



Parent Handbook

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Section 1: Our Programs

Program Statement

Pine Ridge Nursery School's (PRNS) philosophy stems from the belief that children are competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. We believe that children learn best through active play, participation and when they are having fun! PRNS utilizes the professional learning resource guide "How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years" (HDLH) to support program planning and development.

The Program Statement outlines the goals we strive to achieve with children and families, and the approaches being implemented in the program. It has been developed in consultation with staff and takes into consideration the needs and opinions of parents, educators, and students in the program.

Promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of the children

- *Approach:* The staff ensures that the classroom environment holds age-appropriate equipment that is in good repair. A daily inspection of the room during set up time will allow for ongoing monitoring.
- Staff follow the Durham Region Health Department Child Care Cleaning and Disinfecting Schedule. This states that toys and equipment are washed bi-weekly or more often if additional infection prevention and control measures are required. A toy washing record is kept.
- Staff communicate with each other and work together to ensure the whole room environment is supervised. Staff are always aware of the number of children in the room. Attendance verification records are kept up to date. The number of children in attendance is written on a white board near the classroom door for quick reference.
- The children are offered a snack each session. Children staying for extended care will be offered an additional snack or their food provided by parents. The snack menu is posted on Google Classroom for parents to review and a copy of the menu is kept on file for a minimum of 2 months.

Support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff

- *Approach:* Staff model appropriate positive social behavior and interact with others in a supportive and encouraging manner. This includes staff to staff, staff to parent, and staff to child communication.
- Staff greet children and parents in a hospitable way, using a friendly tone of voice with all individuals, while maintaining a calm, composed manner during any situation. Staff will actively listen and respond to child and parent communications.

Encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their ability to self-regulate

- *Approach:* Consistent sensitive and comforting care from supportive and trusted adults helps children develop self-regulation. Staff reinforce positive social behaviors by encouraging children in the moment, thus taking advantage of "teachable moments." Knowing the individual needs and personalities of each child and moving in to support positive communications between children is key to anticipating situations before they escalate. The staff use developmentally-appropriate re-direction strategies when necessary. As children learn to self-regulate, skills such as concentrating, sharing, and taking turns begin to develop.

Foster the children's exploration, play, and inquiry

- *Approach:* “Educators can gain a deeper understanding of children’s developing skills and evolving learning approaches and can support new learning by collaborating with children in discovery and sustained, shared thinking” (HDLH, pg. 35)
- Staff will encourage children to problem solve and find solutions to tasks/activities (i.e., suggest a more stable surface for the child struggling to build a block tower), support children to follow through with strategies (i.e., Help move the blocks to a better spot) and break solutions into small steps if necessary.
- Staff support the children’s learning during class time by balancing supervision of the children with engagement in the children’s experiences, thus creating opportunities to extend learning by adding new vocabulary, suggesting ideas, and providing materials.
- The staff are aware of the individual abilities and needs of each child in the class, and respond appropriately in the moment. (i.e., a teacher may write a child’s name on their painting, another child may be encouraged to write their own name guided by verbal cues, another might receive hand-over-hand help from the teacher)
- Teachers regularly plan group science-based experiences. Children have an opportunity to observe, participate, and inquire during the experience.

Provide child-initiated and adult-supported experiences

- “When children initiate experiences, generate ideas, plan, problem-solve, make meaningful choices, and act spontaneously through play, they are more likely to be happy and get along well with others, to have lower levels of stress, and to be attentive and motivated to learn” (HDLH) p. 35
- *Approach:* Staff follow the children’s cues at every possible opportunity. The program offers a blend of child-initiated and adult-supported activities. For example, a planned activity (craft) is implemented during the free play period. Children can move seamlessly between choosing their own activities, and coming to the table to complete a task with the teacher as a guide.

Plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans

- *Approach:* Staff ensure that all play equipment, furnishings in the classroom are age-appropriate, safe, organized and inviting for the children.
- Staff adapt the environment to meet the needs and interests of the children. Materials reflecting people with diverse cultures and abilities are placed in an inclusive manner throughout the room.
- Staff are given time away from supervision duties to prepare the learning experiences planned for the children and environment set-up. The paid day includes planning/prep time before class.

Incorporate active play, rest and quiet time into the day and consider the individual needs of the children receiving care

- *Approach:* The classroom environment is considered the “third teacher.” The children have a variety of areas in which to choose their own activities, including quiet play areas, literacy, and book centers. Children can choose to engage in quiet or active play. The daily schedule reflects an opportunity for restful activities (i.e., story time) to offer balance to the active day. Children who prefer to observe rather than participate in group activities can watch nearby until ready to join the group. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of individual children while encouraging participation in group activities.

Foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children

- *Approach:* Google Classroom is our online tool used to communicate information with families. We will share weekly program plans, menus and more on the Class Stream. Parents will receive notification of reminders and important dates on their Classroom App or via email.
- Parents are invited to participate in additional activities that may be offered (i.e., Family Night). Special events engage parents and extended family in the program, promoting a sense of belonging and contributing to the child's positive experience overall.

Involve local community partners and allow those partners to support the children, their families, and staff

- *Approach:* When a child in our setting could benefit from a local children's support agency (i.e., Grandview Children's Centre, Resources for Exceptional Children), then the supervisor or staff can make the parent aware of the agency. Records of consent, referral, and any follow-up reports or notes, will be kept in the child's individual file.
- Any offer from the community that might enrich the program is discussed and considered by the staff. PRNS seeks to support families and staff by partnering with groups and/or individuals (i.e. Durham Region Health Department) to provide information to all.

