

All School Parent Handbook



Bringing wonder, beauty and nature connection to learning

This Parent Handbook is intended to serve as a primary resource for our programs and guidelines. We encourage you to seek out other resources, such as the school's website www.rowantreeschool.ca, your child's teacher, other school staff, the Board of Directors and community members.

2023-24 Faculty Contact List

ADMINISTRATION

Sabrina Hale – Head of School sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca

Elaine Kempt – Administration and Finance Co-ordinator info@rowantreeschool.ca

Mike Hendren – Board Chair mikejhendren@gmail.com

PRESCHOOL / KINDERGARTEN / GRADE SCHOOL

Families will receive contact information for their child(ren)'s class teachers once the staffing has been determined for the upcoming school year.

Rowan Tree Children’s School – All School Parent Handbook

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OPENING MESSAGE

The Rowan Tree Children’s School Faculty, Staff and Board of Directors extend a warm welcome to all new and returning families. We respect the trust that you have shown us by placing your child in our school and look forward to working together for the benefit of your child.

OUR MISSION

Our mission at Rowan Tree Children’s School is to instil a sense of wonder and curiosity in our students, leading to a deepening interest in the world around them, reverence for nature, respect for each other, and finding purpose in their actions.

Our teachers lead with integrity, respecting each student and inspiring them, igniting a fire and guiding them on their path towards a love of learning and meaning making.

Our teachers aspire to bring their students into a Waldorf-inspired learning environment, steeped in the Waldorf and Forest School principles, dedicated to the task of educating the whole child, the head, heart and hands.

Our curriculum and principles allow the students to begin with inquiry-based outdoor experiences that awaken students to their own unique ways of learning and growing towards their educational goals.

We strive to build confidence, resilience, sense of self-worth, trust in community, lasting connections and love for the earth through our Waldorf and Forest School curriculums.

Our values are interconnected, interwoven, creating a ‘riverbed’ that supports education.

Our students discover a path towards freedom, the freedom to shape their own destiny.

INCLUSIVITY STATEMENT

Our Rowan Tree Children’s School community embraces and invites students and families of all cultures, faiths, genders, abilities, and backgrounds. We celebrate each student’s unique individuality. We strive to create equal opportunities for all learners through thoughtful differentiation and collaborative programming to support diverse learning needs. ALL are welcome. We are committed to anti-discrimination and addressing bias in our teaching and learning. We aim to be accountable to this statement and we are working on accountability processes. We strive to affirm, celebrate, and uphold the beauty and the good found in all children of the world.

INTRODUCTION

History

Founded in 2004, Rowan Tree Children's School currently offers a preschool program for ages 2.5 to 4 years, plus a Nature Kindergarten class (4-6 yrs) and a Grade School program (6+ yrs). Our Kindergarten and Grade School programs run Monday through Friday, from 8:50 am to 3:20 pm.

Small class sizes offer a close knit, warm and nurturing environment, one that nourishes the senses through self-directed play, imitation and rhythm.

In 2011, our preschool became a provincially licensed day care centre and we have added two new Early Childhood Educators (RECE) to our staff.

In 2017 the Rowan Tree Children's School became an incorporated non-profit school, run by a Board of Directors.

Our Nature Kindergarten opened in the fall of 2019. Followed by the addition of our Grade School program in the fall of 2020.

Rowan Tree Children's School is listed as a Private School with the Ontario Ministry of Education.

School Organisation

Rowan Tree Children's School is an independent, non-profit organisation that is unique in its form of governance and administration. Waldorf schools are 'self-administered', with teaching staff involved in the administration and governance of the school. Waldorf schools model collaborative leadership and explore forms of governance that meet current and future needs of society. Our organisational form includes a cooperative structure, committee involvement, decision-making based on consensus or dialogue, and regular review. The Office Administrator, Preschool Faculty Lead, and Kindergarten & Grade School Faculty Lead / Curriculum Coordinator form the current Leadership Team. The Leadership Team works closely with both the Board of Directors and the Faculty Team to make strategic and operational decisions for the school.

