in our area.

He was born in Northumbria to a Christian family, and although he was educated at Lindisfarne, a centre for Celtic Christianity, Wilfrid became a champion for the Roman Church after visiting Rome. At the Synod of Whitby in 664, he was a strong advocate for reforming the English Church in the tradition of Rome. Because of his firm convictions, the English rulers and clergy dismissed him from his position of Bishop of York and Ripon as well as his monastery at Hexham. In appealing to Rome for reinstatement, he is recognized for the times he sailed there, undergoing hardships and a shipwreck. During these journeys, he

initiated the spread of the faith among non-Christian English people, as well as being a missionary to the Germanic peoples.

Our school community is blessed with a patron saint who was a model of faith, courage, and educational and missionary zeal.



## School Prayer

Dear God,

Today, with the help of St. Wilfrid,  
I promise:  
To work together with my friends,  
To treat everyone fairly,  
To try my best with all my work,  
To respect my school, participate in my  
Parish and show love for my family.

Jesus,  
Help me to be like St. Wilfrid,  
to follow the teachings of the Gospel  
and to be proud of myself and my school.  
Amen.

St. Wilfrid, pray for us.

### Song to St. Wilfrid

St. Wilfrid, a saint so brave and true  
You fought for your faith your whole life through.  
Teach us to be one who's more like you,  
A living saint of God.

Refrain: We sing a song to St. Wilfrid  
As by your side we stand.  
We'll praise your name  
As we work every day,  
To try to be like you.

### Principals

J.F. Johnston (1994–1999)

H. Lanthier (1999–2003)

A. Sherwin-Hamer (2003–2008)

Wm. Perry (2008–2012)

Lynette Wardle (2012-present)

### Contributors:

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