Support staff in continuous professional learning

- *Approach:* Continuous professional learning will be supported by:
 - ✓ Informing staff members of workshops and webinars that come to the attention of the school.
 - ✓ The fee for ongoing Standard First Aid training is covered by the school.
 - ✓ Frequent staff meetings provide an opportunity to share ideas on programming and to reflect and discuss current best practices.
 - ✓ Reference materials and professional resources are available on site.

Document and review the impact of the strategies set out in clauses above on the children and their families

- *Approach:* Pedagogical documentation (i.e., digital/ photo) prepared by the teachers illustrate the program in action and how the goals and approaches of the Program Statement are being followed in our setting.
- The Director observes the program in action on a regular basis. If any of the strategies set out in the clauses (a) to (j) above are observed to need a revision or correction, then either a change will be made immediately, or a discussion on the matter will be planned for the next staff meeting (scheduled monthly, or more often). Meeting minutes reflect discussion on any matters pertaining to program statement, changes made, or suggestions offered.
- Program Statement reflection/review is a regular agenda item at each staff meeting. The teachers implementing the strategies outlined in the statement are best equipped to make observations in the moment, and have valuable input to offer. The intent is to acknowledge that the program statement must continue to change and evolve, as our learning and understanding expands, our processes change and our families, educators and children change.
- The school recognizes that families are valuable partners in the development and review of the program statement. A variety of communication methods are used to keep families informed about their child's experiences, learning, and development within the program.

- Families are encouraged to share feedback, ideas, and suggestions regarding the program through ongoing conversations with educators and the Supervisor. Parent input may be gathered through informal discussions, email correspondence, and feedback received during special events and program activities.
- Feedback received from families is reviewed by the Supervisor and, where appropriate, shared with staff to support reflection, continuous improvement, and responsive programming.
- Parents and guardians are welcome to discuss the program, their child's experiences, or any questions or concerns with staff before or after class, or through email, telephone, or text communication.

Philosophy Of Inclusion

At Pine Ridge Nursery School, we believe in the potential of all children. The staff will “plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child’s learning and development will be supported and which is inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans” (CCEYA, 2014 clause 46(3)f). PRNS is responsible for the delivery of a quality program and must consider that safety and staffing needs can be met for the child, family and the school when accepting enrollments.

Program Statement Implementation and Monitoring Practices

Our Program Statement reflects our belief that children are competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. It outlines our goals for children’s learning and development and the approaches we use to support them. Pine Ridge Nursery School follows *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario’s Pedagogy for the Early Years* as the foundation for our program planning.

Prohibited Practices

The Ministry of Education prohibits certain practices that put children at risk or undermine their well-being. These practices include:

- Corporal punishment
- Physical restraint except to prevent immediate harm
- Confining a child or locking exits (except during emergencies as per policy)
- Harsh, degrading, or humiliating measures or language
- Depriving a child of basic needs
- Inflicting bodily harm, including forcing a child to eat or drink
- Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct, or any prescribed sexual act

How We Support Quality and Consistency

The Director observes the program regularly, provides coaching and professional learning opportunities, and follows up on any concerns related to policies or prohibited practices. Staff are expected to engage in positive, responsive interactions and to implement the approaches outlined in the Program Statement. All staff, students, and volunteers review the Program Statement before working with children and annually thereafter.

Activities off-premises

Pine Ridge does not usually plan for trips off-premises. However, in the event that an off-premises activity is being considered, parents will be informed in advance and must sign permission for their child to attend. This form will be kept in the child's file.

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Arrival

Drop-Off Routine:

- Parents are encouraged to drop off their child outside the front door.
- Staff will greet your child, assist with outerwear, and escort them to their classroom. This process supports independence, reduces parking challenges, and ensures a smooth transfer of care.
- Parents may enter the child care setting if needed or preferred.
- If someone other than your child's usual pick-up person will be collecting them, please inform staff at drop-off. Ideally, this person should already be listed on your child's Registration & Emergency Information form. If they are not listed, you may provide written authorization (note, email, or text). When necessary, the supervisor/designate may accept a phone authorization.
- Photo ID may be requested

Absence Monitoring

If a child does not arrive for class and the parent/guardian has not communicated in advance that the child will be absent, staff will reach out within one hour of your usual drop-off time. Staff will text first, then call if no response is received. This ensures we confirm your child's safety promptly.

Dismissal

Authorized Pick-Up

Children will only be released to individuals authorized on the child's file or approved by the parent/guardian that day. People on the pick-up list must be at least 13 years of age. Photo ID may be required to confirm identity. Departure times are noted on the Attendance Record. Parents should text the school number 905-261-1877 when they arrive. Staff will bring children downstairs and release them safely and in a staggered manner.

Late Pick-Up

If a child is not picked up at the scheduled end of the program:

- Staff will wait 10 minutes and call the parent/guardian
- If parents cannot be reached, staff will call emergency contacts listed on the child's file
- If no one can be reached and the centre is closing, staff will contact Durham Children's Aid Society for direction

Impaired Pick-Up

If staff suspect that a parent is impaired when they arrive to pick up their child, then the staff will request that the parent take a cab or contact an alternate person who can be responsible for driving them home. If this is not agreed to by the parent, the Police and Children's Aid may be called.

Programs, Age Range & Fees

Age Range

All programs serve children 2.5–5 years. Mixed-age groupings are permitted under our licence. A limited number of children aged 24–30 months may attend in each preschool group.