Education Model

Rowan Tree Children's School offers a 'blended' education model, combining Waldorf-inspired programming with Forest School principles, Inquiry-based learning, and place-based education.

Our Preschool is a licensed program under the Child Care and Early Years Act and with the Ministry of Education and is a member of WECAN (Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America).

Our Nature Kindergarten and Grade School programs offer a 'blended' education model, combining Waldorf-inspired programming with Forest School principles, Inquiry-based learning, and place-based education. The Grade School classes follow the Waldorf curriculum and our students benefit from an integrated approach to learning Literacy, Numeracy, Social Studies, Science, Physical Education, Health, and the Arts. Students spend a portion of the daily programming outdoors in the adjacent green space and local park learning through inquiry, and hands-on activities.

Our school is growing with our oldest students by adding a Grade every school year. We are planning for a preschool through 8th grade Waldorf-inspired school by the 2024-25 school year.

What is Waldorf Education?

"The heart of the Waldorf Method is the conviction that education is an art – it must speak to the child's experience. To educate the whole child, the heart and will must be reached as well as the mind." ~ Rudolf Steiner

Founded in Germany in the early 20th century, Waldorf education is an independent and inclusive form of education based on the insights and teaching of renowned Anthroposophist, artist and scientist Rudolf Steiner. Evolving from a profound understanding of the human spirit and human development, Waldorf education is regionally adaptive and has grown to include hundreds of schools worldwide.

Principles of Waldorf Education

- Waldorf education addresses the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, artistic, and spiritual capacities of the human being as they relate to phases of development.
- Waldorf curriculum is created to meet and support the phase of development.
- The Waldorf teacher uses their understanding of child development, their insights, and the environmental context to meet the needs of the children in the class.
- The Waldorf teacher works with the developing individuality of each student to cultivate a healthy and enduring relationship that can last and strengthen over many years.
- The Waldorf teacher supports their practice with ongoing personal and professional development in order to cultivate their imagination, inspirations, and intuition needed for their work.

What is Forest School?

"Forest School is an inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees." ~ Forest School Association (UK)

Forest School is based on Scandinavian learning theories and the work of Rudolf Steiner, Maria Montessori, and Kurt Hahn, among others. It is an educational philosophy that fosters connection to self, to others, and to the natural environment and develops a sense of belonging.

Principles of Forest School

- Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a natural environment.
- Forest School aims to foster a relationship with nature through regular personal experiences in order to develop long-term, environmentally sustainable attitudes and practices.
- Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of its participants, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.
- Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.
- The Forest School leader is a reflective practitioner who continuously develops their professional practice.
- Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes (play, choice, and inquiry) to create a community for development and learning.

What is Place-Based Education?

“Place-based Education “is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, the arts and other subjects across the curriculum.”

~David Sobel, author of Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms and Communities (2004)

Principles of Place-Based Education

- Grows from the specific natural and human-created environment students live in.
- Cuts across all academic subjects and invites interdisciplinary work.
- Engages students in the community and the community in the education of the students.
- Promotes academic and intellectual rigour and active, responsible citizenship.

PROGRAMS

Preschool (2.5-4 yrs)

We protect the integrity of childhood by filling the children’s senses with beauty and meaning while surrounding them in love. We strive to light a fire that ignites the child’s own innate ability to wonder, be curious and find joy with their teachers, friends and in the natural world.

Rowan Tree Preschool is a licensed program under the Child Care and Early Years Act and with the Ministry of Education. Rowan Tree maintains a small classroom size of no more than 12 children per day in the Preschool. Two qualified teachers will be present always to ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child. As a Waldorf-inspired program, our Preschool incorporates all nine essential aspects for the healthy development of the young child as outlined by WECAN (Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America). These include:

1. Love and Warmth
2. An Environment that Nourishes the Senses
3. Creative and Artistic Experiences and Rhythm
4. Imitation and the Young Child
5. Free, Imaginative Play Inside and Out
6. Protection of the Forces of Childhood
7. Gratitude, Reverence, and Wonder
8. Joy, Humour, and Happiness
9. Adult Caregivers on a Path of Inner Development

Inspired by the principles of Waldorf education, we provide an environment that is tuned to the sensibilities of young children. Through music, art, stories, and the rhythm of the day, we foster a child’s curiosity and interest in the world. We feel we can only instil a sense of caring and compassion in children, if we, as teachers and parents, act with dignity, love, reverence and respect.

