



Westboro Nursery School

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Guide for Participating Parents

Welcome to the 2009/2010 school year at Westboro Nursery School.

Children, parents, and teachers share in the excitement of the beginning of school. We all look forward to a year of discovery, learning and fun.

This orientation package contains general information about the philosophy and administration of the school, as well as useful guidelines for parent assist days. We have included registration lists for morning and afternoon members. Please keep these lists. You will find them extremely helpful during the school year.

About the Cooperative

A cooperative is an organization owned by its members who work together for a common purpose and share in the benefits. Listed below are some of the principles underlying how we operate as a cooperative.

1. The members work together to achieve a common goal, that of a successful nursery school which is gender, culture and ability inclusive.
2. We endeavour to provide a cooperative education to members through parent assist days, volunteer duties, field trips, fundraising, meetings, social gatherings and other activities identified by the members.
3. We strive to create a safe and happy learning environment where children grow to feel good about themselves and curious about the world around them.
4. Its members collectively own our school, each member having one vote. Members elect a board or executive to manage school affairs, such as fundraising, registration, and lease arrangements. Members control the board by voting them out of office if they so wish.
5. The executive meets on a monthly basis to discuss administrative issues pertaining to the school. The members are encouraged to identify issues they wish the executive to consider.
6. The membership decides what to do with its money. Our executive must have membership approval on budgetary decisions. Annual budgets are normally tabled for discussion at our General Meeting in the New Year.
7. Our school is a non-profit corporation with no share capital. Any profits are used to improve program materials and resources.
8. Upon dissolution or bankruptcy of the school and after payment of debts and liabilities, the remaining property will be distributed or dispersed to a Canadian charitable organization.

9. There is no personal liability.
10. We are approved by Revenue Canada as a registered charity. Donations are tax deductible and receipts issued.
11. We enjoy tax-free status.
12. A copy of our by-laws is available to any member who wishes to read them.

Our Philosophy

At Westboro Nursery School we strive:

- To promote the development of the whole child, emotionally, socially, physically, cognitively, intellectually and creatively. We provide a warm, safe, child-centred environment, which fosters active participation of the child in concrete experiences.
- To promote greater understanding by parents in matters relating to early childhood education.

Our programs are based on sound knowledge of child development. Developmentally appropriate practice is based on the belief that children are motivated largely from within and that children pass through distinct stages in a given sequence, characterized by specific cognitive styles and abilities. Learning is child-centred and play-based. Children play in order to know and understand the world around them, to express themselves and to practice new skills. We strive to provide an environment that is gender, culture and ability inclusive. We celebrate the individual in a climate of sharing and cooperation. Children build a sense of belonging to the group and a positive self-image.

The curriculum includes language development, mathematical concepts, dramatic play, creative activities, health and safety, environmental sciences and physical, social and emotional development. Sign language is an integral part of our program.

The children work independently as well as cooperatively in small groups. The ratio of 1:8 ensures that the teachers can observe children's handling of materials and social situations, assess their development, and encourage experiences that further their growth. Task time is flexible according to the purpose and needs of the child. Theme-based hands-on activities are designed to build on what the child already knows and extend that knowledge further. Children's natural curiosity and desire to make sense of the world are used to motivate them to become involved in learning. This involvement and resulting "joy of discovery" is how we want children to view learning for the rest of their lives.

Operating Information

Hours

A.M. Program: 9:15 to 11:30- Tuesday and Thursday

A.M. Program: 9:15 to 11:30- Monday, Wednesday, Friday

P.M. Program: 1:00 to 3:15- Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Please note that our teachers welcome children into the classroom at 9:15 for the morning program and 1:00 p.m. for the afternoon program. It is not possible for staff to assume responsibility for any child before class begins. For safety reasons, staff will not release children to anyone other than parents without *prior written consent*.

School Year

Mid September to June

The school will be closed on the same holiday schedule used by the Ottawa Board of Education, excluding P.D. days, when we remain open.

You will have been contacted by one of the teachers regarding your child's entry date.

School policy is to have children start school in small groups.

You will be expected to stay on your child's first day of school. Please do **not** bring other children.

Transportation

Safe transportation of your child to and from school is your responsibility. Please do not park at the entrance of the building when dropping off or picking up your child. This is a safety consideration and also accommodates Para Transpo users. There are five minute drop-off spaces on the north side of the parking lot.

Please be on time when dropping off and picking up your child.

Admission Policy

A.M. programs: 2 ½ years of age at time of admission.

P.M. program: 3 years of age by December 31st of the registering year.

*All children must be toilet trained.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents must give thirty (30) days **written** notice to withdraw a child from the program or forfeit one month's fee.

In the unlikely event that after a reasonable length of time, the program does not meet the needs of the child, the parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the program.

Health Regulations

The following are health regulations that apply to our school per guidelines set out by the Public Health Unit of Ottawa. Please use these guidelines when questioning a child's attendance at school. If in doubt call the staff. They are happy to consult with you.