Morning Programs 9:00–11:45

Option	Days Offered	Monthly Fee
2 mornings/week	Mon/Wed or Tues/Thurs	\$290
4 mornings/week	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$580

Afternoon Programs 12:50–3:35

Option	Days Offered	Monthly Fee
2 afternoons/week	Mon/Wed or Tues/Thurs	\$290
4 afternoons/week	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$580

Extended-Care Programs 9:00–2:50 or 9:15–3:05

Option	Days Offered	Monthly Fee
2 extended-care sessions/week	Mon/Wed or Tues/Thurs	\$510
4 extended-care sessions/week	Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs	\$1020

- Attendance is fewer than 6 hours per day, as permitted by our licence. Start and finish times may be flexible, provided total daily attendance remains under 6 hours and the day ends no later than 3:35 p.m.
- Families send food from home for one nutrition break. The school provides a simple snack during the morning and afternoon classes. If a child's food from home is unavailable or unsafe (forgotten, contains an allergen, or is otherwise unusable), the school will provide a basic replacement snack and notify the parent.
- Outdoor play is not part of any session. Our program operates indoors only, as we do not have a playground and outdoor play is not required for half-day programs.

Friday Morning Class Add-On 9:00–11:45

Option	Fee
Friday morning class	\$35.80 × number of Fridays in the month

Children must already be enrolled in one of our other programs to request a Friday spot.

Daily Rates & Occasional Care

Type of Care	Fee	Notes
Morning or afternoon session	\$35.80	Used for prorating partial months or occasional care
Extended-care session (5h 50m max)	\$63.00	Used for prorating partial months or occasional care
Occasional midday extended care (approx. 11:45–12:50)	\$12.00	Can extend a morning or afternoon session; send snack from home
Occasional drop-in care on a non-scheduled day	Daily rate + \$10.00	Child must be enrolled in another program

Administration Fee

A \$50.00 administration fee is charged once per school year.

Program Description

Our program follows a flexible daily rhythm that allows children to move freely between activities and explore at their own pace. Each day begins with a warm welcome and a period of free play, where children choose from a variety of learning centers offering both quiet and active experiences. This time supports social interaction, hands-on exploration, imagination, creativity, and the development of early literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills.

Children decide how long to engage with each activity and what they would like to explore next. The learning environment acts as a “third teacher,” offering thoughtfully prepared materials for crafts, dramatic play, sensory exploration, music, literacy, STEM activities, and more. Educators observe, guide, and extend learning through intentional interactions, helping children build independence, confidence, and foundational academic skills through play. Valuable group experiences—such as class discussions, inquiry-based learning, story time, science experiments, and indoor gross-motor games—are woven into the program to support communication skills, community building, and shared learning.

Below is a general outline of our daily routine and transitions. Schedules may be adjusted to meet the needs of the group or for special event days.

Daily Schedules

Bathroom routines occur throughout the day, as needed. Times below represent the general flow of the day.

Morning Schedule (9:00–11:45)

9:00-10:00	Staggered arrival and playtime. Children are escorted by staff from the front door and assisted with outerwear. Classroom activities include crafts, literacy, dramatic play, STEM exploration, and free play
10:00-10:15	Tidy up time followed by music and movement; preparation for group activities and snack
10:15-10:35	Group activities (class discussion, inquiry, STEM, music, games) and handwashing in staggered groups
10:35-10:45	Snack
10:45-11:20	Indoor gross-motor games, crafts, and free play
11:20-11:45	Tidy-up, stories, music, dressing for home, and dismissal

Morning Schedule 2 (for additional classroom, depending on enrollment)

This schedule is used for our second classroom when enrollment requires two morning groups.

9:15-10:30	Staggered arrival and playtime. Children are escorted by staff from the front door, assisted with removal of outerwear. Classroom activities include crafts, literacy, dramatic play, STEM exploration, and free play
10:30-10:50	Tidy up time followed by group activities (class discussion, inquiry, STEM, music, games, preparation for snack)
10:50-11:00	Snack
11:00-11:25	Indoor gross-motor games, crafts, STEM activities, and free play
11:25-11:45	Tidy-up followed by music and movement
11:45-12:00	Stories, music, dressing for home, and dismissal

Afternoon Schedule

The afternoon class may be held in either classroom, depending on programming needs.

12:50-2:00	Staggered arrival and playtime. Children are escorted by staff from the front door, assisted with removal of outerwear. Classroom activities include crafts, literacy, dramatic play, STEM exploration, and free play
2:00-2:20	Tidy up time followed by group activities (class discussion, inquiry, STEM, music, games, preparation for snack)
2:20-2:30	Snack
2:30-2:55	Indoor gross-motor games, crafts, STEM activities, and free play
2:55-3:20	Tidy-up followed by music and movement
3:20-3:35	Stories, music, dressing for home, and dismissal

Full Day Schedule

The full day schedule combines the morning and afternoon session activities. The extended care period between sessions includes time for children to eat, rest, and engage in quiet play. Staff maintain sight and sound supervision throughout.

11:45-12:05	Indoor gross motor play and small group activities
12:05-12:10	Bathroom and handwashing
12:10-12:50	Nutrition break followed by quiet activities (books, puzzles, sensory bins)

Add-On Care Options

Eligibility

Children must already be enrolled in the program to take advantage of Add-on Care Options. This ensures continuity in their care and familiarity with the environment and staff. Requests for all Add-on Care Options will be reviewed with consideration for individual support needs.

Friday morning class 9:00 – 11:45

This add-on session offers the same engaging components as our core programs. Fees are calculated using the daily rate multiplied by the number of Friday classes offered each month. For more information or to register, please contact the office.

Drop-In care on non-scheduled day

This flexible add-on is available only when there is an absence or vacancy in the program. Parents may request to purchase additional care sessions when needed, providing a reliable solution for those days when your regular schedule changes, appointments, unplanned work commitments, etc. Fees are calculated using the daily rate plus \$10.00 administration charge, to accommodate the flexible nature of this service. Fees must be paid on the day the child attends. Please note that drop-in care cannot be used as a make-up session for time missed. It is designed to provide additional support when needed, rather than replacing scheduled days.