A well-established rhythm of the day is key to the children’s positive experience at Rowan Tree. Children feel safe and secure if the daily routine is consistent and fine tuned to their needs. A time to breathe out (active and lively play) is then followed by a time to breathe in with quiet time, storytelling and singing. We create a wholesome space by providing multi functional wooden toys

and play structures, natural materials, textures and colours that bring a sense of warmth, security and beauty to the classroom.

Nature Kindergarten (4-6 yrs)

Rowan Tree Nature Kindergarten is a Waldorf inspired, play- and place-based educational program. This program is designed to support the development of the whole child (head, heart, and hands) through nature immersion, unstructured flow learning, child-inspired emergent curriculum, an inquiry-based teaching style, imaginative play, and creative and artistic experiences.

Your child will benefit from a warm, nurturing learning environment that puts nature and the child at play at the centre of learning. Lesson plans flow organically from what nature presents and from the children's interests. Teachers are mentors, guides and role models, actively embodying curiosity, gratitude, reverence, wonder, and engagement in nature while allowing children to engage through imitation and leading their own learning from the inside out.

Following the Forest and Nature School principles, children and educators build a relationship with the land through regular and repeated access to the same natural spaces over an extended period. Children will experience the richness of each changing season through sensory perception, sounds, light, colour, scent and textures of the natural world. They will have the chance to find joy and build confidence by connecting with each other and the environment, engaging in new activities, and observing and learning about nature as it surrounds them.

Depending on the season and the weather, you can expect 30-50% of the day to be spent in a Waldorf inspired classroom. The classroom environment is intentionally arranged and filled with beautiful nature sourced materials that inspire and encourage children to work together, build social skills through self-directed play. Teachers will also lead the children into a more imaginative, creative time through singing, storytelling, drama and gross motor and fine motor creative activities. Hands-on activities include painting, clay modelling, sewing, finger knitting, baking, building, wood working.

The curriculum in Nature Kindergarten begins with the recognition that each child has their own unique set of gifts, talents, abilities, and ever-evolving interests. Our job is to nurture those capacities by offering lots of opportunities to explore, experiment, create, interact, and play. The foundation of successful life-long learning is built by hands-on experiences.

Activities include:

- Nature exploration, daily walk outdoors
- Seasonal festivals
- Storytelling, drama, puppetry, verses, poetry, fairy tales
- Measuring for cooking and baking, counting games
- Gardening, climbing, balancing
- Singing, movement, musical instruments, dancing games
- Watercolour painting, crafts, crayon drawing
- Sewing, woodwork, textiles, needlework, modelling

Through these experiences our kindergarten students develop visual, auditory, and kinesthetic readiness to explore the world of letters, numbers, writing and arithmetic in grade school. Imaginative play, the focus of the early childhood classroom and the true 'work' of the child, encourages problem-solving and creative thinking. The love of learning and the foundation for academic excellence are cultivated through imaginative play.

Grade School (grades 1-7)

Class teachers and subject teachers work to create and develop a dynamic learning environment, both outdoors and in the classroom that brings meaning and relevance to learning, develops confidence and resilience in our students and acknowledges that students have inner capacities and abilities that need only be nurtured to grow. Our class teachers work towards building a framework that enriches and supports the student's individual learning style. Our teachers strive to ensure that our students feel supported, encouraged, valued and acknowledged for each of their unique gifts while building a sense of 'community' and 'respect' within the group. The Grade School programming:

- Places equal value on the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of students.
- Promotes authentic learning with high expectations.
- Provides an open atmosphere for the student's discovery of self, others, and the world around them.
- Encourages an intimate connection to the natural world and surrounding communities through in-depth, integrated and respectful study.

