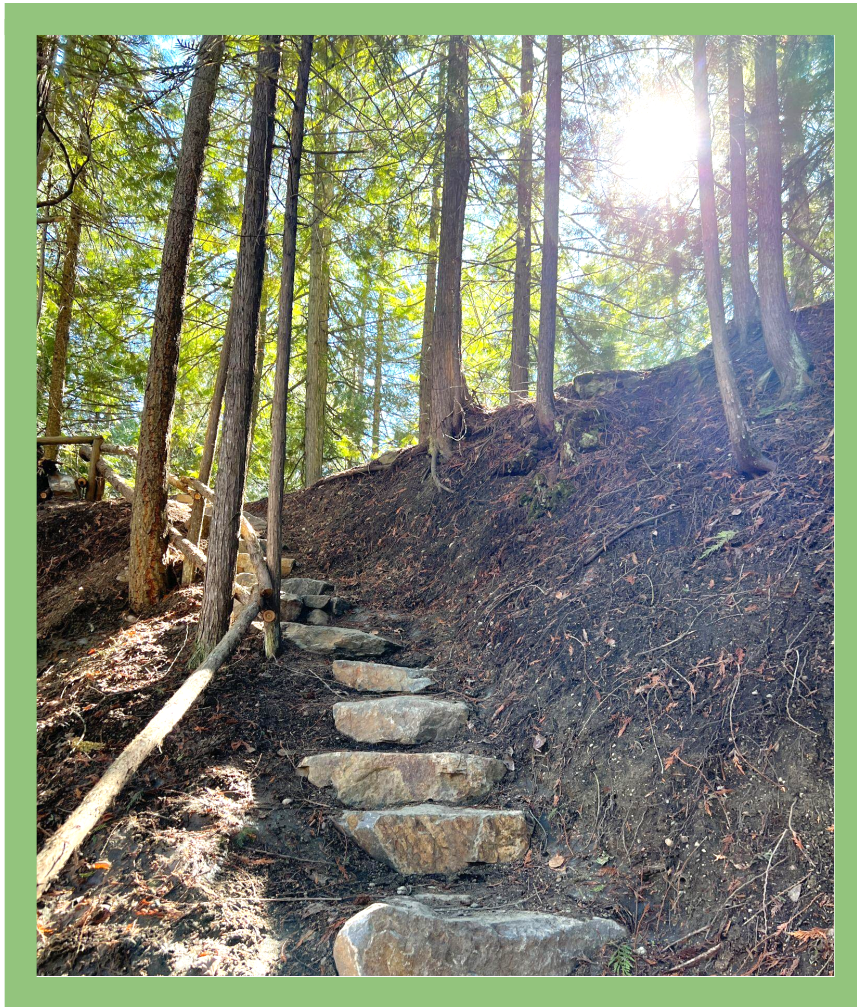


Family Guidebook 2025/26



"A healthy social life is found only when, in the mirror of each soul, the whole community finds its reflection, and when, in the whole community, the virtue of each one is living."

-Rudolf Steiner

General School Information

Early Years Centre

730 Whitevale Road
Lumby, BC V0E2G7

Phone: 250.547.9212 (Main Office) extension 109 for EYC Office

Email: info@bridgeeducational.org or ecmanager@bridgeeducational.org

Main Admin Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00AM to 4:00PM (September – June)
 Monday - Friday 9:00AM to 3:00PM (July – August)

EYC Hours: Monday - Friday 7:30AM to 5:30PM (Closed Stat Holidays)

*Please see EYC Calendar for monthly early closure dates as well as full closure dates.



"Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves, to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility - these three forces are the very nerve of education."

-Rudolf Steiner

Table of Contents

General School Information	2
Table of Contents	3
Welcome to the Early Years Centre	4
Mission Statement	4
Vision Statement	4
Waldorf Education	4
WECAN – Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America	4
The Bridge Educational Society Organizational Structure	5
Spirit of Engagement	7
Policy and Protocols	9
Communication	9
Grievance Management Policy	10
EYC Financial Agreement and Policies	12
Behaviour Guidance	14
Mindful Media Policy	17
Mindful Clothing Policy	18
Health & Wellness Agreements	20
Absences	22
Toys & Pets Agreement	22
Parking Lot Protocol	22
School Closure Protocol	23
Incident or Accident Reporting	23
Emergency Management	23
School Culture Information	24
Parent Lending Library	24
Birthday Celebrations	24
Festivals	24
Photography	26
Early Years Centre Rhythms and Routines	26
Overview	26
Calendar Year	27
Scheduled Play Time	27
EYC Toileting Support	27
Scheduled Rest Time	28
Snacks and Lunches	28
Drop off and Pick up	28
Verses by Rudolf Steiner	30



Welcome to the Early Years Centre

The Early Years Centre Family Guidebook explains policy and structures, and provides information about the unique delivery of Waldorf Education in the early years. It serves as a guide during your family's time at the childcare centre. The policies and procedures described here support the mission and vision of our society, and build integrity, trust, and respect among all members of our community. We share these institutional expectations of conduct, professionalism, and communication to ensure healthy programming and relationships. Please take time to familiarize yourself with this guide and refer to it as necessary throughout your time here. Parents agree to support these standards with their children in all programs their children attend.

Mission Statement

Connecting, nourishing and growing together.

Vision Statement

We offer Waldorf education through purposeful experiences on The Bridge Land for Learning. We seek to uncover the full potential of each person so they may freely carry out their lives with courage and purpose. We strive to foster positive social and ecological growth.

Waldorf Education

Waldorf programs strive to educate the whole human being in a healthy and balanced manner. Waldorf schools and early childhood programs around the world base their educational philosophies on the insights of Austrian philosopher, scientist and educator Dr. Rudolf Steiner.

Waldorf educators work with the conviction that childhood is sacred; that children learn naturally when the curriculum meets their developmental needs; that children's imaginations need to be nurtured and protected; and that students should be engaged through active and thoughtful participation in their learning. We emphasize the importance of children finding joy in learning by experiencing wonder, awe, and reverence for the world around them.