Midday Add-on Care (Approx 11:45 - 12:50)

Families may extend part-time programs with a midday add-on session for \$12.00. This option bridges the gap between morning and afternoon classes, beginning when the morning program ends (11:45 or 12:00, depending on the class) and continuing until the afternoon program begins at 12:50.

15-Minute Extra Time Add-Ons

Our programs run on scheduled start and finish times to ensure smooth staffing and structure. Doors open promptly at the scheduled class time.

For families who need a little extra flexibility on days when timing is tight, extra time add-ons may be purchased in advance for \$5.00 each, adding 15 minutes before or after a session.

Arrangements can be made through the office and are billed via QuickBooks, just like regular program fees. All add-on times purchased are non-refundable. If an add-on is booked but not used, it will remain on your account for future use and will only expire at the end of the school year or upon withdrawal. Requests totaling under \$10.00 may be carried forward and shown on the next monthly invoice. One add-on may be applied before a session and one after, allowing families to use both on the same day.

Pre-Class Add-On

Children may begin their session up to 15 minutes early.

After-class Add-On

Families may extend pick-up by up to 15 minutes beyond the scheduled end time. This option applies to morning half-day programs only and must be pre-booked. Afternoon extensions may be considered at the discretion of the director.

Requests must be arranged in advance. If extra time is not pre-arranged, late fees may be charged at the discretion of the director/designate. The Late Pick-Up Policy information is found under Fees, Admission and Discharge in Section 2 of the Parent Handbook.

March Break Camp

Core programs are closed Monday to Thursday during March Break. Camp runs on those days and is billed separately at the daily rate, as this time is not included in regular March fees.

Morning sessions run from 9:00 – 11:45, with afternoon sessions offered if there is sufficient interest. Children will enjoy a well-rounded program featuring crafts, dramatic play, experiments, and gross motor games. We combine fun with educational experiences designed to build social skills and help prepare your child for junior kindergarten.

The Friday class will continue as usual during this week. It is an add-on class and is scheduled to run during the March Break.

Entry to Preschool Camp

This optional program is offered before the one scheduled orientation session provided to each enrolled child. These short, play-based visits give children a flexible opportunity to spend additional time in the classroom, helping them feel comfortable and confident before the school year begins.

Format: Three one-hour sessions spaced over three days, to support a gentle transition

Cost: \$25 per session

Registration: Register for one, two, or all three sessions, depending on the child's needs

Program Features:

- Parents welcome to stay and support their child's transition
- Early relationship-building with educators
- Familiarization with the classroom through play-based activities

Children are invited to come play, explore, and warm up to preschool, building familiarity and confidence ahead of their orientation.



Section 2: Health Matters

Health Care and Nutrition

We are committed to promoting health and wellness in our setting. Staff follow all guidelines and recommendations provided by the Health Department.

- Snacks are provided daily
- Parents receive the monthly menu at the beginning of each month.
- To reduce the risk for children with food allergies, please do not send treats for birthdays or other special occasions
- If your child has a special diet or dietary restriction, please contact the supervisor to discuss accommodations

Daily Health Check / Screening for Illness

To help maintain a healthy environment, all parents/caregivers must monitor themselves and their children daily for symptoms of illness before coming to school.

Symptoms of ill health include:

- Fever
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny or congested nose not related to allergies or cold exposure
- Fatigue or unusual tiredness
- Headache
- Red or discharging eyes
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- Abdominal pain or unexplained rash

If your child is sick, please keep them home. Children must be 48 hours free of fever or gastrointestinal symptoms, and any other symptoms must be significantly improving before returning to class. Please contact the school to let us know the reason for the absence.

Entering the school:

- A person may enter only if they have passed a self-screening.
- Staff will complete a daily visual health check for each child and communicate any concerns.
- Parents are encouraged to drop off and pick up at the front door but may enter if necessary. Adults entering the setting should be feeling well.
- Parents are encouraged to say goodbye promptly and leave their child in the care of a teacher at the classroom door.

For health advice and information, visit: *Protection from respiratory illnesses | ontario.ca*

Illness and Exclusion

To help maintain a healthy environment, children who become ill while attending the program will be sent home. Parents will be contacted for timely pick-up if their child shows symptoms of illness.

Children must be 48 hours free of fever or gastrointestinal symptoms, and any other symptoms must be significantly improving, before returning to class. Parents must report the reason for a child's absence so staff can track illness and follow Public Health guidance when needed.

If Public Health declares an outbreak, the school will notify families by email and follow all required measures. In situations where symptoms are chronic or non-contagious, a doctor's note may be requested.

Adults entering the setting should be feeling well.

Sanitary Practices

We maintain sanitary practices in accordance with Durham Region Public Health standards. Staff are trained in cleaning, disinfecting, hand hygiene, and safe food-handling procedures.

Supervision of Children

Children are supervised at all times while in our care. Staff maintain required ratios, follow all supervision expectations set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, and ensure children remain within sight and sound throughout the day.

Our team provides active, attentive supervision during all classroom activities, transitions, and movement within the school. Staff position themselves to see and hear children, monitor the learning environment, and respond promptly to children's needs. Attendance is recorded at arrival and departure, and children are safely received from and released to their parent or guardian.

Although our program does not include sleep or rest time, staff continue to provide full supervision during any quiet or relaxation periods.

Anaphylaxis Policy

Our school is committed to providing a safe environment for children with life-threatening allergies. We follow all requirements under Sabrina's Law and the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, including maintaining individualized plans, training staff, and reducing exposure to known allergens.