Our Grade School classes follow the Waldorf curriculum covering Language Arts, Mathematics, History, the Sciences, French, Visual Arts, Drama, storytelling, Music, handwork (sewing, knitting, felting and woodworking), gardening and conservation programs. During core curriculum days, students take part in a Main Lesson, Subject Lessons, and Skills Practice.

The Main Lesson embraces and addresses a varied and progressive range of skills, competencies and faculties in numeracy, literacy, the arts, science and social studies. The Main Lesson is an extended period lasting from an hour to ninety minutes. During this time, the class teacher presents the current academic subject. Each Main Lesson is planned to involve the thinking, feeling, and doing capacities (head, heart, hands) of the students. Due to the length of the lesson itself, and the fact that the same subject is studied intensively for three to four weeks before a new subject is introduced, students are able to penetrate the subject with unusual depth.

The Main Lesson provides an opportunity to work with academic material in a variety of ways. Main Lessons are interdisciplinary and each day's Main Lesson is viewed as an integrated and organic whole. Meaningful connections are made from class experiences outdoors, across subject areas and between Main Lesson themes. The class teacher chooses materials, presentations and activities to suit the requirements of the curriculum and the interests and needs of the specific class.

A copy of our Grade School curriculum can be requested from the Office Administrator info@rowantreeschool.ca or Curriculum Coordinator sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca

Forest School Enrichment Day (grades 1-7)

Our Forest School Enrichment Day is offered on Fridays and is an opportunity for homeschooled students, or those attending other educational settings Monday through Thursday, to join our Full Time Grade School students for a day of specialised programming. Learning activities on our Forest

School Enrichment Day will be entirely outdoors. Students will have access to indoor space to use the washroom, and to warm-up during cold weather.

Students will benefit from immersion in nature and community while participating in hands-on, experiential activities and projects outdoors linked to the season and rhythm of the year. Gardening, seasonal makers workshops, handwork, nature crafts, bushcraft, survival skills, outdoor cooking, ecological studies, orienteering, and nature exploration will provide enrichment opportunities for each learner.

Inspired by the principles of Waldorf education and by the Forest School model, we provide an environment that is tuned to the sensibilities of our students. Through nature-based hands-on learning, forest exploration and discovery, skill-building tasks, music, art, stories, we foster a child's curiosity and interest in the world, build resilience in our students, ignite a passion for learning and caring. Our teachers aim to instil a sense of wonder, gratitude and compassion in children, by modelling dignity, love, reverence and respect.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Administrative Fee

Rowan Tree Children's School charges a non-refundable Administrative Fee at the time of enrolment.

New Students	\$100
Returning Students	\$50

Tuition Deposit

A \$300 tuition deposit is collected at the time of enrollment to secure the student's spot in the chosen program. The deposit amount is deducted from the September tuition payment.

Tuition

Each year, the Finance Committee recommends a tuition level based on the needs of the coming year and the prospective enrolment. The Board of Directors approves the final figures and notifies current and new families of the new tuition fee, by February.

Rowan Tree Children's School has opted-in to the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC). Our base tuition fee for the Preschool program is \$48. The CWELCC system supports quality, accessibility, affordability, and inclusivity in licensed child care. It was initiated and funded by the Government of Canada. CWELCC is a five-year plan to reduce the cost of child care to an average of \$10 per day by 2026.

If amounts are not paid after 30 days from the original date due, the Office Administrator will be in contact with the student's family to make an alternative payment plan or arrangement.

In addition to tuition, there is a supply fee to cover incidental costs.