1. Any child developing a fever during program should go home immediately.
2. The child should be free of fever for 24 hours before returning to school.
3. A temperature of 101 F or 38.5 C is considered a fever.
4. Any child who has a liquid bowel movement or vomiting during program should go home immediately.
5. The child should be free of liquid bowel movements/ vomiting for 24 hours before returning to school.
6. Precautions should be taken with severe colds. The child should stay home if nasal discharge is not clear.
7. Please advise staff of any infectious diseases your child may contract, such as chicken pox, pink eye, etc. We have policies from the Health Department regarding communicable diseases. Call us to report a communicable disease and we will discuss with you the policy regarding your child's return to school.

Please exercise caution when returning a child that has been sick to school. Consider the other children, parents, siblings and friends. Hopefully, with these precautions we can slow down the spread of colds and flu.

Parent Assist Day

As parent assists you are part of the legal staffing requirements of the ministry. It is essential that the assisting parents be on time and it is **their responsibility to trade with another parent if they are unable to attend** on their day. Whenever possible, please advise the teachers of changes made in the schedule.

A.M. Program: Duties are from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Assisting parents are to help with the set up of the room.

P.M. Program: Duties are from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Assisting parents are required to help with equipment storage at the end of the day.

Snack

You will be required to provide a **snack for all of the children and one can of juice** every second duty day. This will be indicated on the parent assist schedule. Examples of nutritious snacks include cheese, grapes, apple wedges, carrots, celery etc. Children enjoy a small, simple snack. Health regulations prevent serving nuts, popcorn or home baking. The school will provide crackers. We are a nut-free environment and ask that nuts and nut products not be brought into the school or on to the playground. Specific allergies will be posted in snack preparation area and at serving tables. You will appreciate that we are vigilant food label readers and we must have the original list of ingredients before serving any processed food.

Hand sanitizer will be used on children's hands before eating.

Clothing

Please send children in comfortable clothing. They must wear shoes with a non-slip sole in the classroom. Remember that we are working on independence and clothing that fits and is easy to remove for toileting is important. Please send a spare set of clothing in the child's bag. Assume that we are going out to play and dress your child accordingly.

Write the child's name on outdoor clothing and boots. Pull any outdoor clothing from the knapsack so it is readily available at dressing time.

Toys from Home

We ask that children do not bring toys from home. We do however encourage items from nature for inclusion on the science table and recyclable materials for creative projects.

Playground

It is our intention to have outdoor play whenever possible. Parents will read and sign our playground policy. As parent assistants you are asked to be vigilant in the supervision on the playground. Children and adults are not to go on the rocks. The climber is closed when the ground is frozen.

Pick Up Time

Collect artwork and knapsacks from the classroom before coming to the playground to get your child at the end of the program. Please leave only by the south gate where staff will say goodbye and you will sign out your child. Once signed out your child is your legal responsibility. Children will be released only to adults for whom we have written permission.

Communication

Parent communication is important to us. Call with any questions or concerns. We are available most Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for telephone calls or parent interviews. We welcome interviews at any time during the school year. Please book these in advance to ensure we are available. Three newsletters will be published over the year. Notices are posted on the bulletin board as well. Please keep staff up to date with any changes to phone numbers, immunization or other personal information.

Designated Place of Safety

In the event that we need to vacate the premises for any reason, the designated place of safety is 704 Brierwood Avenue.

Special Services

We integrate children with special needs into our program with the support of Children's Integration Support Services. Our facility is wheelchair accessible. Sign language is an integral part of our program.

Guide For Participating Parents

You will be assisting in the classroom on a rotational basis. This guide is to help you enjoy your “duty day”. We want you to feel relaxed, to observe the children in their relationships, and to be an extra pair of useful hands, feet and eyes.

Within a flexible framework, the first hour of the session is indoor free-play, followed by tidy up time (children helping), bathroom, snack and circle and dressing for the final play period in the playground.

We suggest you:

1. Wear comfortable, washable clothes and dress for playground supervision.
2. During free-play you will be given a specific area to oversee. Please feel free to trade areas with another adult, but please don't leave an area unsupervised.
3. Tidy areas as needed, preferably with the children's help, so as to be attractive for good play.
4. Sit low on chairs or the floor so you are at eye level with the children. Help them with their activities but do not dominate the play.
5. Teaching is done within the context of the children's play. Our job is to sensitively watch for the moment to interject a comment or question that will further extend interest and lead the child to discover new possibilities in the use of materials and her experience of them. If a child keeps pounding play dough you might comment on how hard he is pounding and ask what he thinks will happen if he rolled or patted it. You may then be able to follow up by getting him to investigate different lengths, talk about snakes or what an “S” looks like.
6. One basic rule is that none of the adults in the school do what the children are not allowed to do. For instance we do not sit on the tabletops or on the rocks in the playground.
7. Children learn from us. In speaking to the children a confident tone gives confidence, a gentle tone gives calmness, but an angry tone gives frustration.
8. Remember not to talk about your own child or other children in front of them. They take in much more than we sometimes think they do. Please respect the confidentiality of all families in our school.