Reducing Exposure

When a child with anaphylaxis is enrolled, all known allergens will be removed from the classroom during the child's attendance. Snacks provided by the school are free of identified allergens. Families will be informed of any food restrictions required to keep all children safe.

For extended-care sessions, parents must send nut-free food and avoid any items that contain allergens for children in that group.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents of children with anaphylaxis must:

- Complete the Anaphylaxis Emergency Plan and have it signed by a physician
- Provide an EpiPen to be kept at school
- Update the school immediately if allergy information changes

Staff Responsibilities

All staff, students, and volunteers receive training on each child's Individualized Anaphylaxis Plan and emergency procedures before providing care and at least annually. In the event of an allergic reaction, staff will follow the child's emergency plan.

Storage of Anaphylaxis Emergency Plans and EpiPens

EpiPens are stored in a clearly labeled zippered case attached to the Emergency Binder and kept out of reach from the children near the classroom entrance. A copy of each child's Individualized Anaphylaxis Plan will be stored in their file, in the zippered case, and in the Emergency Binder.

Medication Policy

If your child requires medication while at school, please provide it in the original labelled container. Parents must complete and sign the Administration of Medication form for any prescription or non-prescription medication. Some items—such as sunscreen, moisturizing lotion, diaper cream, lip balm, and hand sanitizer—may be authorized through a blanket permission form.

Emergency medications (such as EpiPens, inhalers, or other doctor-prescribed emergency treatments) must be supplied and will be stored in an accessible location for staff. Medication will be administered according to the written instructions provided. If a dose is missed or delayed, staff will notify you in writing at pick-up.

Pink Eye (Conjunctivitis) Protocol

Pink eye is an infection of the eye that can be caused by bacteria, viruses, allergies, or irritants. It is considered highly contagious. Because treatment depends on the cause, families should consult a health care provider to determine whether the pink eye is bacterial, viral, or due to another reason.

If staff suspect that a child may have pink eye, the child will be isolated as safely as possible while maintaining supervision of the group. The parent/guardian will be contacted for prompt pick-up. A child may return to school once cleared by a health care provider or when the supervisor/designate observes that the eye is clearly healthy. The supervisor may use discretion in consultation with the family.

Head Lice (Pediculosis) Policy

Head lice are common among school-aged children and do not indicate poor hygiene. They are a nuisance but do not cause illness.

Parent Responsibilities

Parents must inform the school immediately if their child has head lice or has been exposed. Treatment should follow Public Health guidelines. Children must be nit-free before returning to school. Regular head checks at home are encouraged.

School Responsibilities

If a case of head lice is reported, the school will clean the classroom according to Public Health recommendations and notify families in the affected group. Staff will check all children in the class. If lice or nits are found, the child will be discreetly removed from the classroom and a parent will be called for pick-up. Children will be checked again upon return; if lice or nits are still present, the child will not be able to stay for class.

Individualized Support Plans

If a family requests enrollment for a child with developmental or medical needs, the school may arrange a meeting to determine whether we can safely and meaningfully support the child within our program. When appropriate, an Individualized Support Plan (ISP) will be created in collaboration with the family and any professionals involved in the child's care.

ISPs outline how the school will accommodate the child's needs and ensure a safe and inclusive experience. Sensitive medical information will only be included with written parent consent. Families, staff, students, and regular volunteers review and sign the ISP upon enrollment, annually and whenever changes are made.



Section 3: Administration

Supervision of Volunteers and Students

Volunteers and students are welcomed into our program as part of their learning experience, but they are never left alone with children and are not counted in staffing ratios. Only employees who have completed their probationary period may have unsupervised access to children. Volunteers and students may not administer medication or be responsible for individualized plans on their own.

All volunteers and students receive orientation and training before working with children. This includes reviewing our Program Statement, Parent Handbook, policies, procedures, and any individualized plans. Each volunteer or student is partnered with a Registered Early Childhood Educator who provides supervision, guidance, and support throughout their placement.

Volunteers and students who are 18 years of age or older must provide a Vulnerable Sector Check and annual offence declaration. All individuals working or learning in the program understand their legal duty to report suspected abuse or neglect to the Supervisor/Designate and the Children's Aid Society.

Criminal Reference Check Policy

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, Pine Ridge Nursery School follows strict screening requirements for anyone who works or volunteers in the program.

Employees

All employees must provide a Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) dated within the past six months before beginning work with children. Employees complete an annual offence declaration and must obtain a new VSC every five years. If an employee has a break in employment longer than six months, a new VSC is required. Employees are required to inform the Supervisor/Designate if they are convicted of an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Volunteers and Students

Volunteers and placement students who are under 18 years of age are not required to provide a VSC. If they turn 18 while participating in the program, they must submit a VSC within one month.

Volunteers and students who are 18 years of age or older must provide a VSC dated within the past six months, complete an annual offence declaration, and obtain a new VSC every five years. They must notify the Supervisor/Designate if convicted of an offence under the Criminal Code of Canada.

Individuals from External Organizations

Professionals who work with children at the school (such as therapists, consultants, or bus drivers) must provide an offence declaration or an employer attestation before interacting with children and annually thereafter. The attestation must confirm that a VSC has been obtained or reviewed within the past five years and that no offences under section 9(1) of the CCEYA were listed.

Confidentiality

All VSCs, offence declarations, and attestations are stored securely and kept confidential. Documents are retained for three years, as required by licensing, and then shredded.

Compliance and Contraventions of Policies and Procedures

Compliance with Policies and Procedures

To ensure a safe, consistent, and high-quality program, all employees, students, and volunteers are required to follow Pine Ridge Nursery School's Program Statement, Parent Handbook, policies, procedures, and any individualized plans. These expectations help support the health, safety, and well-being of all children.