Tuition Fees 2023-24

Administrative Fee (non-refundable): \$100 for new students, \$50 for returning students

Tuition Deposit: \$300 payable at time of registration (Preschool, Kindergarten, Grade School programs)

Early Childhood Tuitions

Program	Duration	Tuition
Parent & Infant <i>Program is in development and will be dependent on interest and staffing. Parent & Infant sessions run Saturday mornings in 6-12 week sessions throughout the year. Further information is available from the Office Administrator.</i>	6-12 weeks	\$90 - \$180
Preschool (age 2.5-4) Includes lunch and snacks	1-5 day / week	\$48 / day*

*No sibling discount or full-time enrolment discount can be applied

Nature Kindergarten (age 4-6)

Program	Duration	Tuition
Full Time Enrollment Includes afternoon snack	5 days / week	\$9,666.54* year
Part Time Enrollment Includes afternoon snack	4 days / week	\$9,097.92 year
	3 days / week	\$6,823.44 year
	2 days / week	\$4,548.96 year
One Day Monday or Friday only Includes afternoon snack	1 day / week	\$2,340 year

**A 15% discount is included for full-time enrollment

Before & After School Care*

Item	Fee
Before School Care Preschool (8 - 9 am) Kindergarten, Grade School (8 - 8:50 am)	\$10 / day
After School Care	\$10 / day

Grade School (1-7)

Program	Tuition
Full Time Enrollment Grade 1-2 Grade 3-4 Grade 5-7 Grade divisions are dependent on enrollment	\$9,666.54** year
Core Program - 4 days Monday to Thursday	\$9,097.92 year
Forest School Enrichment Day Fridays only	\$2,340 year

**A 15% discount is included for full-time enrollment

Supply Fees

Preschool 2-5 days / week	\$50 / year
Nature Kindergarten 3-5 days / week	\$100 / year
Nature Kindergarten 1-2 days / week	\$50 / year
Grade School Core Program & Full Time	\$100 / year
Grade School Enrichment Day	\$50 / year

Additional Discounts

Sibling Discount	5%
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Additional Information

Tuition Increase
 Our admission fees are currently below industry standards and may increase periodically until industry standard is reached.

Preschool (3-4:20) Kindergarten, Grade School (3:20 - 4:20 pm)	
There may be a charge for late pickup.	
Before & After School Care	\$15 / day
Before & After School Care Full Time / Annual Includes 15% discount	\$2422.50
*100% eligibility for child care tax receipt	

Before & After School Care is invoiced monthly.

Occasional use is available depending on space. All registration for this service is handled by the Office Administrator.

Tuition Adjustment

Our tuition adjustment program exists to serve families who do not have the means to fully cover the costs of their child’s education at Rowan Tree Children’s School. Individual tuition adjustment funding amounts are dependent on financial need, the current year’s budget, and the number of applicants for that year. Further information regarding tuition adjustment and application forms are available from the Office Administrator info@rowantreeschool.ca.

Tuition Adjustment

Our tuition adjustment program exists to serve families who do not have the means to fully cover the costs of their child’s education at Rowan Tree Children’s School. Generally a budget will be set aside that will go towards supporting families in need of tuition assistance.

Individual tuition adjustment funding amounts are dependent on financial need, the current year’s budget, and the number of applicants for that year. Further information regarding tuition adjustment and application forms are available from the Office Administrator info@rowantreeschool.ca.

Tuition adjustment will be decided by the Tuition Adjustment Committee, after review of the application form and demonstrated proof of need. Families who benefit from the tuition adjustment program are required to support the school, to the best of their abilities, beyond the usual involvement in community activities to either earn or save money for the operating budget.

Tuition adjustment is granted on a yearly basis and families need to re-apply in a timely manner. All information is kept confidential.

Fundraising

As a non-profit organisation, a thriving community is vital to the health of our school. Gifts of all sizes enable us to grow our programs, reinforce our infrastructure, enhance our faculty, and reaffirm our commitment to build socioeconomic diversity. We believe that Waldorf education has a ripple effect – educating confident, compassionate students helps to strengthen families and create empathetic communities.