For more information, please visit our website at www.bridgeeducational.org

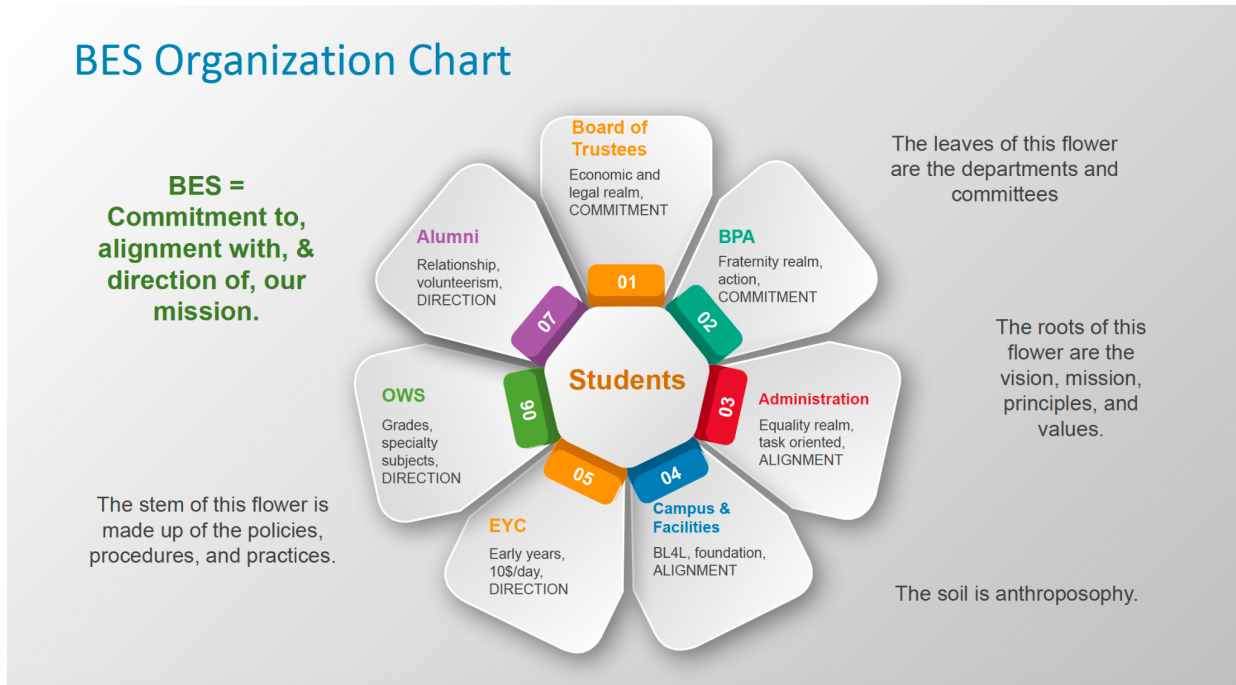
WECAN – Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America

The Early Years Centre is proud to be an Associate member of WECAN. The WECAN mission is to foster a new cultural impulse for the work with the young child from pre-birth to age seven. Based on an anthroposophical understanding of human development, WECAN is committed to protecting and nurturing childhood as a foundation for renewing human culture (WECAN, n.d). WECAN provides direct dialogue with early childhood educators and their colleagues about the programs they design in institutions and in homes, and about how they define and develop their roles and their work with

parents. Site visits, regional gatherings, and conferences allow WECAN to research and harvest the current needs of programs in the vast geography of the USA and Canada.

The Bridge Educational Society Organizational Structure

The Early Years Centre functions through the joint efforts of the Administration and Facilities Team, Faculty, Board of Trustees, Alumni, and the Bridge Parent Association.



The composition and responsibilities of these bodies are as follows:

Administration & Facilities

The administrative staff provides the infrastructure and logistical support for the activities of the childcare centre and the OWS school. Together they are responsible for the smooth operation in the areas of finance, enrollment, development, outreach, and general operations, including facilities management. Each administrative staff member plays a role in the overall function of the society and acts as a point of contact for parents.

Administrative Directors are the key positions responsible to the Board of Trustees. At The BES there are two Directors: Director of Administration/Business and Director of Education.

The Early Years Centre Operational Administration is run by a Manager who is responsible for the day to day operations of the EYC.

Faculty

The faculty of the EYC consists of all educators and program support staff. The faculty is responsible to provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children. The faculty comply with Child Care Licensing Regulation at all times. Educators are responsible for all pedagogical program development (in alignment with *WECAN* membership), curriculum standards, mentorship, peer evaluations, and family and child support. In addition, the faculty holds a responsibility for parent education and connection through parent meetings, and maintaining relationships within the larger Waldorf community.

Faculty members are individuals who are deeply committed to the health and well-being of our programs. Beyond tending to the above responsibilities, faculty members actively study and strive to further develop their understanding of the growing child as they also continue to deepen their academic methods.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees works in collaboration with the faculty and administration to ensure that the mission of the society is carried out in accordance with our bylaws and agreed-upon goals and objectives. The Board is responsible for overseeing the business aspects of the school, including all financial, legal, and property matters. The Board is composed of educators, parents, and community members. The Board meets on a monthly basis. Agendas and minutes are available in the Administrative Office. The Annual General Meeting of the Board of Trustees, in which all community members are encouraged to attend, is held in the Fall of each year. This is when new on-coming Board members are approved by the Society at large.

Board Mandated Committees

Committees are task groups of the Board. The Board oversees the invitation, function, and reporting of the committees. Current BES Committees are:

- Campus Development Committee
 - Grounds Committee
 - Forest Action Committee
 - Garden Committee
- Finance Committee
 - Fund Development Committee

Bridge Parent Association

All parents of children enrolled in programs at EYC are automatically members of the Bridge Parent Association (BPA) and may participate in the meetings and activities, as well as access the minutes of this group. The Bridge Parent Association follows approved Operating Protocols (bylaws).

When working in collaboration for a common purpose, the Centre and the parents form a powerful team with far reaching positive effects on the children and the entire school community. The Bridge Parent Association provides a vital and much appreciated service to the entire BES community. The BPA supports the decisions and policies of the Board and administration.

The BPA is a place where parents from both EYC and OWS can develop projects together, take part in parent education opportunities and participate in meaningful activities that support the health of the community. The BPA aims to foster an inclusive and robust spirit of engagement, which has the added benefit of allowing parents to get familiar with each other, and positive social relationships can ensue.

Alumni

The Alumni are our community experts. These valuable community members have been directly impacted by our efforts and have much to share back as a result. We value maintaining connections with our Alumni through celebrating their achievements, offering volunteer opportunities and engagement through festivals and events, and include them in our newsletters recipient list to ensure they get first hand information about job opportunities. See more about this program below.

Spirit of Engagement

The power of community lies in becoming involved. Just as our students discover daily that success depends on collaboration, caring for others, inclusivity, and continuity of purpose – the strength of our organization depends on the contributions of all of those who benefit from Waldorf Education and what our campus offers. We are grateful to our actively engaged community of involved parents, grandparents, and friends of our programs who support us through volunteerism and philanthropy.

At the Early Years Centre there are many ways to get involved. Two automatic opportunities are Society Membership and Volunteerism.

Society Membership

Membership to the society gives you the opportunity to positively impact the educational services provided by The BES through participation at the AGM and through volunteerism.

