



*A Growing
Experience!*

**PARENT HANDBOOK
2019-2020**

2019 - 2020

RIVERSIDE PARK NURSERY SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

Riverside Park Nursery School (RPNS) was established in 1970, by a group of concerned parents who recognized the need for a preschool program in the area. Originally run by the Riverside Inter-Church Social Action Council as a non-profit organization, the school was incorporated in 1977 and has since been run by a volunteer Board of Directors. Its' continued success results from the dedication of Board members and the support of parents working with the teaching staff.

We have a high caliber of qualified, professionally-trained and dedicated teachers. All staff must have successfully completed the requirements for a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and are registered members of the College of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario. You are encouraged to discuss with them any questions or concerns relating to your child or the school in general.

Riverside Park is run as a cooperative nursery school—one where parents and teachers work together to provide an enjoyable learning environment for the children. We stress the word "cooperative," because it is vital for the successful operation of the school.

Parent participation includes:

- ❑ Helping with your child's class as a volunteer reading buddy, snow ball maker, piano player etc....
- ❑ Volunteering for a committee or Board position; and
- ❑ Taking part in school activities such as school cleanup and maintenance, etc.

Parents can also share ideas and/or concerns regarding their children with the teachers. We encourage you to contribute your ideas and talents to the school program.

RPNS PROGRAM STATEMENT

Children

We believe:

- That health, safety, nutrition and well-being of children is a priority.
- That early childhood education sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health.
- Children are competent, capable, curious learners; rich in potential.
- Respect for diversity, equality and inclusion are prerequisites for honouring children's rights, optimal development and learning.

Therefore:

- We create a healthy environment where children can explore the world through play based learning.
- Children are encouraged to problem-solve; to be self-thinkers; and to communicate their emotions.
- We model and encourage respect for all individuals.

Practice:

To ensure a healthy and safe environment for children, RPNS

- Provides nutritious snacks with water as the beverage. All children and staff wash their hands prior to snack time
- Includes outdoor play as part of the curriculum
- Has parents read and sign our "Sick Child Policy" and provide a copy of children's immunizations
- Requires Criminal Reference Checks for all staff, classroom volunteers and ECE students. All adults read and sign Behaviour Management Guidelines and Supervision of Volunteers Policy.

- Maintains up to date First Aid & CPR training for staff. All adults are instructed in the use of EpiPens and sign our Anaphylaxis Policy.
- Ensures that practice fire drills are conducted monthly along with annual fire inspection, Ottawa Public Health inspection and drinking water testing
- Documents daily safety checks and is proactive with any safety or health issues

To ensure that children are encouraged to problem-solve; to be self-thinkers; and to communicate their emotions, RPNS

- Sets up indoor and outdoor learning environments with play-based, child initiated activity centres and educators act as facilitators of learning
- Encourages children to interact and communicate in a positive way and supports their ability to self-regulate
- Provides adult-supported experiences that engage children in group situations (for example: snack time and circle time)

To model and encourage respect for all individuals, RPNS:

- Provides the children opportunities to share their family traditions and interests (Show & Share; special events)
- Ensure that program materials reflect diversity
- Acknowledge gender neutrality

Families

We believe:

- Partnerships with families strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.

- In honouring the diversity of our families by valuing their similarities and their differences.
- That the quality of our program is directly related to ongoing parent and family involvement and participation.

Therefore:

- We are committed to open and constructive communication with families.
- We strive to be responsive to each family's individual needs.
- Our cooperative program ensures the participation of all families.

Practice:

To provide families with open and constructive communication, RPNS

- Engages families in conversation at the child's arrival and departure times
- Utilizes technology to connect with families (website, FaceBook, Twitter)
- Frequently updates the Parent Zone bulletin boards
- Provides feedback on each child's development to their parents using an electronic documentation tool (Seesaw)
- Conducts Parent & Teacher Interviews

To respond to each family's individual needs, RPNS:

- Provides forms in our Registration Package for parents to share information and/or concerns
- Holds an Orientation Night for all parents and orientation visit day for each family prior to the child's start in the program
- Invites families to contact us at any time to discuss their child's progress

We believe:

- A planned curriculum supports early learning in an environment that promotes the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children.
- Play is a means to early learning that capitalizes on children's natural curiosity, exploration and exuberance.
- In a universally designed curriculum based on the *ELECT* and *How Does Learning Happen* documents.
- In a child centred program that embraces both indoor and outdoor environments.
- In implementing a program that supports the developmental continuum with respect to our program goals and objectives using an interactive curriculum model.

Therefore:

- We implement a flexible program that provides for different learning styles to meet the needs of all children.
- We base our programming on ongoing observations of the children to ensure that they continue to be challenged.
- We provide positive learning environments where experiences are child-initiated and adult-supported.

Practice:

To ensure that Riverside Park Nursery School is providing quality researched pedagogy

- we ensure that our curriculum follows Ontario's *ELECT* and *How Does Learning Happen* guidelines. <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/pedagogy.html>
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ExcerptsFromELECT.pdf>
- we provide feedback on each child's development to their parents using an electronic documentation tool (Seesaw) and conduct Parent & Teacher Interviews.
- we post photo documentation throughout our facility
- through documented observations of each child, we challenge their learning with open-ended questions; encourage enquiry and allow the child to experiment with their hypothesis

- we allow for exploration time in both our indoor and outdoor classrooms

Educators

We believe:

- Knowledgeable, responsive and reflective early childhood professionals are essential to develop and implement a responsive curriculum.
- That it is imperative to remain current with the trends in the field of early childhood education and care.
- That Educators play an important role in the lives of young children.
- In advocating for and promoting awareness of high quality early education.
- That the classroom is also a learning environment for future Educators.

Therefore:

- We mandate that all Educators be registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators.
- We strive to hire Educators that are both professionally and personally committed to their work.
- We encourage continuous professional learning for all Educators.
- We encourage Educators to become members of the AECEO.
- We promote communication between Educators and parents.
- Our Educators mentor and support Early Childhood Education students.

Practice:

To ensure that our Educators are of the highest quality, we

- check their status on the College of Early Childhood Educator's public registry.
- adhere to professional hiring practices.

- provide budgeted funds for Educators to work on their Continuous Professional Learning and to become members of early childhood education organizations.
- encourage our Educators to mentor students from Algonquin College and other post secondary institutions.

Community Partners

We believe:

- Partnerships within the community strengthen the ability of early childhood settings to meet the needs of young children.
- In fostering positive relationships with community partners.
- In providing families with links to community resources.
- In working cooperatively with outside professionals to ensure that all children are adequately supported.

Therefore:

- We seek out and participate in community consultations.
- We communicate with professionals to support and enhance the learning environment.
- We welcome and embrace the involvement of our community members.

Practice: To ensure that we participate with our community partners

- we send representatives to City of Ottawa community consultations and information sessions; participate in Child Services “Learning Labs”; chair the City of Ottawa Nursery School Network meetings; and consult with our Ministry of Education program advisor
- welcome support services such as: Children’s Integration Support Services; Ottawa Children’s Treatment Centre; Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario; private Autism Therapists, Behavioural Specialists and Child Psychologists.

- we invite members of the Riverside Churches of Ottawa (our landlords) to participate in nursery school functions; send representatives to their meetings and hold discussion sessions.
- we participate in Riverside Community & Recreation Association's annual events such as their Fall/Spring Fun Days and Victoria Day celebrations.

ADMISSION

GENERAL

Children are enrolled in programs at the school in an age-appropriate fashion. For the English Preschool Program, children should be 2½ by September 1st of the current school year. For the **French Introduction Program** children should be 3 years of age by October 31st of the current school year. For the Toddler Program, children must be 18 months by September 1st of the current school year. In consultation with parents/guardians and teachers, movement between programs may occur based on the age and developmental level of the child.