We strive to have active participation from families in our fundraising efforts. Regardless of the size of the donation, your contribution demonstrates your support of our core values and mission. Every gift, no matter the amount, is received with gratitude and appreciation. With your help, we can keep our school thriving. To learn more about how you can contribute to Rowan Tree Children’s School, please contact info@rowantreeschool.ca

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

I. Schedule

School Hours

Preschool: 9:05 am – 3:00 pm

Kindergarten and Grade School: 8:50 am – 3:20 pm

Daily Schedule - Preschool

9:05-9:15 am	Arrival Time
9:30 am	Gathering together, self-directed play, singing, storytelling
10:30 am	Morning snack
11:00 am	Outdoor play
12:30 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Quiet time with stories, open play time, crafts, clean up
2:00 pm	Outdoor play, nature walks, games
3:00 pm	Departure

Daily Schedule - Nature Kindergarten

8:50 am: Morning Arrival	Teachers greet the kindergarten students outside and allow the children a chance to settle in.
Morning Adventure	The morning circle will unite the group before they set off on their morning outdoor 'adventure' in the adjacent green space or in the nearby park. A morning snack will be enjoyed along the journey.
Lunch	Teachers will bring the children into the kindergarten classroom to eat their lunch.
Afternoon	A rest and relaxation time on yoga mats begins the afternoon program. Followed lots of opportunities for play and creative expression indoors and a story time.
Outside Play	This is an opportunity for the children to run, climb, jump and move their bodies. It is also a time to play group games or work on a project (gardening, using tools, making a shelter).
Closing Circle	Songs and verses are shared. The children are invited to share their most special moment. The circle closes with an afternoon snack.
3:20 pm: Departure	Happy, tired children, full of fresh air, recount tales of their adventures and creations!

Projected Core Program Daily Schedule - Grade 1-7

*Finalised class schedules are sent out prior to the start of the school year.

8:50 am	Drop-off at outdoor hubs
9:00 am	Morning Circle
9:20 am	Transition indoors
9:30 - 11:00 am	Main Lesson
11:00 - 11:30 am	Snack / Recess
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Subject Lessons
1:00 - 1:40 pm	Lunch / Transition to outdoors
1:40 - 3:00 pm	Outdoor Learning
3:15 pm	Closing Circle
3:20 pm	Dismissal

The daily schedule for the Forest School Enrichment Day (Fridays) will be sent out with the Welcome Package prior to the start of the school year.

Arrival and Drop Off

Procedures currently under review for the coming school year. Final plans will be communicated prior to the start of the school year.

Travel To/From School Unaccompanied

Please provide a letter to the class teacher and Leadership Team giving permission for your child to walk to/from school unaccompanied. Students must inform their teacher before leaving the school property.

Car Pooling

Please inform class teachers and the Leadership Team of regular carpool arrangements. Please provide a written note if there is a change in carpool arrangements.

Delays in Pick-Up

On occasions when parents are unavoidably detained (traffic jams, bad weather) students will be brought to After School Care at 3:25 pm. Fees will apply for this service.

Absences and Late Arrivals

Regular and timely attendance is essential for the academic and social life of the child. Students who arrive late miss an important part of the school day and disrupt the class. We ask parents to support their children in understanding the importance of punctuality and good attendance. Please call/text the class teacher before 8:45 am if your child is going to be late or absent.

Schedule Changes

Please communicate schedule changes to the class teacher in writing or by phone. These include picking up your child early, having someone else pick up your child, and absences.

Inclement Weather

Rowan Tree Children's School will be closed only when travelling conditions are extremely hazardous or in the event of unsafe conditions at the school. Our parents, students and teachers commute from a wide geographic area which will impact the decision to close school. The decision to close the school could be made on short notice in the event of a sudden change in the weather or in the case of an unpredicted extreme situation that impacts the health and safety of students, faculty and staff. For example: loss of heat during the winter months, power outages, water stoppages or extreme weather. As tenants at The Mount Community Centre, we may be asked to close the school if conditions at TMCC are not safe for vehicles to use the driveway and parking lots. In the case of a school closure parents will be notified by email and an announcement will be posted on our social media by 7 am.

Typically, Rowan Tree Children's School will remain open on inclement weather days, but an Inclement Weather Day will be declared when driving conditions prevent some students and teachers from safely coming to school. We urge parents to exercise caution when making the decision about whether to walk or drive to school. Please be advised that some staff members will not be able to travel and we will switch to alternative programming. Classes may be combined to ensure adequate supervision with appropriate health and safety precautions. If weather conditions become worse during the course of the day, parents will be called to pick up their child(ren) early. The safety of families and staff is our primary concern.