Community awareness and contribution, as well as environmental stewardship, are fundamental aspects in the Society's mission and are integrated into our educational programs. When your child sees you helping, they are learning in these areas at an even deeper level.

Volunteerism

Parent participation is an integral part of the BES experience and builds a thriving community both socially and financially. We ask that you give willingly of your time to help as needed at a variety of seasonal fundraisers. Parents can make a significant impact in the society's success, and strengthen their own connection to the society, by helping within the community.

It is on the steam power of community collaboration and contribution that The Bridge Educational Society has been built, and continues to grow and thrive. Our expansive campus and growing student body create an ever-scrolling list of things to be done. Incorporating volunteerism can help us economize and make more meaningful opportunities possible. These projects and tasks are disseminated through the different committees and groups, and subsequent volunteer opportunities are shared through the newsletter.

Some examples of ways to get involved include, but are not limited to:

- Participate in work parties
- Sign up to work at a festival
- Sign up to work at an event
- Write thank you cards on behalf of the Society
- Contribute items to the Children's Store in December
- Wooden toy repair
- Festival craft preparations
- Accept assigned specific grounds, woodwork or maintenance tasks as needed



Please know that every set of hands and every contribution is profoundly appreciated and makes a difference!

Policy and Protocols

We believe that transparency and collaboration are the key to a community's success. At EYC we collaborate to create policies with various stakeholders in mind and in response to various regulations and guidelines for child care centres in BC. In policy writing we include the voices of our employees as much as possible and review the contents of our policy suite regularly. To access the EYC policy suite specifically, you can request this at the Administrative office.

The role of policies and protocols is to uphold our shared agreements. They simultaneously define and guide the way so that we can provide consistency and transparency in operations. When we work at or have our children enrolled at EYC, we agree to uphold all policies of the Centre.

We have collected some relevant policies to share with you below. For more information, or to see other policies, please speak to the Receptionist in the Main Administration Office.

Communication

Your direct link to BES and to EYC is your Class Lead Teacher. This person can help you find the information you need. Begin your communication journey with your Class Lead Teacher.

At Bridge Educational Society Programs (OWS and EYC) we embrace and nurture warm, honest, and open communication. We value connection, transparency and shared responsibility. This policy outlines the protocols for communication with this in mind.

Communication Guidelines

- Maintain a willingness to use compassionate communication without blame and to practice respectful thinking, listening, speaking and acting.
- Strive toward inclusivity in your interactions, activities and social gatherings (and in your child's interactions, activities and social gatherings. We are models to our children.)
- Bring any concerns to faculty or administration in an explicit, timely, and constructive way using guidelines from the BES Grievance Management Policy.
- When applicable, direct another person's statement or question about someone else back to the original source.
- Suggest a better time and/or place for a particular conversation to occur.
- Bring any issues that need addressing in an appropriate space and time and never during class time with or about the person in question.
- Remind each other to speak from the 'I'. (Speak for yourself; not for a group unless specifically delegated this responsibility)
- Recognize that we are each ambassadors of Bridge Educational Society when we speak about the Organization in the wider community.

Email Communication Protocol

Email is a tool for arrangements, confirmations, and information sharing. We do not address complaints or resolve conflicts on email. Email communication is to be used for relaying routine information pertaining to school and class business, and not used for student specific information or issues needing discussion.

Cell Phone Communication Protocol (Phone or Text)

Cell phone use is prohibited within the classroom/child care room in front of children unless required for extenuating circumstances (such as a sick child/family member at home or awaiting a very important phone call). In this situation, however, phone calls should be taken outside of the room whenever possible. Photographs may not be taken by cell phones without approval by the Lead Educator who is aware of permissions in this area. Texting is reserved for emergencies while in the classroom or on school events.

PDF of full Communication Policy [HERE](#)

Grievance Management Policy

At Bridge Educational Society Programs (OWS and EYC) we embrace and nurture warm, honest, and open communication. We value connection, transparency and shared responsibility. This policy outlines the differences between types of communication, and the procedure aimed at conflict resolution.

Definitions

The Bridge Educational Society recognises that not all concerns are grievances. Faculty, staff, parents or community members more often have a question that needs to be worked out. Sometimes comments or concerns are questions in the making. The following are BES's definitions of types of communication:

Comment: A verbal or written remark expressing an opinion or reaction. An example might be 'The EYC program is requesting we provide very specific outerwear items'.

Concern: A cause of anxiety or worry. An example might be 'The program is requesting we provide very specific outerwear that is expensive, this is not in my family's budget right now'.

Question: An inquiry made to elicit information about something specific. An example might be 'Why is the quality of my child's gear so important to the program?'

Grievance: An official statement of a complaint over perceived unfair treatment. An example might be 'I spoke to my child's lead educator about my concern. I don't feel like my concern was heard and I am struggling to communicate this to the educator.'

At the BES Programs we support resolution of grievances through a process called Grievance Management.

Grievance Management General Information

If you have a comment, concern or question please speak to your class teacher who will either be able to help you find resolution or direct you to another resource. In addition to your class teacher as a first step, below is a description of your leadership team member's areas of work. They are always ready to answer your questions.

Main Office Administrator

- Enrollment & OWS Re-Commitment
- OWS New & Returning Enrollment
- Absence & Late Arrival Reporting
- Newsletter
- My Ed

EYC Manager

- Policy, Health & Safety
- EYC HR Admin
- Programming
- ECE Licensing
- EYC Registration & Enrollment

Business Director

- Tuition & Invoicing
- Family Accounts & Payments
- School Budget Transparency
- ACCB

Director of Education & Principal OWS

- Curriculum & Programming
- Reporting
- Policy, Health and Safety
- OWS HR Admin

BES Board Chair

- Strategic Plan

Facilities Manager

- Bridge Land for Learning use

Grievance Management Procedures

The BES/OWS encourages direct and compassionate communication. Parents, teachers and staff are encouraged to speak directly to the person with whom they have a conflict or question. This may be done via telephone or in person. Notes will be taken and shared between those concerned in order to ensure the content of the meeting, telephone or in-person, is accurate. Email communication is not the place to share concerns or difficult questions and is reserved for transport of information and appointment setting only, as per BES Communication Policy. The BES aims to use thoughtful, truthful and compassionate communication. Therefore, communication must be free of aggressive, threatening or

inappropriate language. Should this kind of language enter a meeting, the meeting will be ended immediately and rescheduled with additional support.