ENROLLMENT OPTIONS

Our class times are held in the mornings *only*.

Junior Preschool Program

The junior preschool children are aged 1½ years to 2 ½ years and there are various options for enrolment:

- 2 Day Junior Preschool on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- 3 Day Junior Preschool on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
- 5 Day Junior Preschool, Monday through to Friday

Senior Preschool Program

The preschool children are aged 2½ years to 5 years and there are various options for enrolment:

- 2 Day Senior Preschool on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- 3 Day Senior Preschool on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
- 5 Day Senior Preschool where children attend Monday through to Friday.

We also offer **French Introduction Preschool Programs** with the option of attending 2 days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays), 3 days a week (Mondays, Wednesday, and Fridays), or 5 days a week (Monday to Friday).

See the Director to discuss other 5 morning options for your child (for example: 2 morning Senior and 3 morning Junior Preschool combination).

Note: Child's registration is confirmed once Registration Fee and completed PAD agreement (with VOID cheque) are provided to RPNS.

WAITING LISTS

City of Ottawa

Waitlist and Child Care Register of Ottawa visit <http://www.ottawa.ca/daycare>

Riverside Park Nursery School

In 2016, the Ministry of Education mandated that all early learning and care programs implement a **Waitlist Policy** for their facilities:

RPNS WAIT LIST POLICY

How to get on the RPNS Waitlist

- a. The **City of Ottawa** prefers that all families (whether full fee paying or subsidized) utilize the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List*. From families using the registry, the city of Ottawa can keep statistics on child care demands and waitlist patterns. Child care programs can access families contact information from the wait list and can confirm registrations.

Families wishing to enroll with a **Floating Subsidized** child care space **must** first register with the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List*. The city sets a 'priority number' on the waitlist for each family which is based on the needs of the family/child and not based on the time of application. RPNS is obligated to accept enrolment based on the city's priority listing. **To register go to:** <http://www.ottawa.ca/daycare>

The Director of our program frequently checks the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List* and notifies parents when spaces become available throughout the school year. The Director contacts **subsidized** and **full fee** paying parents based on the city's priority system.

- b. Nursery schools are unique from child care centres and typically maintain their own waitlists. *Open House Weeks* and formal *Registration Nights* for the following school year are common practice in nursery schools such as **Riverside Park Nursery School**.

RPNS acknowledges that not all families are familiar with the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List* and that many families hear about our program by 'word of mouth'. Therefore, RPNS will also accept full fee paying families to our own **Internal Waitlist** from direct emails, telephone calls or visits to our program.

- c. When filling available spaces from our **Internal Waitlist**, RPNS uses the following **priority system**:
1. currently enrolled child (example: 2 morning Senior Preschool class child waiting for a 2 morning French Introduction class space)
 2. siblings of currently enrolled child
 3. children of currently employed staff
 4. children of current board members
 5. children of alumni families
 6. children referred by external agencies

Ideally we would prefer that children attend our program for a full 10 month school year. However, we do accept registrations throughout the school year should vacancies occur.

Wait List Details

There are **no fees** associated with registering with the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List* nor with the RPNS Internal Waitlist. Likewise, parents are not financially penalized should they wish to be removed from wait lists.

Parents are required to update and/or change information on the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List* and on the RPNS Internal Waitlist.

For both the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry List* and RPNS Internal Waitlist, the Director will make up to 3 attempts to contact a family when a space becomes available. After the third attempt, the Director will move on to the next family on the priority list.

Parents who register on the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List*, can view their **priority status** at any time on their website. Parents need to keep in mind that the City of Ottawa (and not RPNS) determines the priority status for this waitlist.

For the RPNS Internal Waitlist, parents can contact the Director via phone call or email to determine their status on the waitlist.

The Director and the Assistant Director are the only staff from RPNS with access to the *City of Ottawa's Child Care Registry and Wait List*. The Director, Assistant Director, Registrar and President of the RPNS Board of Directors have access to the RPNS Internal Waitlist.

All parent and child information on waitlists (both the city's and RPNS' waitlists) are **confidential** and will not be shared with outside agencies and/or other parents on the waitlist.

CLASSROOM SIZES

PRESCHOOL CLASS SIZE

The *Child Care and Early Years Act of Ontario* regulates the acceptable ratio of adults and preschool children. Our preschool class will have three staff members (two staff being Registered Early Childhood Educators, RECE) and a maximum of 24 students for a ratio of 1:8.

JUNIOR PRESCHOOL CLASS SIZES

The *Child Care and Early Years Act of Ontario* regulates the acceptable ratio of adults and toddlers. Since our junior preschool program accepts children as young as 18 months, they are considered the 'toddler' age group.

Therefore, our Junior Preschool classes use the 5:1 ministry ratio. This class is staffed with two RECEs when we have 10 children registered. The classroom itself is licensed for 15 children, should we have a high demand for our Junior Preschool classes, we will add another staff person to that program.

PROGRAM FACTS

HOURS OF OPERATION

The school operates a morning program from **8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Monday through Friday** for children aged 1.5 years to 5 years. We also offer *Before Care (8:00 am to 8:30 am)* and *After Care (12:00 pm to 12:30 pm)* programs for additional fees.

DURATION AND HOLIDAYS

The nursery school usually follows the normal school year of the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), with classes commencing on the first Tuesday following Labour Day. All holidays, with the exception of OCDSB PD days are followed and these include:

- Labour Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Break (two weeks)
- Family Day
- Good Friday and Easter Monday
- March Break (one week)
- Victoria Day

Note: The nursery school is open on **Remembrance Day**.

We finish the school year after the third week in June to allow staff time to close down the program for the summer months. If warranted, school may be closed for one day during the school year for teachers' Professional Development.

We acknowledge that family holiday time is important and that children may be away from the program to enjoy a vacation. However, regular monthly tuition fees do apply. Refunds or pro-rated monthly tuition fees for a leave of absence due to vacation are not offered.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

In the event that the school must be closed due to weather, loss of power, loss of water, flood, fire, or other unforeseen circumstances, every effort will be made to contact the parents to inform them of the closure.

If you are uncertain whether or not the school will be operating please call the Program Director or check our Twitter/Facebook pages. Refunds will not be given for school closures.

ABSENCES

We recognize that children will be away from the nursery school due to illness or holidays from time to time. Please advise the school (613-738-0305) or by email rpns@rogers.com when your child is going to be absent.

FEES

Upon registration, each family shall provide to RPNS:

- ❑ A \$50.00 *non-refundable* **registration fee** cheque payable the day you register your child.
- ❑ A *non-refundable* **program fee** cheque dated September 1st (see PROGRAM FEE)
- ❑ A VOID cheque accompanied with a **Pre-Authorized Deposit** agreement for monthly tuition fees.

Fees are withdrawn from parent's bank accounts on the first of each month, starting September 1st through to June 1st.

Fees are collected one month in advance to cover school expenses.

Automatic withdrawals are the only option for monthly tuition fee payment. RPNS does not accept credit cards. Parents also pay for pre-authorized deposit processing fees at an extra cost of \$1.50 per transaction.

TUITION FEES FOR 2019-2020 SCHOOL YEAR

Program	Number of Days	Core Day ~ 3.5 hrs 8:30 – 12:00 pm	Extended Day #1 ~ 4.0 hrs 8:00 – 12:00 pm <i>or</i> 8:30 – 12:30 pm	Extended Day #2 ~ 4.5 hrs 8:00 – 12:30 pm
Junior Preschool	2	\$285	\$327	\$343
	3	\$330	\$392	\$416
	5	\$615	\$719	\$759
Senior Preschool	2	\$255	\$297	\$313
	3	\$325	\$387	\$411
	5	\$580	\$684	\$724

Our **core nursery school day** is a 3.5 hour program starting at 8:30 am to 12:00 pm.

EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM

RPNS is pleased to offer **extended days** (see table above) to our families. Registering your child in an extended day program ensures space availability in our Before & After Care programs and at a lower rate compared to *Needed Before & After Care* fees. As well, parents will know exactly what to expect in monthly fees as no additional Before & After Care tuition will be applied at month end.

BEFORE AND AFTER-CARE PROGRAM

Parents are encouraged to register their children in our Extended Day options mentioned above, especially if they plan on using the extended hours on a regular basis.

However, we do wish to offer our families 'as-needed before & after care' for those times when life gets busy for parents! Stuck at the doctor's office and realized that you can't make the 12:00 pick up time at nursery school? No worries! Parents can utilize this service on a daily 'as needed' basis.

Before Care takes place from 8:00 am to 8:30 am and **After Care** from 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm.

Fees for Needed Before & After Care:

Before Care 8:00 am to 8:30 am	\$10.00	
After Care 12:00 pm to 12:30 pm	\$10.00	

Parents are invoiced at the beginning of a month for Before & After Care utilized in the previous month with the fees being withdrawn from the parents' bank account along with their monthly tuition fees.

PROGRAM FEE

RPNS prides itself as providing a high quality, enriched learning environment for young children with specialized program materials, activities and events. The costs associated with these activities go above our daily operational budget. As a result, we have added a one-time program fee, payable upon registration:

2 day programs - \$50

3 day programs - \$75

5 day programs - \$125

LATE PICK UP FEE

As morning programs end at 12:00pm, children must be picked up no later than 12:05pm. If a child has not been picked up by 12:05pm that child will be placed in the **After Care program** at regular after care rates.

Parents/Caregivers will be automatically invoiced at the end of each month that after-care fees have been accrued. The Director reserves the right to refuse admittance of any child as a result of non-payment.

AFTER-CARE: LATE PICK UP FEE

Children must be picked up from the after-care program, no later than 12:30pm. By 12:35pm, a late fee of \$5.00 for every 5 minutes, per child, will apply. Parents/Caregivers will be automatically invoiced at the end of each month that after-care late fees have been accrued. The Director reserves the right to refuse admittance of any child as a result of non-payment. The Director also reserves the right to decline after-care privileges to any family who fails to pick up their child(ren) by 12:35pm more than two times during the school year.

RECEIPTS

Tuition receipts will be issued in January or February for the previous year via **email** for income tax purposes. The receipt will include before and after care fees. Under CRA guidelines, tax receipts are not issued for registration fees and activity/program fees. Requests for printed hard copies of tuition receipts need to be done in writing to the Director. There is a **\$15** administration charge for reissuing receipts.

NON PAYMENT OF FEES POLICY

Should a parent not supply any required fee, the school will verbally request that the financial obligation be honoured immediately. If fees are not met, the school will provide the parent with a written notice and payment is required within 15 days. If satisfactory arrangements are not made with the 15-day period, notification will be sent by registered mail extending the time period for payment another 15 days. If, at the end of the 30 days, payment has not been arranged, the child/children will be withdrawn from the school's registry, and the family will be notified in writing.

The school will utilize the services of a Collection Agency.

NSF CHEQUES/DECLINED PRE-AUTHORIZED PAYMENT:

Upon receipt of a declined preauthorised payment, the school will verbally request that the financial obligation be honoured with cash or a certified cheque within 15 days of notification. **A \$25 fee will be applied.**

If satisfactory arrangements are not made with the 15-day period, notification will be sent by registered mail extending the time period for payment another 15 days. If, at the end of the 30 days, payment has not been arranged, the child/children will be withdrawn from the school's registry, and the family will be notified in writing.

The school will utilize the services of a Collection Agency.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Director ensures confidentiality regarding the name of the family in arrears up to the point where a written notice of withdrawal of the school is required.

WITHDRAWAL POLICIES

Parents wishing to withdraw their children from the school must notify the school Director in writing **one month** prior to last day in attendance. If they do not do so, they must pay the following month's fee (e.g. notification of withdrawal after October 1st would still result in the payment of fees for the month November). The program,/activity fee is non-refundable if a child is withdrawn after the commencement of the school year. There will be **no refunds of tuition fees after March 1st** of the current school year should a parent withdraw their child from the program.

Why are there no tuition refunds for the last 3 months (April, May and June) of the school year? As a non-profit charitable organization, RPNS has a very tight fiscal budget of which 75% of its operations going towards payroll for the educators. Every tuition fee needs to be accounted for in order for the nursery school to stay out of a deficit come our June 30 fiscal year end.

Parents wishing for an exception to the Withdrawal Policy, must do so in writing to the RPNS Board of Directors at least one month in advance to withdrawing their child from the program.

Riverside Park Nursery School reserves the right to direct parents to withdraw their child from the school for reasons that include the following:

- A child continues to require a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time and attention;
- Child's behaviour is found to be continually disruptive to the group as a whole;
- The School is unable to meet the needs of the child
- Non- payment of fees
- Failure of parent to participate in a cooperative nursery school as set out in RPNS By-Laws
- Failure of parent to adhere to RPNS policies and procedures

Prior to directing a parent to withdraw their child the following steps will have been taken by RPNS:

- Written observations of the child completed by the staff.
- Any concerns documented.
- Staff meeting with the parents.
- Referral to appropriate resources.

CURRICULUM

Children participate in activities both indoors and outdoors that promote many learning experiences in all developmental domains. The emergent curriculum is based on the early childhood “learning through play” philosophy and is supported by Ontario’s *ELECT* and *How Does Learning Happen* documents. The children’s learning is documented on the “Curriculum Board” in our hallway and educators use an electronic app to share observations, photos and videos with parents.

What is Emergent Curriculum?

Emergent curriculum is a way of planning curriculum that is based on the children’s interest and passion at a certain point in time. Children thrive and learn best when their interests are captured. Learning occurs naturally. Planning emergent curriculum requires observation, documentation, creative brainstorming, flexibility and patience on the part of the Early Childhood Educator. Rather than starting with the lesson plan which is repeated every year regardless of the age, developmental level or interests of the children, emergent curriculum starts with the children’s interest.

In short, *it is a child-directed and teacher facilitated approach to planning the curriculum.*

Emergent curriculum summons a lot of creativity and flexibility on the part of the teachers. There is no knowing where the learning will end up but this openness makes the curriculum more exciting for both teachers and children. The emergent curriculum process starts when a teacher sees an interest “emerging” in the child. Once the “emerging” interest has been identified, the teachers brainstorm different ways for the children to study the topic in depth.

Webbing a topic is often used because of its playful and flexible nature. A web does not show everything that will be learned but will show many things that could be learned. Webbing the curriculum opens the teacher to “possibilities” rather than “plan”. Teachers brainstorm many possibilities for study sparked from the emerging interest of the children. Rather than a lesson plan, the teacher ends up with a “road map”. Webbing all the activities together gives the teacher a road map full of possible journeys with no end in sight. The end comes when the children have moved their interest to another topic and a new “emerging” interest has again been identified.

The Four Foundations of How Does Learning Happen?

How Does Learning Happen? is organized around four foundational conditions that are important for children to grow and flourish: **Belonging, Well-Being, Engagement, and Expression.**

These foundations, or ways of being, are a vision for all children’s future potential and a view of what they should experience each and every day. These four foundations apply regardless of age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting. They are aligned with the Kindergarten program. They are conditions that children naturally seek for themselves.

- **Belonging** refers to a sense of connectedness to others, an individual's experiences of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community, the natural world.
- **Well-being** addresses the importance of physical and mental health and wellness. It incorporates capacities such as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulation skills.
- **Engagement** suggests a state of being involved and focused. When children are able to explore the world around them with their natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged. Through this type of play and inquiry, they develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, and innovating, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.
- **Expression** or communication (to be heard, as well as to listen) may take many different forms. Through their bodies, words, and use of materials, children develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Opportunities to explore materials support creativity, problem solving, and mathematical behaviours. Language-rich environments support growing communication skills, which are foundational for literacy.