II. Additional Programs & Activities

Before & After School Care

Before and After School Care is available each day, Monday to Friday. Parents may enrol their children in the program for regular or occasional attendance. Users are invoiced monthly.

Before School Care is open by registration only. Students registered for Before Care must be accompanied by a parent to the Preschool door. Before School Care runs from 8 am to 9 am for Preschool children and 8 am to 8:50 am for Kindergarten and Grade School students.

After School Care is open by registration. Students registered for After School Care will be brought to the After School Care area by their class teachers and signed into the After School Care register. **After School Care ends at 4:30 pm.** Parents or caregivers will collect their child(ren) from the After School Care area. Billing for After School Care will be invoiced by the Office Administrator.

Before School Care - Monday to Friday	
Preschool 8 - 9 am Kindergarten and Grade School 8 - 8:50 am	\$10 / day
After School Care - Monday to Friday	
Preschool 3 - 4:30 pm Kindergarten and Grade School 3:20 - 4:30 pm	\$10 / day
Before AND After School Care - Monday to Friday	\$15 / day
<i>There will be a charge for late pickup (\$5 every 15 minutes)</i>	

Class Trips

As part of the curriculum students occasionally participate in off-site activities. These may include, but are not restricted to outdoor activities, community work, concerts, day trips and extended class trips. These activities are part of the academic and pedagogical work, strengthen the social life of the class and often provide an opportunity for personal growth. Parents will be asked to sign forms for overnight trips or trips that need special considerations. Parents may be asked to assist with driving. Notice of field trips will be given by the class and/or subject teacher. The student Code of Behaviour applies to all field trips. Police checks are required for any adult accompanying overnight trips.

III. Health and Safety

Illness

A parent will be called if a child is unwell and not able to participate in school activities. Please do not send your child to school if he/she is not feeling well or has an infectious condition. When returning to school after an illness, please ensure your child is well enough to participate in all school activities, including outdoor play.

It is very difficult for your child to function in a group when they feel unwell. The following health policy is enforced to prevent the spread of infection:

1. Immunisation records must be submitted by the first day the child attends school.
2. Parents should advise the teacher of any allergies or any communicable disease affecting their child.
3. If a child becomes ill every effort will be made to reach the parents or specified emergency delegate so that the child may be withdrawn for the length of the illness.
4. Your child should not be sent to school if he or she has any of the following symptoms: constant sneezing, a persistent cough, diarrhoea, coloured nasal or eye discharge, a fever, vomiting, a rash of unknown origin.
5. An ill child must remain out of the program for 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided.

Our teachers are invested in the whole child and welcome observations you wish to share about your child's health, sleeping habits, stresses and home life.

*For the 2023-24 school year please also refer to the Health and Safety COVID-19 Handbook which outlines additional measures being implemented by the school due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Contagious Diseases

If a student contracts a contagious disease (chicken pox, strep throat, lice, pinworms etc.) please notify the school immediately so that other parents and staff can be informed. A student must stay home until the illness is no longer contagious.

The school may inspect students for head lice from time to time. If it is discovered that a student has head lice, the parents will be called to pick-up their child. Any student who contracts lice or pinworms must be under effective medical treatment before returning to school. The school may ask for a doctor's note. Students must be free of nits and lice before returning to school.

Medication

Students taking medication during school hours must have written permission. In case of an accident, staff will not administer any medication, unless written permission is on file. A consent form for prescription medication can be requested from the Office Administrator.

Student Health Information Form

A completed Student Health Information Form must be filed with the Office Administrator each year. If a student has special dietary or health concerns, these should be stated clearly in writing on the form. The information on this form is used to contact parents and/or initiate medical care in the event of an emergency. If there are changes throughout the year, please notify the Office Administrator immediately with updated information.