Parent to Employee

In the event that a parent has a grievance against an employee, they will follow the steps below;

1. The parent is encouraged to have a conversation with the person directly as soon as a situation arises.
2. If a resolution is not reached in step 1, the Director of the program mediates between the parent and the employee as soon as possible within 1 week of the grievance. Extreme circumstances will take priority.
3. If a resolution has not been reached in steps 1 & 2, the Director offers the parent a Grievance Management Form to fill out. The GMF is forwarded to the full HR Committee (Two Board members and the Directors) and a decision is made on how to further proceed within 2 weeks of the initial grievance.
4. In the event that the parent is filing the complaint against one of the Directors, another faculty member may step in to fill that role for said grievance.
5. In rare situations, an ombudsperson may be called upon for mediation purposes.
6. In the case that the family or employee chooses to leave the school, an exit interview will be conducted by HR Committee members. The HR Committee will be responsible for a full report to the Faculty, Staff, and Board.

PDF of full Grievance Management Policy [HERE](#)

EYC Financial Agreement and Policies

During your child's enrollment at the Early Years Centre financial agreements are considered binding. Refusal to adhere to them will result in termination of enrollment agreements. Upon enrollment in The Early Years Centre, currently part of the Government Funded \$10 a Day Child Care Initiative, fees listed below will be due.

Full details of all financial responsibilities can be found in your Financial Agreement or contact the Business Manager's office at accounts@bridgeeducational.org.

- **Enrollment Fees:**
 - *Membership Fee:* Annual Society Membership dues run from July 1st to June 30th. A \$25 membership fee is due with enrollment paperwork. *This fee is per family.*
 - *Child Care Fees:* Payments are due on the 1st of each month, with the first month's fee required before the first day of care. Invoices will be issued five days before the due date. Please contact us promptly with any invoice or account inquiries upon receipt.
 - *Late Pick-Up Fees:* A charge of \$1.00 per minute will be applied to your account for late pick-ups beyond 5:30 p.m.

- **Affordable Child Care Benefit:** The Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB) is a government assistance program designed to alleviate child care costs by providing direct payments to the Child Care Provider. Families can manage their ACCB applications, renewals, and track progress using [My Family Services](#). Note: The ACCB does not cover registration fees.

Note: Coverage terms are subject to change without notice and are communicated monthly upon submission of our claim. Please be aware that you are responsible for renewing your ACCB claim and for any child care fees in the event of ACCB coverage changes or cancellations.

- **Withdrawal and Refund Policy**

Family Withdrawal - Full Length Programs:

To withdraw from full length programs at the Early Years Centre, a written notice must be submitted by the 1st of the month, effective for the end of that month. Failure to provide this one-month notice will result in responsibility for an additional month of child care fees. All withdrawal notices must be emailed to ecmanager@bridgeeducational.org and accounts@bridgeeducational.org by the 1st of the month preceding the anticipated withdrawal month. If withdrawal occurs after advance payments have been made, a 30-day notice is required for any refund processing.

Family Withdrawal - Short Term Programs (Parent and Child):

For short-term Parent and Child programs, fees are non-refundable after the program start date. Cancellations prior to the start date are eligible for a full refund. To withdraw from short term programs at the Early Years Centre, a written notice must be provided to ecmanager@bridgeeducational.org and accounts@bridgeeducational.org no later than one full week before the first session. Failure to provide this notice within the stated timeframe will result in forfeiture of the full program fee.

The Bridge Educational Society Withdrawal of Care:

If a child's enrolment is withdrawn by *The Bridge Educational Society*, any fees paid in advance will be refunded on a pro-rated basis, based on the withdrawal date provided in the official notice. In cases requiring immediate withdrawal due to safety concerns, fees will be refunded up to and including the child's final day of attendance.

Note: The annual membership fee is non-refundable, regardless of the withdrawal date. Refunds will be issued within 30 days of the child's final day, following reconciliation of all account balances.

- **Closures:** The Early Years Centre recognizes all BC holidays and will be closed for the following: New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, BC Day, Labour Day, Truth and Reconciliation Day, Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Christmas Day and Boxing Day as well as Easter Monday and the week between Christmas and New Years and one week during the summer.

On rare occasions the EYC, or parts of the EYC, may close due to unforeseen circumstances

such as power outages, staffing shortage or at the recommendation of Interior Health. We appreciate your understanding in these circumstances and will strive to provide as much notice as possible. Please see your Financial Agreement for more information about the financial implications of EYC closures.

- **Arrears:** To ensure the sustainability of the Early Years Centre, it is crucial that families fulfill their financial obligations. The Board of Trustees and the Finance Committee have approved the following arrears policy:
 - Effective when an account is 15 days past due:
 - *First Notice* (15 Days Late): A First Notice will be issued for any amount overdue by 15 days. Families will receive an email reminder of the due date.
 - *Second Notice* (30 Days Late): If the outstanding amount is not paid within 15 days of the First Notice, a Second Notice will be sent.
 - Accounts that are 30 days in arrears will face the following options:
 - *Payment in Full:* Pay the outstanding amount within 5 days of the Second Notice (35 days overdue) to bring the account current, including any new amounts owing.
 - *Withdrawal:* Failure to make payment will result in automatic withdrawal of the child from the program. To resume care, the family must settle all outstanding amounts and reapply for enrollment, subject to availability.

PDF of full EYC Financial Agreement and Policies [HERE](#)

Behaviour Guidance

Policy Framework

Learning appropriate social behaviour is an essential part of the early years. Our educators provide daily opportunities for children to practice and strengthen their social-emotional capacities.

This policy is grounded in the BC Early Learning Framework, the ECEBC Code of Ethics, Inclusion BC, Universal Design for Learning, and Waldorf principles of reverence, rhythm, and relationship.

We recognize that cultural and family contexts influence children's behaviour and communication, and we approach guidance with cultural humility, openness, and respect. Together, these values and frameworks guide our daily practice of behaviour guidance in every classroom.

Our Approach to Developmental Care

Educators at the Early Years Centre are trained specialists in Infant & Toddler care, Three-to-Five development, and Waldorf pedagogy. Educators receive ongoing professional

development in positive behaviour guidance, trauma-informed practice, and inclusive care, including participation in provincial initiatives such as *Behaviour in the Early Years*.

We take a whole-child approach, considering social, emotional, physical, cognitive, nutritional, developmental, and behavioural needs. Observation, documentation, and team collaboration ensure care is responsive and thoughtful.

When needed, in-house support plans are developed with families as partners to ensure consistency between home and Centre. Daily and seasonal rhythms, as well as access to our sensory room, help children find balance and regulation.

Protocols and Procedures

We recognize that behaviour is a form of communication. Our role is to listen for the underlying need and to guide children toward safe, constructive ways of expressing themselves. Educators respond with calm, consistency, and reflection, always upholding dignity and inclusion. Families can expect direct and compassionate communication, with practices that respect each child's individuality.

Step 1: Educator Response

Preventive Environmental Design

Our environments are thoughtfully designed to reduce stressors and support regulation. Predictable rhythms, smooth transitions, and consistent staffing help children feel secure. Educators also adjust sensory factors such as noise, light, and group size to maintain balance and reduce triggers before they arise.