A focus on these foundations throughout all aspects of early years programs ensures optimal learning and healthy development.

While this pedagogical document is built on the above foundations, the groundwork for *How Does Learning Happen?* is the 2007 publication *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings*, commonly referred to as ELECT or the Early Learning Framework.

SPECIAL NEEDS INTEGRATION PROGRAM

Children's Inclusion Support Services (CISS) is a bilingual service funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services. CISS provides support services to integrated programs within the Ottawa-Carleton Region and is managed by the Board of Directors of Andrew Fleck Child Care Services. The services provided by CISS may include additional staffing, consultation to programs, staff training, and financial supports in the form of transportation and childcare subsidies. A child with special needs in our program may also have occasional visits from professionals during the morning, including Speech or Occupational Therapists and Integration Advisors.

As defined in the *Child Care and Early Years Act of Ontario*, a child with special needs is "a child with a physical, mental, or developmental impairment that is likely to continue for a prolonged period of time as verified by objective psychological or medical findings."

All children are encouraged to learn to embrace differences. What is important is that they learn to interact with each other in a positive way. Children diagnosed with special needs can learn social skills and independence in an integrated program. The role model provided by the other children, both in language skills and behavioural expectations, is invaluable.

Integration can be a wonderful experience for all, providing positive experiences, which will benefit everyone throughout life.

DAILY SCHEDULE

We believe that children thrive best with a consistent daily schedule providing them with comfort of what to expect next during their day. However, we also acknowledge that a flexible schedule allows for taking advantage of nice weather (for longer outdoor play) or for children to broaden a learning experience. The following is a typical day:

PRESCHOOL SCHEDULE

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:30 to 9:30	Children arrive Free Play in Activity Centres of Outdoor Classroom
9:30 to 10:00	Undressing from outdoor play Hand washing and snack time
10:00 to 11:00	Circle Time Tidy up time
11:00 to 12:00	Free Play in Activity Centres of Indoor Classroom Prepare for home time

SNACK

Each teacher facilitates her/his group of children for this special social time. **The school provides snacks.** If you wish to bring a special snack for a special occasion, please speak to the Director. Occasionally, you may be asked to contribute food for a special snack activity. When planning snacks, some foods may be prohibited as some children may have life-threatening allergies. Extreme caution is used, and all teachers and parents are made aware of all allergies that any of the children may have. At all times, RPNS is a peanut/allergen conscience school. To eliminate the number of sweet snacks birthdays are celebrated once a month with a cake provided by RPNS.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthdays are important milestones for young children and we certainly do celebrate them! We set aside two days each month (usually a Tuesday and a Wednesday) to celebrate that month's 'Birthday Children'. Parent volunteers bake 'allergy free' cakes for these occasions, as we prefer that outside birthday cakes are not brought into the nursery school.

CIRCLE TIME

Teachers plan daily circle time activities that promote social, language and cognitive skills through finger plays, songs, musical instruments, games, stories, puppets and a calendar. This formal group learning time prepares children for the Elementary School system.

SPECIAL THEME CIRCLES

The Director plans monthly special theme group circles to which parents and siblings are invited. Children will explore a special theme through stories, finger plays, music, dance and other interactive activities. Group circles allow for all the children (and other family members that wish to participate) to come together as a community.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

During the school year we will provide the preschoolers and toddlers with enriched activities within the school. We do not participate in field trips but we do have activities which may include special guests and presentations that enhance curriculum. These activities will provide the children with additional learning experiences in a safe environment. Parental involvement and participation is encouraged.

THE OUTDOOR CLASSROOM AND FOREST SCHOOL

Outdoor play is important for healthy development. Our large fenced in play yard allows the children to explore the trees, sand box, play houses, gardens and bike path. Children must bring bicycle helmets in order to ride the tricycles or scooters. In the winter months outdoor play will not occur if the temperature (including the wind chill) is below -25 degrees Celsius. The Environment Canada 613-998-3439 phone line is used to determine the temperature.

Why Children Need to Play Outside – Even in the Winter Months

Source: <http://mommiesmagazine.com/10580/children-play-outside-winter/>

Builds Up their Immune System:

It's no surprise that many children that are raised on, or around, a farm are generally healthier than those that aren't. This is because on a regular basis these children are exposed to dirt, animals, pests, bacteria and everything else that send modern-day parents running. While we like to think that dirt, animals, pests and bacteria do more harm than good it's actually the opposite. When your children come into contact with these things in a natural way (outside) and on a regular basis, they are less likely to develop autoimmune disorders and allergies.

Provides Exercise

Playing outside provides children with something many children don't get enough of anymore – exercise. Exercising while having fun is the best kind of exercise, and that's exactly what playing outside does. Riding bikes, playing tag with friends, building a snowman, sledding, having snowball fights and other outside activities get our children's bodies moving...something most video games can't do.

Stimulates the Imagination

Sadly, one of the things that today's children are lacking is an imagination. This is because we're in the technological age – today children are literally shown everything. Why go outside and play imaginative chasing games when we can watch a movie about it or play a video game? Playing outside helps children develop their imagination, which is something that television, video games, computers, iPods, etc. don't do.

It Promotes Problem Solving Skills

Children who play outside learn how to solve real life problems better than children who are always in their rooms playing video games or secluding themselves. Regardless of if they're learning how to get along with friends or trying to figure out the best way to build a fort – they're problem solving.

It Provides Vitamin D

It's important that your children get Vitamin D, which is provided by the sun. Vitamin D helps promote better moods, energy levels, memory, overall health and more. Just 10-15 minutes out in the sun will give your children their daily dose of Vitamin D.

Refer to the **RPNS FOREST SCHOOL HANDBOOK** on page 42 for more information on our Forest School program for all children registered at RPNS!

WHAT DOES MY CHILD NEED FOR NURSERY SCHOOL?

School Bag Requirements

- ❑ Diapers or pull-ups
- ❑ Small change pad
- ❑ Wipes
- ❑ Full change of labelled clothing (undershirt, underpants, sweater, pants, socks)
- ❑ Indoor shoes (whatever footwear the child has for outdoor play cannot be permitted to be worn indoors)
- ❑ Do not leave any form of medication (Tylenol, cough drops etc.) in your child's school bag

CLOTHING

All clothing for school should be simple, comfortable and washable. Our paints are washable and non-toxic, but may stain some fabrics. While we try to protect the children's clothes, because of the nature of the activities in our program, we cannot be held responsible for damages to clothing.

All children play outdoors every day, weather permitting. Please be sure they are dressed appropriately for the weather. All outdoor clothes and boots should be marked with your child's name. Neck warmers are safer to wear than scarves. In warm weather, please make sure your child wears a wide-brimmed hat and sunscreen.

Please send a complete change of child-friendly clothes, allowing children to toilet themselves, to school every day in a backpack. Slip-on or Velcro shoes are also required for indoor play. These encourage independence and self-help skills. Children still in diapers must also have diapers, wet wipes and a change pad in their bag. RPNS also accepts children in cloth diapers. Parents need to include a suitable bag for soiled cloth diapers.

TOILETING

A child does not have to be toilet-learned to attend our school. Staff and/or qualified volunteers will toilet children as necessary. This includes changing diapers, changing wet clothing, etc. Parents and teachers can discuss how to proceed when a child shows signs of readiness for toilet learning.

TRANSPORTATION

The school does not provide transportation. Parents must make their own arrangements to drop off and pick up their children.

BIKE HELMET POLICY

Safety of the children is one of our major priorities at Riverside Park Nursery School. Parents are to provide their child with a properly fitted bike helmet for use of our tricycles and ride on toys.