Review of Required Documents

Before beginning employment or placement, and again annually or whenever updates occur, employees, students, and volunteers must review the Program Statement, Parent Handbook, all policies and procedures, and any individualized plans. A signed record of this review is kept on file.

Monitoring Compliance

The Supervisor/Designate, along with RECE mentors, monitors compliance through daily observations and regular check-ins. For students and volunteers who remain with the program for six months or longer, a formal compliance review may be completed.

Contraventions

If an employee, student, or volunteer does not follow required policies or procedures, the Supervisor/Designate will meet with the individual to discuss the concern and determine whether additional support or training is needed. Continued non-compliance may result in further action, including termination of employment, placement, or volunteer involvement.

Wait List Policy

When program capacity has been reached, families may place their child on the wait list. There is **no fee** to join the wait list. Pine Ridge Nursery School maintains a fair, transparent, and confidential process for offering available spaces.

Joining the Wait List

Families submit a wait list request through our online Google Form. Each request is automatically time-stamped and added in chronological order. The wait list includes the child's name, date of birth, parent contact information, preferred start date or class, and any relevant circumstances noted by the family.

Placement Priority

When a space becomes available, placement is offered in the following order:

- Children of staff members
- Currently enrolled children requesting additional sessions
- Children on the wait list, based on:
 - ✓ date the request was received
 - ✓ age suitability for the available space
 - ✓ relevant program considerations

Families with special circumstances that would benefit from the program may be prioritized at the discretion of the Supervisor/Designate.

Offering a Space

Families will be contacted—usually by email—when a space becomes available. Parents are given at least one business day to accept or decline the offer. If no response is received within this timeframe, the next family on the list will be contacted.

Managing the Wait List

Families may request removal from the wait list at any time. Parents are responsible for keeping their contact information up to date. The Supervisor/Designate may periodically check in with families to confirm continued interest. A child may be removed from the wait list if the family does not respond to communication or does not follow through with the registration process.

Confidentiality

To protect privacy, only limited information is shared when a family requests their child's position on the wait list. Families will see only:

- the date the request was received
- the child's given name

All other personal information remains confidential.

Future Enrollment Requests

If a family requests a start date in a future school year, the child remains on the wait list and is noted as a future-year applicant. In April or May, families on the future-year portion of the list receive registration forms and submission deadlines for the upcoming school year. After the deadline, spaces are offered on a first-come, first-served basis. The school will try to place children in their first-choice class; if that option is full, alternate choices will be offered or families may choose to wait for an opening.

Parent Issues and Concerns

Ridge Nursery School is committed to transparent, respectful, and timely communication with families. All parent issues and concerns are taken seriously and will be addressed promptly, fairly, and professionally.

How Concerns Can Be Shared

Parents may share concerns verbally or in writing. Staff will acknowledge the concern within one business day (and no later than two business days). If an immediate response is not possible, staff will confirm that the concern has been received and arrange a follow-up time.

How Concerns Are Addressed

All concerns are documented and reviewed by the Supervisor/Designate. Investigations begin within two business days, or as soon as reasonably possible, and are conducted respectfully, impartially, and based on factual information. Families will be kept informed throughout the process.

Confidentiality

Concerns are treated confidentially. Information is only shared with staff who need it to support the investigation or ensure the safety and well-being of children. Information may be disclosed to regulatory bodies such as the Ministry of Education, the College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement, or the Children's Aid Society when required by law.

Conduct and Safety

Harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or threats toward staff or others will not be tolerated. If staff feel unsafe, they may end the conversation and report the situation to the Supervisor/Designate. Police intervention may be requested if necessary. Information about termination of care, when applicable, is outlined in the Parent Handbook.

Duty to Report

Everyone has a legal obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect. If a parent expresses concerns that a child may be harmed, they will be advised to contact Durham Children's Aid Society (DCAS). Staff are also required to report such concerns directly to DCAS, even if the information is unverified.

Types of Concerns and Who to Contact

Program-Related Concerns

Examples: daily routines, activities, toilet learning, menus

Contact: Any staff member or the Supervisor

Response: Staff will address the concern when possible and ensure it is reviewed by the Supervisor.

General Operations Concerns

Examples: fees, placement, registration

Contact: Supervisor

Response: The Supervisor will review and follow up with the family.

Staff-Related Concerns

Examples: communication, conduct, professionalism

Contact: Supervisor or Licensee

Response: The concern will be reviewed and addressed. Child safety concerns are escalated immediately.

Concerns About Other Adults on the Premises

Examples: Church staff, visitors

Contact: Supervisor

Response: The Supervisor/Licensee will review and follow up.

Child safety concerns are escalated immediately.

Student/Volunteer Concerns

Contact: Any staff member or the Supervisor

Response: The Supervisor/Licensee will review and follow up.

Child safety concerns are escalated immediately.

Escalation Options

If a parent is not satisfied with the response or outcome, they may request contact information to escalate their concern to:

- Ministry of Education: **1-877-510-5333**
- Durham Region Public Health: **905-668-7711**
- Durham Regional Police: **905-579-1520**
- Clarington Fire Department: **905-623-5126**
- College of Early Childhood Educators: **416-961-8558**

Fees, Admission and Discharge

CWELCC Status

Pine Ridge Nursery School is not enrolled in the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC, “\$10.00 per day plan”).

Fees

Program fees are listed in Section 1 under Programs, Age Range and Fees

Deposit

A non-refundable \$50 administration fee is due within 3 calendar days of accepting an offer of enrollment. If the fee is not received within this timeframe, the school may offer the space to the next applicant.