Educator Response

When a child exhibits negative, oppositional, threatening, or harmful behaviour, educators respond with calm presence, ensuring safety and guiding the child toward regulation and reconnection. Responses may include, but are not limited to:

- Staying calm and intervening as necessary to ensure safety.
- Acknowledging the behaviour and providing clear, positive guidance.
- Allowing time for the child to respond and regulate.
- Repeating or rephrasing the guidance, if needed.
- Supporting the child in communicating or meeting their needs in an alternate way.
- Redirecting with an alternate activity or idea.
- Supporting the child, as developmentally appropriate, to repair harm (e.g., checking on another child, helping to clean up, etc.).

When ratios, environment, and rhythm allow, educators may also:

- Engage an alternate educator to provide one-to-one support.
- Offer an alternate space for regulation (calm corner, sensory room, or indoors if returning from the forest, etc.).
- Use sensory room equipment as a planned support or immediate calming intervention.

The Lead Educator initiates parent communication if escalation requires family involvement, with the EYC Manager assisting when available. If immediate safety is at risk, the EYC Manager or designate may be summoned for additional support.

Step 2 - Parent Support

Inclusion must be meaningful, sustainable, and beneficial. If a child's experience becomes primarily supervision rather than engagement, educators may call parents. This will happen when:

- Behaviour compromises ratios or group safety.
- The child has a third incident of bodily harm/verbal attack in one day.
- The child requires 1:1 support for more than 20 consecutive minutes.

When possible, the EYC Manager supports the call and communication. If parents cannot arrive within 45 minutes, an authorized pick-up or emergency contact will be requested.

Pre-discussed early check-ins may also be arranged to support regulation and dignity.

Ongoing Conversations and Support Planning

We recognize that every child grows and changes during their time with us. Conversations about behaviour, regulation, and development are ongoing throughout enrolment and may evolve through several levels of collaboration:

Collaboration evolves at three levels:

- **Parent-led conversations** – Families share insights, observations, and hopes.
- **Lead and team collaboration** – Teaching team aligns strategies and develops in-house plans.
- **Lead Educator, EYC Manager, and Family partnership** – Meetings deepen the conversation, reflect on progress, and consider additional tools together. A Support Plan is Created. Support plans are reviewed with families and educators every 6–8 weeks, or sooner if needed, to assess progress and refine strategies. Documentation and shared reflection ensure consistency and accountability.

When challenges continue, the Centre may recommend support from NONA, the SCD Program, Interior Health, or other partners.

Step 3: Additional Supports

When frequent harmful behaviour, significant dysregulation, or developmental delays are present, families are invited to collaborate on next steps. The Centre may recommend:

- Referral to NONA, SCD, or Interior Health services (speech, occupational therapy, etc.).
- On-site observation and consultation with specialists.
- Trialling and adapting recommended strategies.
- Access to resources such as CCRR, FRC, WECAN, ECEBC, and NOYFSS.

Strategies are reviewed regularly with families and consultants. If ratios, staffing, or rhythm do not allow certain strategies, adaptations will be made to protect safety and program balance.

The Centre is committed to inclusion and will make every reasonable effort to support each child, including consultation with parents and outside agencies (e.g., SCD). However, if a child's needs cannot be met within the program, or if their behaviour presents ongoing safety risks, the Centre reserves the right to withdraw care. Families will be provided with reasonable notice, unless immediate safety concerns require otherwise.

PDF of full Behaviour Guidance Policy [HERE](#)

Mindful Media Policy

As an integral part of its mission, BES Programs (OWS and EYC) take a strong stance against the exposure of children to television, videos, computers, tablets and other electronic devices that undermine and work directly against the healthy growth of essential learning capacities in the formative years of childhood. We recognize that student use of cell-phones, tablets, gaming devices, iphones, ipads, itouches, smart watches and other electronic devices are distracting, disruptive, and counterproductive to the culture of learning in a Waldorf setting and the healthy social environment we strive to create for the children.

Students shall not bring any such electronic devices to BES Programs or events. If such a device is inadvertently brought to childcare/school, the teacher shall hold it for safekeeping and it shall be returned to the parent or guardian at the end of the day. Students shall not bring such devices to school events (regardless of whether they are held on or off campus) including festivals, camping trips, and Parent Association led events.

Bridge Educational Society programs provide children with a unique haven away from the pervasiveness of such devices, and many parents choose to enroll their children for precisely that reason. Parents are asked to adhere to this policy by reducing exposure to screens and media for children, to the fullest extent possible and to be mindful of their own use of electronic devices while on school grounds or at school functions.

Early Childhood - Early Years Centre (EYC)

BES recommends that a child in EYC programs not be exposed to any electronic media in daily life. Exposure to radio and recorded music is best limited and age-appropriate. The younger the child, the more vitally important this is. We recommend no use of media, particularly on nights preceding and following program days. We are very grateful for your support in creating an electronic-device-free sanctuary for young children. This includes no adult use of cell phones within the Early Years Centre play yard, classrooms, and immediate campus surrounding program spaces.

Middle Childhood - Okanagan Waldorf School (OWS)

BES recommends that a child in OWS programs should not be exposed to any electronic media or use electronic devices on days preceding program days. Educators use personal devices outside of class times and with great discretion as necessary during school hours. An exception is made in our Grade 4 & 7 classrooms for FSA purposes, and Grades 6+ middle school classrooms where screen use can be used when necessary to enhance curricular concepts, including but not limited to a Cyber Civics course. We are very grateful for your support in creating an electronic-device-limited sanctuary for children.

PDF of full Mindful Media Policy [HERE](#)

Mindful Clothing Policy

This policy serves to provide guidelines around clothing that encourage the safety, joy and focus of students.

Overview: Weather

The Early Years Centre is a place of active work and play. Children play outdoors every day for at least an hour in all types of weather. To allow the child to experience nature and the elements in an enjoyable, open way, proper clothing is extremely important; therefore, we ask that all children be dressed according to the forecast. Since the temperature can fluctuate greatly over the period of a day your child should arrive with additional layers for all day comfort. A sweater can always be removed when your child becomes too warm.

Children are required to wear a hat when playing outside throughout the year. Please provide a cloth, fully-brimmed sun hat for the fall and spring and a warm winter hat that covers the ears for the winter months.

Overview: Logo/image-free

The Early Years Centre is a logo-free zone. We make this choice for several reasons; we notice that

logos present distraction in a place where focus is a priority, and we want to alleviate competition that can arise when some children have 'coveted' brands and some do not. We set the size criteria for logos and images at *no bigger than a fist* so that it is easy to remember. We include clothing, backpacks, and lunch bags in the zone.