Properly fitted helmets should:

- Fit comfortably on top of the head and sit low on the forehead, just above the eyebrow. The helmet should not move if the child shakes their head.
- Have an outer shell, inner protective liner, chin straps that hold the helmet firmly in place, and adjustable sizing pads.
- Meet SPCS, CSA or Snell standards.

Placing a baseball cap or any other headgear changes the fitting of the helmet on the head.

- The thickness of the hat under the helmet raises the helmet above the head. The result is that the helmet covers less of the head than it should, leaving the sides unprotected.
- Raising the helmet on the head destabilizes it by moving the sides that normally keep the helmet steady, up and away from the sides of the head.
- Having steel buttons (top of baseball cap) on top of the head could concentrate the force of the blow on one spot. The helmet is designed to spread out the force of impact to prevent the skull from fracturing.
- The thickness of hats, sweatbands, as well as the bill of a cap, interferes with the fit of the helmet.

For further information on the subject, please check out the following websites:

www.bhsi.org

www.ottawa.ca (search "Tricycle Safety")

PLEASE NOTE: BIKES WILL NOT BE OUT UNLESS IT IS WARM ENOUGH TO NOT REQUIRE WINTER HEADWEAR.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Riverside Park Nursery School abides by the regulations set out in the *Child Care & Early Years Act* follows the prohibited practices as set out in Section 48 of the Act:

- 48. No licensee shall permit, with respect to a child receiving child care at a child care centre it operates or at a premises where it oversees the provision of child care,*
- (a) corporal punishment of the child;*
 - (b) deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures on the child that would humiliate the child or undermine his or her self-respect;*
 - (c) depriving the child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding;*
 - (d) locking the exits of the child care centre or home child care premises for the purpose of confining the child; or*
 - (e) using a locked or lockable room or structure to confine the child if he or she has been separated from other children.*

We want all of the children to feel safe and secure. To ensure this, we set limits so that the children may not harm themselves, other children or an adult, or destroy the property of others. Limits are expressed firmly but warmly in a positive manner, with simple explanations given. If necessary, a child may be redirected to another activity. The child may return to the activity when he or she feels ready. We do not use a 'time out' chair or space as we believe this creates a negative perception in a social setting.

We encourage the children to express themselves verbally rather than physically, and to discover their own solutions through problem solving. The educator serves as a resource person in disputes between the children and at times it may be necessary for her to offer suggestions.

All Educators, Volunteers, Practicum Students and Teacher Assistants are expected to follow through on safety rules and limits, and to treat the children with respect and kindness. Everyone is required to read and sign our **Behaviour Guidance Policy and Contravention Procedures**, which set out actions appropriate to specific circumstances, and will be monitored by staff to ensure that they are following this policy. All staff, volunteers and parents must read and sign the *Behaviour Guidance Policy* as required by the *Child Care & Early Years Act*.

MEDICATION

From time to time, Riverside Park Nursery School may have children in attendance that require medication for allergic reactions or other medical conditions. Staff are trained and prepared to administer medication to children when required. Under the Day Nurseries Act, all medication must be stored in a locked box.

Therefore, parents are to adhere to the following:

- 1) Parents are to complete an **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION FORM** if their child requires medication and hand the form and medication to the Director.
- 2) The form and medication will be locked in a portable box and it will be stored in the nursery school. Teachers wear “fanny packs” to carry Epipens and inhalers.
- 3) Parents must approach their child's teacher or the Director at pick up time to retrieve the medication. For children with allergies (especially those requiring *Epipens*) we require a second dose of medication that could be left at the school. This way important medication will not be forgotten here or at home.
- 4) Parents are not permitted to leave any form of medication in their child's back packs. This includes cough medicines, lozenges, Tylenol etc.
- 5) Parents are to check the expiry dates on medications as we will not administer out of date medications.
- 6) For ongoing medications (ie. allergies), parents are asked to advise staff of any changes to dosage/type of medication/possible side effects etc. The completed **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION FORM** must match the actual medication.

SICK CHILD POLICY

In the best interest of your child and the other children at the Nursery School, he/she must be kept home when they exhibit any of the following symptoms:

- Severe runny nose or cough, wheezing or difficulty breathing, excessive lethargy.
- An oral fever of 38°C (100.4°F).
- Undetermined rash. Your child must be seen by a physician to determine the nature of the rash before returning to nursery school.
- Vomiting, diarrhea or fever within the last 24 hours.

If a child appears to be ill on arrival to the school, teachers reserve the right to send the child home. We strongly recommend that parents prepare and arrange for emergency back-up childcare in anticipation of these situations. If your child is not well enough to participate fully in the program, he/she is probably not well enough to be at school.

Children may return to the nursery school when they are symptom free. Some illnesses require a doctor's note to return to the school. This can be discussed with the Director.

If a child becomes ill during school, the parent or alternate adult will be contacted to pick up the child. We ask parents to keep staff informed of all communicable diseases and any other signs and symptoms of illness their children experience. This information may need to be reported to the City of Ottawa's Public Health Department.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Children must be immunized according to the Health Department's Immunization Schedule (contained in the Registration Package). Tuberculosis testing will be required for participants who have spent three months (90 days) or more during the past 5 years in countries specified by the Health Department.

You must fill out an **immunization form** from the Ottawa Public Health before your first visit to the school takes place, indicating the date that each vaccination was given. This is a regulation of the Child Care & Early Years Act of Ontario and Ottawa Public Health Department. Children who have not had the necessary vaccinations can be withdrawn from the school until the vaccinations are up-to-date. For parents that have chosen not to have their children immunized, an *Affidavit of Non-immunization* form must be completed with Ottawa Public Health.

We follow the recommendations of the City of Ottawa Health Department for childcare facilities regarding the prevention of Hepatitis B and HIV infection.

ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY

Our Nursery School takes life threatening allergies very seriously. All staff and volunteers must read and sign our Anaphylaxis Policy. Staff are trained on *Epipen* administration annually. **Note:** It is the policy of our Nursery School that only staff are to administer *Epipen* or other medications to the children.

NO SMOKING POLICY

No smoking of any kind is permitted in the building nor anywhere on the property. This includes the playground and parking lot. (*Child Care and Early Years Act of Ontario requirement*).

POLICE RECORDS CHECK (CRIMINAL REFERENCE CHECK)

All staff and volunteers involved in the delivery of the school's programs must submit a current **Police Record Check before the start of each school year**. Such volunteers include Classroom Buddies, ECE students placed at our school, and any person assigned direct responsibility for a child or children by the school.

The school will provide staff and parents/volunteers with the necessary documentation to obtain a CRC; however, staff and parents/volunteers are solely responsible for obtaining the CRC.

RPNS POLICE CHECK POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES/VOLUNTEERS

Intent

For all candidates of a teaching position; currently contracted employees and volunteers to understand their roles and responsibilities regarding Criminal Reference Checks (for the vulnerable sector).

Responsibilities for Employees

- For **employees**, the vulnerable sector check must be prepared no earlier than six months before the day it is obtained by the licensee. All candidates applying for a position at RIVERSIDE PARK NURSERY SCHOOL must present a completed and cleared Criminal Reference Check (CRC~ for the vulnerable sector) by the Ottawa Police Department. Candidates that do not have a CRC must apply for one. Candidates that refuse to produce a CRC cannot be considered for employment.
- A new vulnerable sector check is required on or before every fifth anniversary date of the most recent vulnerable sector check. In the years a vulnerable sector check is not required, individuals must sign an offence declaration. (*An offence declaration is a written declaration signed by an individual that lists all of the individual's convictions for offences under the Criminal Code (Canada), if any, during the period specified in the declaration.*)
- upon hiring, employees must produce their completed CRC. In the event that the cleared CRC is not available, then the person cannot start their contract. Contracts will not be signed until proof of a cleared CRC is provided.