Monthly payments

Fees are due on the 21st day of each month to cover the upcoming month.
Preferred payment method: e-transfer to hollyasselin@pineridgenurseryschool.com.
Post-dated cheques payable to *Pine Ridge Nursery School Inc.* are also accepted.

Additional Charges:

- \$25 for NSF cheques
- \$10 for payments received after the 21st
- \$1 per minute late pick-up fee, at the discretion of the Supervisor/Designate

Refunds:

Refunds are not provided for:

- illness
- family vacations
- statutory holidays
- unplanned school closures (e.g., power outage, inclement weather)

Exception: Refunds will be issued for government-mandated closures (e.g., public health emergencies).

If you have paid multiple months in advance, any unused fees beyond the final month will be refunded upon withdrawal. Post-dated cheques will be shredded.

Withdrawing your child from the program:

Parents are asked to provide one month's written notice when withdrawing their child.

- Notice must be given no later than the 21st day of the month prior to the intended withdrawal.
- Monthly payments are non-refundable once submitted
- The school will remind families to collect belongings on the child's final day. Items not collected within one month will be donated.

Tax Receipts

Tax receipts are issued in February or anytime upon request.

Immunization

A copy of your child's immunization record is required upon enrollment. If your child is not immunized or is on a delayed schedule, one of the following standardized forms must be submitted:

- Statement of Medical Exemption
- Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief

Children may not begin the program without one of these documents on file.

Admission Considerations

Pine Ridge Nursery School welcomes all families and strives to support each child's successful participation in our program. During the admissions process, parents are encouraged to share any information that may help us understand their child's needs, routines, or comfort strategies. This information allows us to plan for a smooth transition and ensure the program can safely meet the needs of all children.

To support a positive adjustment, the school does not accept new enrollments after mid-May. Children who begin this late in the school year often do not have enough time to settle into routines, build relationships, and fully benefit from the program before June. Families are welcome to join the wait list for the upcoming school year. The Supervisor may make an exception if the child is already familiar with the program.

The school must ensure that it can deliver the program safely and effectively within available resources. One-to-one care is not available, and the school's ability to provide additional support is limited. While educators will do their best to help each child feel comfortable and successful, there may be situations where the level of support a child requires exceeds what the program can safely provide.

Additional Support Meeting (After Enrollment)

Every child adjusts to a new environment differently, and sometimes needs emerge only after a child begins participating in the group setting. If educators observe behaviours that impact safety, well-being, or successful participation, the school may arrange an Additional Support Meeting with the family.

This meeting is a supportive, collaborative conversation focused on helping your child feel comfortable and successful. Together, we may explore strategies such as:

- adjusting routines or transitions
- introducing comfort or regulation supports
- increasing communication between home and school
- temporarily modifying the child's schedule, if helpful

In some cases, a short, supported transition period may be recommended to help your child settle into the program at a pace that feels positive and manageable.

The goal is always to help your child thrive while ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of all children in the program. If, after implementing supportive strategies, the school determines that it cannot meet the child's needs within available resources, the Supervisor/Designate will work with the family to discuss next steps.

Termination of Care

We value our relationships with families and make every effort to support each child's participation in a safe, meaningful, and inclusive environment. When concerns arise, the school will work with families to identify strategies and supports.

In rare situations, it may be necessary for the school to withdraw services. Grounds for termination may include, but are not limited to:

- the program's inability to meet the child's needs within available resources
- non-payment of fees
- inappropriate parent/guardian behaviour (harassment, abusive conduct, damage to property)
- failure to comply with school policies and procedures

The school will provide two weeks' written notice of termination. The school reserves the right to terminate care immediately, with written notice, if the safety or well-being of staff or children is at risk. Any fees paid beyond the termination date will be refunded.

Enrollment applications may be submitted by email, mail, or in person. Pine Ridge Nursery School must ensure it can safely and effectively support all children enrolled. The school may decline enrollment if the level of care required exceeds available resources. It is essential that parents share all relevant information about their child's needs.

Holidays

We follow the local school board schedule for holidays, including 2 weeks at Christmas, March Break (Mon to Thurs), Thanksgiving Day, Family Day, Easter Monday, and Victoria Day. Parents are informed of any holiday via email at least two weeks in advance. Reminders of holiday closure are posted on Google Classroom. Fee rebates are not given for months with statutory holidays.

Inclement Weather/Power Outage

Nursery school may be cancelled if weather conditions create unsafe travel or dangerous road situations. Families will be notified by telephone, email, and/or Google Classroom at least one hour before class start time. Our outgoing telephone message will also reflect the cancellation. Because the website is not updated in real time, it will not display weather-related closures.

Fee rebates are not provided for unplanned school closures due to inclement weather or power outages.

Special Needs Resourcing (SNR)

SNR agencies are funded through the Regional Municipality of Durham and the Ministry of Education to assist in providing inclusive environments for children and families. The school works with local agencies that provide support services. See below for a reference link to information and the access line at Resources for Exceptional Children and Youth. <https://www.rfecydurham.com/index.php/programs-and-services/access-services> .

Privacy Policy

The personal information collected in each child's file is required to provide service to families and to meet licensing requirements. Pine Ridge Nursery School Inc. and its employees respect your privacy and will only disclose or share information with your written consent, or when required by law.

All personal information is securely stored and retained for three years, as required by licensing. After this period, documents are shredded to protect confidentiality.



Section 4: Incident Management

Accident Reporting

Any injury, even minor, will be reported to parents. Staff follow the school's accident reporting protocol, administer first aid as needed, and complete an accident report. Families receive either a hard copy or an electronic copy of the report.

If an injury is considered serious, parents will be contacted immediately and the school's emergency procedures will be followed. All accident reports are documented in the daily written log.