Clothing Checklist:

Clothing worn to school should be:

- Neat and in good repair – no holes
- Free from graphic images, logos (OWS logo wear is acceptable), brands, advertising, or large writing - remember, *no bigger than a fist!*
- Appropriate for the weather (layered for changeable weather)
- Suited to active play and experiential learning

Coverage requirements:

For tops

- All tops should cover shoulders for maximum sun protection as children spend a large portion of their day outside
- Midriff must be covered even with arms raised above the head

For bottoms

- Shorts and skirts must be below fingertip-length for all genders
- Shorts under skirts

Shoes:

- Athletic shoes that lace up below the ankle and socks are ideal for a full day at school (both for indoor and outdoor shoes, boots for rain or snow outdoors).
- During the hotter months, closed-toe sandals and shoes worn without socks are acceptable (both for indoor or outdoor).
- Avoid shoes that have lights, wheels, or other distractions.
- Ensure shoes are comfortable and enjoyable for the wearer before they are brought to school.

Note: All students in the school require a pair of designated indoor shoes at all times.

For cold weather:

- Hats
- Gloves/mittens
- Sweaters

- Coats/Jackets
- Boots

Additional expectations:

- No make-up or unnatural hair colour
- No hats worn inside unless required by religious practice. Kerchiefs may be worn.
- No jewelry unless required by religious practice. Stud earrings are OK.
- Watches for third grade and up must be analog (dial faces), not digital (this is to assist the child's curriculum and learning of analog time).

We ask that parents support their child to take home soggy, dirty items on rainy or snowy days. Send replacements right away. Wash and return borrowed clothing as soon as possible. Children who get cold easily may need to keep a sweater at school. Hats are required for outdoor play throughout the year. All spare clothing, outerwear and boots should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Sunscreen should be applied at home. Sunscreen waiver can be accessed [HERE](#) or in the EYC Administration office.

Labelled diapers, wipes and cream can be brought to remain at the centre. Educators will notify you when more is needed.

PDF of full Mindful Clothing Policy [HERE](#)

Health & Wellness Agreements

Please be diligent about updating files in the Main Office. When phone numbers, addresses, emergency contacts, or health insurance information changes during the year we want to ensure we have this updated information.

Illness

Mandated by Interior Health, BES is required to post the occurrence of any communicable diseases. This includes strep throat, head lice, pinworms, chicken pox, pink eye, etc. Communicable diseases require treatment before the child can return to school. The child may require medical clearance.

If a student becomes ill during the school day, the parents will be called to arrange pick up of the child as soon as possible. Please note that the Centre does not have accommodations for students to rest while ill at school. We ask that parents/guardians be diligent about updating files in the Main Office including phone numbers, address, emergency contacts, or health insurance information.

Please observe the following guidelines where applicable:

- Caregivers will not administer medicines to provide relief from pain or other illness (unless

prescribed by a physician) to be able to attend care. If your child is ill they should remain in the restful care of a guardian or parent until symptoms are stable.

- Do not bring sick children to school. If your child has an excessively runny nose, sore throat, heavy cough, headache, stomach ache, nausea, or fever (temperature above normal within the previous 24 hours), arrange to have the child stay home or to be cared for elsewhere. The child may return to school 24 hours after the last major symptoms (including fever) subside. For cases of gastrointestinal illness, the child may return to care 48 hours after the last symptom.
- Children with communicable conditions (strep throat, head lice, pinworms, pink eye, chicken pox, scabies, etc.) are not allowed in school. Re-admittance of a child who had parasites will be possible upon proof of treatment, including any prescribed waiting period, should one be designated by a physician or the public health department.

In the event a doctor-prescribed medicine (including herbal remedies) needs to be administered during the school day, parents must fill out a [Consent to Administer Medication Form](#).

Medical Concerns

In the event that doctor-prescribed, or over-the-counter medicine including herbal remedies, need to be administered during care at the Centre for short term health concerns, please follow EYC procedures for administering medication. Procedures for administering medication include the following provisions:

- A Consent to Administer Medication Form is completed and submitted to the Program Lead Teacher (this will be sent to parents on DocHub);
- The medication, including herbal and homeopathic remedies, is provided in the original container; and,
- The parent brings the medicine directly to the Program Lead Teacher

For known medical conditions that require the administering of medication during care at the Centre, parents must fill out a [Medical Permission Form for Non-Life Threatening Conditions](#). Documents will be sent via DocHub.

Lice

Although lice is inconvenient and uncomfortable, it does not pose a threat to health. If lice is identified at school, parents will be notified at the end of the day. We ask that parents take the necessary steps to ensure that lice is removed according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Lice Treatment Guide](#).

If a teacher suspects a risk to other students in the class, an email note will be distributed with linked instructions.

Absences

Call or email the Main Office (250-547-9212 ext. 1, or 'program'@bridgeeducational.org (eg. marigold@bridgeeducational.org) to report absences for children.

Planned Absence

For a planned absence, please notify the Lead Teacher of your child's program. Excessive/long term absences run the risk of the child being denied ACCB funding. Please refer to your ACCB contract.

Toys & Pets Agreement

We ask that your child leave personal toys and belongings, other than those requested to be at school by your child's teacher, at home. Toys from home can become very distracting to the young child in their day and can create tension for your child as they rightly feel possessive with ownership of such toys.

We ask that pets who attend pick up or drop off do so at the end of a leash, lead line, or in a pet carrier and remain in the parking areas away from school grounds. We require that all contained pets are under the control of an adult at all times while on school property. We require that the adult supervise and guide meetings between pets and students. In the event that a student is injured by a pet, the owner of the animal is liable.

For agreements about bringing toys, personal belongings, or pets into the classroom for show & share, we ask that arrangements be made with the Class Teacher in advance.

Marked service dogs or dogs for other therapeutic purposes are allowed on campus with their owner or trainer. Please notify the office if you have a service dog.

Parking Lot Protocol

We ask for your help in keeping our campus, staff, students, and visitors safe in and around the parking areas. To that end, we ask that you be aware of the following parking lot guidelines:

- Enter and Exit the appropriate parking lot via the marked Entrance, and exit through the marked Exit;
- Adhere to posted speed limit signs;
- A reminder that cell phone use by drivers in a moving vehicle is prohibited;
- Park only in approved areas that are distinguished by gravel ground cover or cleared snow;
- Keep car radios at a low volume that cannot be heard outside the vehicle;
- Front-end angle parking is required of all vehicles to ensure safety while backing up;
- Use extreme caution while backing up;
- All children must be supervised, with an adult within reach, at all times in and around the parking lots; and, All trees that line the drive between the school and the parking lot are not for climbing, we ask that you assist us in reminding your children of this rule.