Responsibilities for Volunteers & Students

- **Volunteers and students**, must present a completed and cleared Criminal Reference Check (CRC~ for the vulnerable sector) by the Ottawa Police Department. Volunteers that do not have a CRC must apply for one. Volunteers that refuse to produce a CRC cannot be considered for the program.
- **RPNS** may obtain a copy of a CRC instead of the original document except if over six months have passed since the day the vulnerable vector check was completed, the volunteer must also provide an

offence declaration that addresses the period since that day. In no circumstances can the vulnerable sector check be older than five years.

- A volunteer or student can begin interacting with children if they have not provided a vulnerable sector check under these guidelines:
 - volunteers apply to obtain a vulnerable sector check as soon as possible and present proof that they have done so (receipt, email confirmation) and inform RPNS when they expect to receive a cleared CRC
 - volunteers must remain in close proximity to RPNS staff at all times

CRC Documentation and Confidentiality

- It is the responsibility of the employee or volunteer to obtain, complete and submit the required Vulnerable Sector Criminal Reference Check forms. Offence Declaration Forms are provided by RPNS.
- Employees/volunteers are to provide their complete CRC to the Director of RPNS where she/he will verify that it has been cleared. The CRC will be photocopied and filed at the nursery school. Employees/volunteers retain the original CRC.
- The information provided in CRCs and Offence Declaration Forms are solely used for the protection of the children of RPNS. Should there be concerns about the employee's or volunteer's suitability to work with children, that information will be brought to the attention of the RPNS Board of Directors of evaluation. Any grievances that an employee or volunteer may have concerning a non-cleared CRC must be taken up with the Ottawa Police Department; not RPNS.
- CRCs and Offence Declaration Forms are kept confidential and stored in a locked filing cabinet for the privacy of the individual.

Responsibilities of RIVERSIDE PARK NURSERY SCHOOL

- RPNS will cover the *regular* CRC processing fee for returning contracted employees.
 - The nursery school will not cover the fee for an *expedited* CRC; therefore employees should ensure that their new CRC is done by their fifth year anniversary.
- For volunteers, their CRC forms provided to the Ottawa Police Department can be accompanied by a letter from RPNS stating our charitable status. This letter can be obtained from the Director of the nursery school.
 - The CRC processing fee is waived for volunteers in non-profit organizations.

Non-cleared CRC

- In the event that an employee or volunteer submit a CRC form to RPNS that indicates that there is concern with them working in the vulnerable sector, then that person will not be allowed on the premises.
- They would not be permitted to work with the children.

In the event that an employee or volunteer produce a non-cleared CRC *during* a contract, then that contract /volunteer services will be terminated immediately. Employees whose employment is terminated shall be given pay in lieu of notice in accordance with the Employment Standards Act of Ontario. Should the employee or volunteer produce a cleared CRC after the termination, then they may reapply to the nursery school.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

The Riverside Park Nursery School is dedicated to promoting an atmosphere of open communication and respect between students, parents/caregivers and staff. Should an issue arise, feedback and suggestions that benefit the school as a whole, delivered in a positive manner, are always taken into consideration.

Should you have any concerns during your child's stay at RPNS, the following procedures have been established to assist and guide effective and straightforward communication about your concerns.

DEFINITION OF A COMPLAINT

A complaint is defined as: "Any communication received by a parent/caregiver either in writing, or by telephone, or in person, which expresses dissatisfaction about any aspect of the school program, the standard of service or action or lack of action by the school". Each complaint(s) whether legitimate or not is to be recorded by the Director or Assistant Director in a log book as it is received. All follow-up action including lessons learned related to the complaint(s) will also be recorded in the log book in a timely manner.

PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW SHOULD YOU HAVE A COMPLAINT

The procedures listed below are intended to guide the school in handling parent/caregiver issues. The main aim at all stages of this procedure will be to ensure that the complaint is fully considered and is resolved, in so far as it is possible to do so, to the satisfaction of the complainant. It is not intended that these guidelines should replace the normal discussion which takes place in the school on day-to-day problems and concerns as they arise. Only when the complainants remain dissatisfied with the outcome of such discussion should further steps be taken.

Step 1 – Communicating with your child's Teacher

The informal stage is the first complaint stage. Parents/caregivers are encouraged to discuss the matter **with your child's particular teacher**. Most straightforward problems can be resolved at this point. Your child's teacher has the most knowledge and insight regarding the situation and is experienced in behaviour management. It is recommended that this discussion be conducted outside of regular teaching hours, so that the matter can be discussed fully without interruption.

Please note that RPNS takes parent and child confidentiality very seriously. The staff are happy to discuss your child's needs, but are not at liberty to discuss details of another child or family's situation.

For more information on the Riverside Park Nursery School's policy regarding Behaviour Guidance, please refer to the Parent Handbook, available at www.rpns.net

Step 2 – Letter to the Director

The second stage (and first formal stage) should be followed if the parent/caregiver is not satisfied with the informal response from your child's particular teacher. At this stage, the parent must notify the school Director **in writing (paper copy, not email) within 1 week of the incident**. The Director is responsible for investigating the complaint(s) before providing a formal response in writing back to the parent/caregiver **within 1 week of receipt of the parent/caregiver's letter**.

Step 3 – Letter to the Parent Board

The third stage should be followed if the parent/caregiver is not satisfied with the outcome of the first formal stage. The Director will advise the parent/caregiver to send their concerns in writing to the President of the parent Board. The Board will discuss the issue at the following monthly meeting, or earlier should the issue require immediate attention.

The parent Board is responsible for investigating the complaint before providing a formal response in writing back to the parent/caregiver and the school in a timely manner.

Stage 4 – The Ministry of Education

The fourth stage should be followed if the parent/caregiver is not satisfied with the outcome of the parent Board. The parent/caregiver is responsible for notifying the Ministry of Education, who will be responsible for investigating the complaint before providing a formal response in writing back to the parent/caregiver and the school.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

The entrance to the school is located at the back of the church, beside the playground. Please do not use the church entrance. The entrance way to the parking lot is a fire zone and the driveway has “Drop Off Zone” signage. “Drop Off Zones” are intended for idling cars where the driver remains behind the wheel. It is not a parking area and we expect parents to use the parking lot for nursery school drop off and pick up times.

There are marked handicapped parking spots in the lot and these are to be used by the cars that have handicapped parking permits. Please do not use these spots even if you are in your car waiting in order to keep them free for those who need them.

Do not leave siblings in the car or outside in a stroller unattended. As a suggestion, ask another nursery school parent to help you.

Children must not be left at school until the program start time and a staff member is made aware of their arrival. The Director or acting Director will sign each child ‘in and out’ as they begin and end their day at the nursery school. Should you arrive late, make sure the Director is aware of your child’s arrival.

When picking up a child for home, be sure that a staff member knows that your child or car pool is leaving with the proper driver.

Teachers cannot release your child to an unauthorized person. Please notify the school in advance by calling or emailing with the Director when someone else is picking up your child. The authorized individual must present ID to the staff member before your child will be released into their care.

Please pick up your child on time. A child left behind can become very anxious. As well, the staff have additional duties to perform each day.

SECURITY

All children are supervised at all times. Anytime they need to leave their classroom, including washroom visits, an adult accompanies them. We have in place a chime to alert the staff of unauthorized access to the premises. The nursery school entrance door is locked between 9:20am and 11:00am. Ring the door bell if you need access to the school during these times.

RPNS practices monthly **fire drills** and an annual **lockdown procedure**. Should any emergency arise during nursery school hours, parents will be contacted directly by phone and/or email. We will also post a notice on *Twitter* and *Facebook*. In the event that we need to vacate the premises of the nursery school and church building, parents will be notified to pick up their children at our **emergency location** (Holy Cross Catholic School on Springland Drive).