Fire Safety, Evacuation, and other Emergencies

Fire safety and emergency preparedness are an important part of keeping children safe. Fire Drill and Evacuation Procedures are posted in each classroom and reviewed annually by all staff, students, and regular volunteers. Fire drills are conducted monthly, recorded in the daily log, and documented on the fire drill record sheet. Families will receive a brief notification after each drill through Google Classroom or email. Children's artwork is displayed thoughtfully and does not exceed 20% of wall space, as required by fire safety guidelines.

Pine Ridge Nursery School has detailed emergency response procedures that outline three phases:

- **Immediate Emergency Response**
- **Next Steps During an Emergency**
- **Recovery**

During any emergency, staff ensure that children are kept safe, supervised, and accounted for at all times.

If evacuation is required, the immediate gathering point is the front walkway of St. Paul's United Church, or the church hall/gym, depending on the situation. If it is unsafe to return to the school, children and staff will proceed to the **Clarington Public Library**, 163 Church Street, Bowmanville. Parents will be contacted by telephone from the evacuation site. Emergency services personnel may direct us to evacuate to a different location, and their instructions will always be followed.

For emergencies involving a child with an individualized support plan (ISP), staff follow the procedures outlined in that plan. If an unexpected emergency occurs that does not have a pre-existing plan, the Supervisor/Designate will guide staff on the immediate response and next steps. Any emergency that meets the criteria for a serious occurrence will be reported according to our Serious Occurrence Policy. All emergency situations are documented in the daily log. The full Emergency Management Policy and Procedures is available in our Policies & Procedures Binder in the office.

Missing Child Response Procedure

If a child cannot be immediately located, staff conduct a rapid search, secure exits, and expand the search while maintaining supervision of the group. Emergency services and families are contacted promptly if required. A Missing Child Drill is completed every three months and documented in the daily log, with records kept for a minimum of two years. The full procedure is available in our Policies & Procedures Binder in the office.

Serious Occurrence Policy

Pine Ridge Nursery School follows the Ministry of Education's Serious Occurrence requirements to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all children. A Serious Occurrence is any significant incident that affects a child or the operation of the program and must be reported to the Ministry.

What Is a Serious Occurrence?

The Ministry defines the following categories:

- Death of a child receiving care (on or off the premises)
- Abuse, neglect, or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child while receiving care
- Life-threatening injury or illness of a child in the program
- A missing or temporarily unsupervised child
- Unplanned disruption of normal operations that poses a risk to children (e.g., fire, flood, gas leak, carbon monoxide detection, outbreak, lockdown, emergency relocation or temporary closure)

How Serious Occurrences Are Managed

If a Serious Occurrence involves a child enrolled in the program, families will be notified as soon as reasonably possible. Staff respond immediately to ensure safety, follow emergency service directions, and document the incident according to Ministry requirements.

The Supervisor/Designate reports all Serious Occurrences to the Ministry of Education within the required timelines. A summary of the Serious Occurrence and any actions taken will be posted in a location visible to families. Updates are added as needed, and the summary remains posted for at least 10 business days after each update.

Individualized Support Plans (ISPs)

If a Serious Occurrence involves a child with an individualized support plan, staff follow the procedures outlined in that plan. For emergencies without an existing plan, the Supervisor/Designate provides direction on immediate response and next steps.

Documentation and Follow-Up

All Serious Occurrences are documented and reviewed. The Supervisor/Designate may conduct an internal review to support staff, strengthen practices, and reduce the likelihood of future incidents. Serious Occurrence records are retained for the required period under licensing regulations.



Section 5: Recommendations for Parents

To help keep belongings organized and avoid mix-ups, please label all items with your child's name especially outerwear, which changes frequently with the seasons.

What Your Child Needs for Preschool

- A backpack large enough to carry crafts and clothing
- Indoor shoes with slip-on or Velcro closures (preferred over laces).
- Two sets of spare clothes, including underwear or diapers, pants, a shirt, and socks.
 - ✓ One set should be packed in a labelled Ziploc bag and will be kept at school. Storage space is limited; please include four diapers only, and we will text you when refills are needed.
 - ✓ One set should be packed in a labelled Ziploc bag and kept in your child's backpack daily.

Please dress your child in easy-to-manage clothing. Preschool is busy, active, and often messy—comfortable, practical clothing helps children participate fully and independently.

A Happy Start

Before your child begins the program, an orientation session will be scheduled for your family. This visit allows children to explore the classroom and meet the educators, helping them feel comfortable and familiar with the space.

An All About Me form is included in the enrollment package. Sharing your child's interests and preferences helps us prepare materials that feel welcoming and meaningful from the very first day.

We understand that attending preschool without a parent may be new or sometimes challenging. Our educators are experienced in supporting children who feel anxious or hesitant to separate. We view children as capable and resilient, and with the right support, they can adjust successfully to new environments. When helpful, an individualized transition plan—including a modified schedule—may be created to help your child gradually build comfort and confidence.

Tip for families: Offering simple, reassuring information can ease the transition. Let your child know there will be new toys to explore and new friends to meet. Play skills and friendships develop naturally over time with participation in group care.

Parking

Do:

- Park legally. The school cannot cover the cost of parking tickets.
- Allow extra time to find parking at arrival and departure.
- Expect to use street parking or the municipal lot.
- Use the accessible parking space on the premises if you have a valid permit.
- Call or text if you are having difficulty finding parking—we will assist where possible.
 - ✓ School phone numbers: 905-261-1877 (cell) or 905-697-6384 (landline)

Do Not:

- Park on the premises unless you are licensed to use the accessible spot. All other on-site parking spaces are reserved for Church staff and patrons.