School Closure Protocol

In the event of an emergency, or due to inclement weather, the school may be closed for the day. In this case, an emergency email or phone call will be made to all families and the school Website will be updated with closure information.

In cold or snowy weather, the BES makes every effort to stay open. It is important that, even though the school may stay open in inclement weather, families make individual decisions about whether to transport to school based on the safety of their commute.

Staff Shortage EYC Program Closure

In the event of a staff shortage due to illness or other reasons, where there are insufficient educators available to cover all regular shifts in the Early Years Center, the following procedure will be implemented:

- One or more programs will be closed and available staffing resources will be reallocated to other programs; and,
- Families will be informed as soon as possible of the closure in their room, via phone call or email, by the EYC manager or delegate.

In the event of multiple days of short staff over a 2-week period we will close each program in succession (youngest to oldest) in order to lessen the impact of service interruption on any one group of families. This procedure would look like:

- One-day closure for Honeysuckle, then one-day closure for Sweet Pea, then one-day closure for Marigold, then one-day closure for Dandelion.
- If there is a period of more than 10 operational days with no closure, we will reset and the cycle of closures will begin again with the youngest (Honeysuckle) program.

Partial Refunds will be made when a service interruption prevents the child from attending child care for more than 15 consecutive days.

Incident or Accident Reporting

In the event of an incident or accident (any incident that causes bodily harm and requires first aid) an Incident Report or an Accident Report will be filled out and parents will be notified. The Parent will sign the report to acknowledge understanding of the incident or accident and a copy of the report will be placed in the student file.

Emergency Management

Written protocols for emergency drills and evacuation are located at each entrance of the EYC.

In the case of an evacuation, the children and faculty will travel to Muster Point #3: Main Parking Lot, SE corner, and contact parents from that site via emergency text/phone. If parents cannot be reached,

faculty will reach out to emergency contacts and pick-up contacts. In the event a parent or contact is unable to collect a child the caregiver will stay with the child and call MCFD for support.

In the event of an area evacuation, children will be transported by vehicle to the Vernon Recreation Centre. With a severe emergency we will be guided by those in authority such as the police and firefighters. We will make every effort to communicate with parents. We ask that parents remain alert and attentive to the EYC's communication regarding any emergency management instructions during an area emergency.

Emergency Information

Parents are to ensure that emergency information (e.g. student allergies, medications and contact names and phone numbers) is kept current at the EYC. Children's emergency information is kept in the EYC Administration Office, and in the Class Emergency Kit, which is also used for off-site excursions.

School Culture Information

Parent Lending Library

The Parent Lending Library is located in the Main Administration office beside the school store. Parents can sign books out according to the instructions found on the book shelf. There are many topics and several copies available. We encourage parents to read with a friend or start a book study. Don't see a Waldorf title that you'd like to read? Ask the Receptionist to put your title on the wish list and you'll be notified when the book is available.

Borrowing Time Limit: The time that a book can be signed out is limited to the school year (July to June), or if there is a hold on the book.

Fines: In mid May, the registrar/receptionist will contact any parents that have books signed out and let them know that they are required to return the books by May 24th. In the event that they are not returned the accounts department will add the cost of the book to their last invoice of the school year.

Birthday Celebrations

Birthdays or special day celebrations are celebrated each year for each child. Each teacher has a unique way of honoring your child at that time. Most often, a birthday story is told which, through the imagination, describes an understandable picture of the human birth experience. Your child's teacher may contact you to discuss the details.

Festivals

EYC marks the rhythms of the year through the changing seasons and the coming and going of festivals. Festivals are deeply fulfilling experiences for both young and old. Refer to the school

calendar for festival celebration dates. Please talk with your child's teacher if you wish to share your own traditions with your child's class. Festivals and Celebrations mark the culture of a people as mirrored in the changing landscape. The festivals chosen are dependent on the people who work and attend the school. Below are some of our past and present favourites:

Harvest Festival/Festival of Courage (September)

- Around the fall equinox, the Festival of Courage brings consciousness to the changing of the season and the attributes of the season: strength, courage, and clarity of thought. To celebrate the Harvest we share food. We prepare the potatoes or corn, walk to the garden to gather, sing, and share a blessing. We enjoy our warm baked meal from our garden, with butter, and some hot apple cider, by the warmth of a bonfire.

Enchanted Garden (October)

- This after-hours event is open to all students in our early childhood programs and those up to age 10. This 'Storybook Village' is created by parents for their children. Archetypal characters are stationed at 'houses' in the village. Characters may include the fisherman, the artist, the candlestick maker, miller, baker, farmer, or blacksmith. As the children stroll through the village hearing verses or stories from the characters they receive natural treasures from each stop along the way. The evening concludes with warm apple cider and fresh baked goods beside the bonfire.
- Halloween is best celebrated by family choice at home. The EYC does not include this event in our Festival calendar.

Lantern Walk (November)

- This is the festival of Compassion. We celebrate the inner light, which burns brighter as the days are getting shorter. In some of our programs, the children make unique lanterns to use during our evening lantern walk. Our lantern walk is open to the BES Community. Your child's program will share program specific details about participation.

Winter Garden (November/December)

- The Winter Garden is both a gift from the parents to the children and community as well as one of our most attended fundraisers. The Winter Garden Committee is responsible for organizing the event with support from the entire parent body. All parents participate by contributing to this festive event.

Spiral of Lights (early December)

- Celebrated by the early childhood and lower grades (as well as older students who wish to participate), the children walk an evergreen spiral to light their own candles and set them on the path. This beautiful ceremony makes outward the inner process of rekindling our inner lights during times of darkness. Our older students may assist in the event by playing music along with the early childhood

faculty. Many older students elect to walk the spiral path as well.

Candlemas (February)

- The celebration marks the beginning of the end of winter. Children create their own candles and holders to celebrate the warm light joining us soon. This event is typically held in house during school hours for children and staff only. Your child's classroom may choose to participate in this event.

Valentine's Day (February)

- Each program lead uses their discretion as to how the class will hold this day. *If* it is celebrated, the focus is on the virtues of love, peace and friendship. Candy is not allowed. Educators help celebrate with stories and craft.

May Festival (May)

- A festival celebrating the glories of spring. Dances are learned by each class. A family picnic follows the dancing celebration. Often there are several stations children may visit such as the donut tree, petting zoo, creating flower crowns, face painting, etc. There may also be a fundraiser held at this event. This festival is open to the BES community and their friends and family.