COMMUNICATIONS

The monthly calendars of events, duty day rosters and ELECT curriculum plans are posted on bulletin boards at RPNS. Duty day rosters and information bulletins are emailed to our families. Other information such as the **Calendar of Events and Monthly Newsletters** are posted on our website www.rpnsottawa.com RPNS is also on *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*.

Always check your **child's folder** in the **Communications Box** in the hallway for important notices, updates and events. Workshops for parents, health alerts and other information is also posted on bulletin boards in the hallways.

Along with our cooperative nature, RPNS provides families with **Class Contact Lists** which comprises of the parent names, phone numbers and email addresses of the children in your child's class. This information is to be used solely for RPNS purposes such as contacting another parent to arrange for emergency pick up or to send invitations for birthday parties. It is imperative that RPNS families recognize that the information is *not* to be used for any other purpose and *not* to be shared with others.

Our 2 **Emergency Contact Volunteers** are also provided with a complete list of family contact information for emergency purposes only. These two volunteers understand their role and keep these lists in confidence.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

This is a cooperative school, so we are counting on you! Parents must complete a **Volunteer Choice Form** upon registration. Your help is needed and very much appreciated. As members of the school, you are expected to be an active helper, serve on a committee, attend the Orientation Meeting in September and participate in Fall and Spring parties.

To keep the school running smoothly, parent participation is needed in a wide variety of activities. The activities are listed below, and offer an opportunity for parents to participate at a level that reflects their talents and available time.

DESCRIPTION OF VOLUNTEER POSITIONS

DUTIES	DESCRIPTION
PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE	Assists and advises the Director of RPNS and its management for the best interests of the nursery school.
NEW BUILDING SUBCOMMITTEE	Assists with the tasks of completing the new building, Riverside Park Early Learning Centre slated for December 2020 opening date.
GROCERY SHOPPERS	Purchasing weekly grocery items for snack menu within a set budget. Parent retain receipts for one month and then are reimbursed by RPNS
SCHOLASTIC BOOK ORDERS	Hand out flyers, collect orders, place orders online and distribute books
LAUNDRY	Take laundry from the school home each week to wash, dry and fold
EMERGENCY CALLER	Call the parents when the school will be unexpectedly closed.
END OF SUMMER CLEAN-UP	Outdoor prep work for the upcoming school year. Various tasks include: lawn mowing; weeding garden; remove weeds and overgrowth along the fence; clean playhouses etc.
GRASS CUTTER	Mow the lawn in play yard. Must have own lawn mower
FALL CLEAN-UP	Outdoor clean-up of the school playground. Various tasks include: raking leaves; tree pruning; toy storage; lawn mowing; etc.
SPRING CLEAN-UP	Outdoor clean-up of the school playground. Various tasks include: gardening; tree pruning; painting Indoor clean-up of rooms:

	dusting blinds, cleaning windows etc.
FAMILY FUN DAY	A school event that takes place in early June on a Saturday where families are invited for a day of food, fun & games
HANDY PERSONS	Minor repairs of equipment/painting etc.
BIRTHDAY CAKE BAKERS	Using recipe provided by RPNS, bake 3 cakes (costs reimbursed)
DIRECTOR SUPPORT	Runs errands for director or teachers such as picking up program supplies
CLASSROOM BUDDY	Volunteers in classrooms for special events; activities; Reading Buddy Note: police check required
FOREST SCHOOL BUDDY	Volunteer in the Forest School classroom. Note: police check required

ORGANIZATION

COMMITTEES

In addition to the Board of Directors, the school sometimes requires the work of extra committees. These committees have one chairperson and several members. The role of the chairperson of a committee is to direct and coordinate the work of the committee members. These committees can change from year to year and may be as follows.

- Operations Committee (examples: Family Fun Day)
- Fundraising/Building Fund Committee
- Future of the School Committee

REGISTRAR

The Registrar is responsible for maintaining an updated registration list with assistance from the Director of RPNS. A Registrar Assistant assists the Registrar in these duties (see Operations Committee).

Task Description	Frequency
Prepare student lists and keep them updated with assistance from the Director	As needed
In the spring, revise the registration package and/or Parent Handbook.	Once a year
In the March, organize and execute registration for the following school year.	Once a year

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

This committee is responsible for various school operational tasks, such as playground maintenance and major events, such as Family Fun Day. Although this committee has by far the most members, the role of the committee chairperson is primarily administrative.

This person has two main functions:

- The matching of roles with parent volunteers (an activity which takes place primarily in September); and
- Acting as liaison between the Board/school administration and committee members during the school year. The Operations Chair is a voting Member of the Board of Directors and is required to attend monthly Board meetings.

The following list covers most of the activities that this committee would be involved in, but other activities may also be assigned to this committee by the Board if they fall within the same category.

Task Description	Frequency
Volunteer Choice Forms: develop and maintain a tracking record of parent volunteers with assistance from the Director	September and as needed
Contact parent volunteers and assign tasks with assistance from the Director.	As needed
Assist Fundraising Chair on major fundraising events by providing him/her with a list of parent volunteers.	As needed
Cleanup: Organize work parties for pre-school year, Spring cleanup and for Fall cleanup. The objective of these work parties is to maintain and/or repair the outdoor play area and various equipment and toys.	3 times a year

Family Fun Day: This event takes place in the Spring. It is an occasion for parents and children to get together and play games, eat and have fun!	Once a year, in June
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PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE & Information Technology

This committee is responsible for the school public relations and publicity of special events. The committee chairperson directs and coordinates all of the activities, and acts as liaison between the Board/school administration and committee members during the school year.

The following list covers most of the activities that this committee would be involved in, but other activities may also be assigned to this committee by the board if they fall within the same category.

Task Description	Frequency
Publicity: Publicize special events, fundraisers, open houses, registration, and so on.	Every two or three months
Maintain the RPNS website. Post newsletters and calendar of events provided by RPNS staff	As needed and monthly
Place ads in community and other newspapers and media (including Facebook and Twitter)	Every two or three months
Provide information to local school newsletters and/or suggest articles or photo opportunities for community.	Every two or three months
Help promote awareness of the school.	Every two or three months
Suggest creative ways of reaching the community.	ongoing

FUNDRAISING CHAIR

The Fundraising Chair is responsible for organizing subcommittees to raise funds for long term projects (example: RPNS New Building Fund)

Task description	Frequency
Assist the Director in organizing fundraisers	As needed
Coordinate with the Director and PR chair to advertise for fundraisers	As needed

* * * * *

Thank you for choosing Riverside Park Nursery School.

By working together, we can ensure that our children have a positive and rewarding preschool experience – one that will help prepare them to meet the successes and challenges of the years ahead to reach their full potential!

*** * * * ***

RPNS FOREST AND NATURE SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK



The world's forests are a shared stolen treasure that we must put back for our children's future. *Desmond Tutu*

Defining Forest School

How is it different from other outdoor learning experiences?

Forest School is different from other outdoor learning experiences in two ways. First, Forest School takes place in the same setting on a regular basis over an extended period of time. This gives students the opportunity to learn a great deal about the area and enables them to develop a lasting connection with nature.

Second, while there are some structured elements, the Forest School curriculum is largely emergent, child-directed, and play-based. The ethos of Forest School allows learners the time and space to develop their interests, skills, and understanding through practical, hands-on experiences. At Forest School, young people have the freedom to explore, play, build, create, imagine, and use their senses to experience the outdoor environment and engage with one another. Sustainability is woven into the culture of the classroom, and as nature becomes the third teacher, sustainability becomes the foundation on which both children and teachers stand.

At Forest School, there is a strong emphasis on educators observing, learning with, and teaching students in the context of the environment. This process of observation allows children the space and opportunity to delve into various activities and experiences guided by their imagination, rather than explicit, external direction. It also leads to a process of inquiry in which educators' primary role is to ask a multitude of questions based on what is emerging from a student's questions, experiences, and imagination. The guiding principle at Forest School is that children are competent and engaged learners, and with guidance and support, are able to lead their own learning process in directions far beyond what an educator can initiate on their own.