Photography

We understand that you want to capture the joy of your children's performance; however we kindly appeal to our audience not to take photos or record the performances. The activity of photographing or filming detracts from the experience and the focus of the children and audience. Being photographed or filmed changes the nature of the event into a performance that is being done for a device rather than for people. We strive to have the children and the audience experience and celebrate a live performance for the sake of joy and belonging. Further to this, we have children within our community whose parents have requested that they not be photographed for various reasons including the protection of privacy. We ask that you help us maintain consent or non-consent of photography for each student by not filming your child during a childcare activity. You may discuss with your Program Lead Teacher whether there can be opportunities for staged photograph opportunities, we ask that these arrangements be made in advance of activity.

Early Years Centre Rhythms and Routines

Overview

Children are carried along by the rhythms of the environment in which they live, from the cadence of breathing in their bodies, to the daily patterns of sleeping and waking. The yearly cycle of the seasons and the rhythmic procession of stars are part of life's experience. Children flourish when their daily activities are arranged rhythmically to reflect the natural order of life.

Thus, the Early Childhood activities flow with a sense of “breathing in” and “breathing out,” from the quiet moments of fairy tale and circle to the active moments of vigorous work and play. Activities the children are involved in during the day include creative play, circle, snack, outdoor play, and story time with a fairy tale, puppet play, or nature story. Typically, each class has a daily and weekly rhythm of activities and snacks, which vary each day but repeat from week to week. All transitions between the activities are graced with song. A schedule of daily activities is posted in each Early Childhood room.

Just as children are carried along by the regular rhythms of the school day, so too are they nourished by regular rhythms offered at home. As difficult as it is in these modern times to establish set meal-times and bedtimes, we strongly encourage you to do so. It is very important for young children to go to bed at the same time every night, and we recommend that this be no later than 8:00 pm. Please feel free to contact your caregiver if you would like some ideas for making this transition a successful one for parents and child. We encourage you to share your home rhythm with your Lead Educator if you feel it would be helpful.

Calendar Year

Our EYC year calendar can be found at www.bridgeducational.org under Our Community > Calendars > Early Years Centre > View Calendar, you can also subscribe to the Google Calendar. Each year our centre closes for one week in summer and one week in winter, as well as for occasional professional development opportunities for our staff members. This calendar contains our opening and closing dates, dates for celebrations and festivals as well as opportunities to participate in events such as our AGM. Please note our early dismissal dates and closing dates so you may find alternative care, if needed, in advance.

Scheduled Play Time

Care programs at the Early Years Centre include the following minimum active play opportunities for full-day care:

- 60 minutes outdoors
- 50 minutes free play indoors
- 20 minutes of active songs and circle or game times

These active play opportunities include facilitated play (circle time, games, obstacle courses, forest walks, household work), and un-facilitated (free play) times as described in each program's daily rhythm.

EYC Toileting Support

At the EYC, we support toilet learning once it has been initiated and is showing success at home. Our role is to build on this foundation by encouraging skill development in a supportive and respectful

approach. We understand that toilet learning is a process that can include steps forward and backward, and we believe there should be no shame associated with this journey. Open, ongoing communication with families is key to supporting children's emotional well-being. You can expect conversations from your child's educators about toilet learning progress, wiping skills, developing autonomy, and—when appropriate—normalizing the need to pee outdoors during forest or outdoor play time.

See the full Toileting Protocols for each program [HERE](#).

Scheduled Rest Time

- All children who participate in our EYC will participate in daily rest time.
- IT: Crib/sheet provided, family provides sleep-sack
- Toddler: Cot/sheet provided, family provides sleep-sack
- 3-5: Cot/sheet/blanket provided, family provides comfort object (ie. stuffie)

Snacks and Lunches

- Children should bring enough prepared food to serve two snacks and lunch each day. Please send healthy choices that can be eaten as they are. Items such as lunch meats and dairy products that require refrigeration should be sent to the EYC in an insulated bag with a cold pack. Please make sure your child has a clean refillable water bottle each day, and utensils when needed.
- Bibs, dishes, and utensils are available at the centre.
- Infant and toddler programs are able to warm foods up. In our 3-5 year old programs we encourage families to send warm things in thermoses.
- Snacks and lunches should be in a reusable lunch bag or box free of media images. Please be mindful of using reusable containers and avoiding pre-packaged foods to avoid creating garbage. Candy, gum, cookies, etc. are not appropriate for lunches or snacks.
- Trading or sharing of snack and lunch items is prohibited due to food allergy concerns and family preferences.

Drop off and Pick up

The EYC doors open at 7:30 AM. Parents can greet caregivers at the classroom door or outside on the play yard, as indicated by your child's educator. Caregivers are not always available for one on one conversations/conferences during this time. You may inform the educator that you would like to speak and an appointment will be scheduled.

Routine is an important part of a child's life, when picking up and dropping off your child, please try and keep the procedure the same. This helps the child with the transition and becomes something they naturally come to expect and understand.

Parents must provide (and update as needed) a list of all authorized adults that have permission to pick up their child on an emergency consent form. Photo ID is required for pick up if the person is not familiar to the faculty for drop off and pick up. If the adult picking up appears to be unable to provide



safe care, an alternative person will be requested for pick up. In the event a parent or contact is unable to collect a child, the caregiver will stay with the child and call MCFD for support.

Any child not enrolled in our program—whether older or younger—must remain with their parent or caregiver at all times. As licensed child care programs, we are not permitted to supervise any child who is not registered and accounted for in our daily attendance. While we know siblings often enjoy being part of the moment, our educators must remain fully focused on the children in their care. Even brief distractions can impact the calm, safe environment we strive to uphold.

Additionally, we kindly ask that during pick up and drop off:

- All gates and doors are opened by adults only. Older siblings can help by modelling safe and respectful transitions.
- If your family group includes siblings, and/or if the cubby area is full, we kindly ask that you stagger your entry with other families/parents to support a calm and safe flow for all.

Verses by Rudolf Steiner

The Bell Ringing Verse

To wonder at beauty,
Stand guard over truth,
Look up to the noble,
Resolve on the good.
This leadeth us truly
To purpose in living,
To right in our doing,
To peace in our thinking.

And teaches us trust
In the workings of [spirit],
In all that there is
In the widths of the world,
In the depths of the soul.



A Verse for Our Time

We must eradicate from the soul all fear and terror
of what comes towards us out of the future.

We must acquire serenity in all feelings and
sensations about the future.

We must look forward with absolute equanimity to
everything that may come.

And we must think only that whatever comes is
given to us by a world- directive full of wisdom.

It is part of what we must learn in this age, namely,
to live out of pure trust, without any security in
existence.

Trust in the ever present help of the spiritual world.

Truly, nothing else will do if our courage is not to fail
us.

And let us seek the awakening from within
ourselves, every morning and every evening.

Children who live in an atmosphere of love and
warmth, and who have around them truly good
examples to imitate, are living in their proper
element.

- Rudolf Steiner, *The Education of the Child*