Principles of Forest and Nature School:

- *takes place in a variety of spaces, including local forests, creeks, meadows, prairie grasses, mountains, shorelines, tundra, natural playgrounds, and outdoor classrooms.*
- *is a long-term process of regular and repeated sessions in the same natural space.*
- *is rooted in building an on-going relationship to place and on principles of place-based education.*
- *is rooted in and supports building engaged, healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities.*
- *aims to promote the holistic development of children and youth.*
- *views children and youth as competent and capable learners.*

- *supports children and youth, with a supportive and knowledgeable educator, to identify, co-manage and navigate risk. Opportunities to experience risk is seen as an integral part of learning and healthy development.*
- *requires qualified Forest and Nature School practitioners who are rooted in and committed to FNS pedagogical theory and practical skills.*
- *requires that educators play the role of facilitator rather than expert.*
- *uses loose, natural materials to support open-ended experiences.*
- *the process is as valued as the outcome.*
- *requires that educators utilize emergent, experiential, inquiry-based, play-based, and place-based learning approaches.*

Taken from; "Forest and Nature School in Canada Guide" pub Forest School Canada, July 2014

EXPLORATION AND POSSIBLE OUTCOMES!

Forest School is incorporated throughout the school year (in all types of weather!) for *all* children!

Children attending our 2 Day programs will participate in 4 consecutive Forest School Thursdays. Likewise, children attending our 3 Day programs will participate in 4 consecutive Forest School Fridays. You will be notified in advance as to when your child's 'Forest School block' is scheduled. Your child's class along with their teacher, Paulette and a parent volunteer will explore the forest from 9:00 am to 11:30 am. Children are to be dropped off in our play yard at the regular 8:30 am start, and we will head to the forest at 9:00 am. Ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for the weather (see clothing list below).

We will be exploring the forested area at the back of the church property and occasionally the shoreline of the Rideau River.

Outcomes in Forest School

- appreciation for nature (why worms are good for the environment)
- fine and gross motor skills (moving rocks)
- cooperation with peers (building a fort with branches)
- using all our senses (finding animal tracks in the snow)
- learning new skills (tying knots in ropes)
- taking risks (climbing trees)

Risky Play in Forest School

Avoiding hazards and risks is often deemed necessary as a means of avoiding injury, litigation, and insurance claims, as well as keeping children “safe”. These assumptions are fueled by societal norms that now view overprotection as a fundamental part of the role adults should play as they care for children.

Avoiding all risks and hazards comes at a great cost *as healthy risk plays an important role in the development of the child*. “An exaggerated safety focus of children’s play is problematic because while on the one hand children should avoid injuries, on the other they might need challenges and varied stimulation to develop normally, both physically and mentally” (Kennair & Sandseter, 2011). As our children tell us that they want to experience age-appropriate risk through their every effort to climb trees, jump rocks, run down hills, build shelters, and get their hands full of mud, *how* do educators in Forest and Nature School programs begin to support and navigate healthy and age-appropriate risks?

The first step is to acknowledge children’s competencies and capacity to navigate risks and hazards, and that recognizing and experiencing risk in childhood is a fundamental component of healthy development and learning. In doing so, we are setting the stage for children to begin navigating risk in healthy and controlled doses. Additionally, FNS supports children as they learn to self-regulate: as children experience more risky activities and terrain, they learn to determine for themselves whether something feels safe or not, rather than look externally to adults to decide this for them.

Secondly, in Forest and Nature School risk management is viewed as a fundamental skill needed for young people’s safety and well-being. It is through risk management that we are then invited into a world where we can be supported to experience risk in their day to day. Educators have a duty of care towards young people, and therefore have responsibility not only to keep young people safe, but also to enable them to learn to manage appropriate risks for themselves.

In FNS, it’s very important to engage children in calculated, age-appropriate, purposeful and meaningful levels of risk. This is both an art and a science, and an educator spends a significant amount of time in the “Forest and Nature School Practitioners Course” developing appropriate policies and procedures to communicate this to their community at large. This process is, and should be, dynamic and revisited on a regular basis.

Taken from; “Forest and Nature School in Canada Guide” pub Forest School Canada, July 2014



DRESSING FOR OUTDOOR WEATHER!

For the Late Fall:

- Rain gear [waterproof boots, pants, jacket]
- Water proof boots
- Winter hat
- Warm Jacket [fleece or other breathable fabric ideal]
- Pack extra socks

Winter:

- Winter hat [must cover ears and stay on the head]
- neck warmer [no scarves please due to risk of strangulation]
- Two pairs of warm, waterproof mitts (make sure they are child sized)
- One warm, waterproof snowsuit
- One set of warm, waterproof boots (should be big enough for child to wiggle their toes)
- Wool socks
- Three base layers: thermal shirt and pants, middle layer, wool/fleece sweater [cotton is not recommended for cold weather conditions]

Warm, good quality outdoor clothing can be pricey, so check out second hand stores (Boomerang Kids) or online places like kijji and usedottawa.com

During cold weather please consider the following factors when dressing your child:

1. **Insulation:** Natural fabrics such as wool or silk work well as an inner layer, as does fleece. Polyester pyjamas are another good option. The key for this layer is to wick moisture away from the skin and insulate it with a breathable layer.
2. **Middle Layer:** This is another insulation layer that creates 'dead-air space' between skin and the elements. This airspace helps in keeping warm. Wool sweaters (Merino wool is exceptionally warm and soft on sensitive skin) and fleece tend to work well.
3. **Outer Shell:** This layer should be waterproof and wind-proof, as well as breathable.

Dressing For the Early Spring:

- Rain gear [waterproof boots, pants, jacket]
- Water proof boots

- Light weight hat or sun hat
- Spring Jacket [fleece or other breathable fabric ideal]
- Pack extra socks

RPNS will provide the following items for your child:

- Water bottle
- Morning snack
- Foam 'sit spot' mat
- Equipment and materials
- Natural bug spray



Insects: Yes, there are bugs in the forest!

Unfortunately you cannot enjoy the forest without encountering biting insects! This is why we need to be properly dressed for the forest and need to apply bug spray. Parents are encouraged to apply bug spray to their child prior to Forest School. RPNS will apply a natural spray to the children when needed.

RPNS Bug Spray *Ingredients*

- ✓
- ✓ Witch hazel
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Vegetable glycerin
- ✓ Citronella oil
- ✓ Eucalyptus oil

For information on ticks, visit Ottawa Public Health website:

<http://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/lyme-disease.aspx>

Food for Thought!

This change, signified by many teachers and parents withdrawing their children from parks, streets and community facilities, is predominantly fed by a culture of fear, insecurity and litigation. This is in light of current childhood research that states by not allowing children to participate in the life of their communities, teachers and parents are denying children the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills

*and experience to be safe and confident to confront the challenges
complex urban environments now present for them.*

*—Malone, Place-Based Pedagogies in Early Childhood and Primary School Settings
(2012, p. 2)*

Resources

Position Statement on Active Outdoor Play: <https://www.participaction.com/en-ca/thought-leadership/research/2015-position-statement-on-active-outdoor-play?q=var/www/html/www.participaction.com/en-ca/thought-leadership/research/2015-position-statement-on-active-outdoor-play>

Risk Reframing Tool for Parents: www.outsideplay.ca

Lawson Foundation: Outdoor Play Strategy: <http://lawson.ca/our-approach/impact-areas/healthy-active-children/outdoor-play-strategy>

<https://scienmag.com/children-who-play-outside-more-likely-to-protect-nature-as-adults/>

<http://www.nature-play.co.uk/blog/schemas-in-childrens-play>