Allergies

If your child suffers from life threatening allergies (anaphylaxis) let the Leadership Team know immediately and inform yourself of our Anaphylaxis Policy (can be requested from the Office Administrator). The school will take reasonable measures to adapt the school environment to accommodate anaphylactic students. Rowan Tree Children's School is not a nut-free school.

Anaphylaxis Plan

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can lead to rapid death if left untreated. The Rowan Tree Children's School allergy plan has three components:

- Information and awareness
- Avoidance
- Emergency Response

1. INFORMATION AND AWARENESS

Board

The Board of Directors will be made aware of the legal responsibilities towards the children with life threatening allergies and the Rowan Tree Children's School anaphylaxis plan will be reviewed annually by the Board.

Faculty

Every faculty member and staff member in the school:

- will be educated about the identification of children with life-threatening allergies and the need for absolute avoidance of the allergen
- will be educated about the strategies required to minimise risk in the school environment;
- will be educated to recognize the symptoms of exposure to the allergen and the absolute necessity of responding immediately to these symptoms;will be educated about the action required in the event of an anaphylactic emergency.
- Volunteers and other people in contact with the anaphylactic child will be educated as outlined above.
- Faculty will ensure that students with anaphylactic allergies will be brought to the attention of the full faculty circle and to the classroom parents to increase the awareness of the student's needs and to increase the willingness to support the student. All faculty and classroom parents are to be informed prior to a child with an anaphylactic allergy visiting the class as part of the application procedure.

Administration

- Administration will create and maintain a file of consent forms, waivers, physician's instructions and alert sheets for each child with a life-threatening allergy. Alert sheets will be posted in the child's classroom and in key locations throughout the school.
- Administration will provide the school's insurance broker with the consent forms, waivers and alert sheets for each anaphylactic child.
- Administration will develop and maintain the emergency plan in consultation with parents,

teachers, family physicians and public health nurses.

- Administration will coordinate the strategies (e.g. letters to parents, newsletter articles, etc.) to promote safety and compliance with the anaphylactic policy. Administration will communicate the need for cooperation with the policy and will make reasonable efforts to ensure adherence to the policy.
- Administration will have responsibility for ensuring annual in-service training of faculty is completed, including education about the allergens hidden in non-food materials, education about the danger of cross-contamination and education about the need for schoolyard cleanliness.
- Administration will provide substitute teachers, parent volunteers and other people with occasional contact with a procedure so they are prepared to avoid the allergen and to deal with an anaphylactic emergency should it arise.

Anaphylactic child's parents

- The parents will inform the school of their child's allergy prior to the beginning of each school year and upon identification of any change in the condition of the child.
- The parents will provide a MedicAlert bracelet for their child.
- The parents will provide the school with current medical instructions from the child's physician.
- The parents will provide the school with up-to-date EpiPens. It is the responsibility of the parents to confirm expiry dates on the EpiPens and ensure that sufficient EpiPens are in the school for use by their child.
- The parents will provide their child with safe foods, containers and implements.
- The parents will teach their child to recognize the first symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction; to know where medication is kept and can get it; to communicate clearly when he or she feels a reaction starting; to carry his/her own EpiPen in a fanny pack; not to share food; the importance of hand-washing.
- The parents will complete and sign the annual consent forms, waivers and alert sheet for their child, as well as provide the school with the physician's instructions.
- The parents will provide the school with additional support as needed.
- Parents will keep their contact information up to date and be reachable by phone.

Parents and children

- Information, identification and strategies will be shared with all parents and children (as appropriate), especially those in classes with a child with a life-threatening allergy.
- Educational articles will be published and talks will be held, including suggestions for alternate foods for lunches and information about food labelling.
- Letters asking for cooperation will be sent to all parents and faculty.

2. AVOIDANCE

In the School

The school will take reasonable measures to adapt the school environment to accommodate anaphylactic students. The school cannot assume responsibility for providing a completely allergen-free environment.

- The school will provide allergen-safe areas, using a cooperative approach with students and parents.
- Fund-raising activities that involve selling products from outside sources (e.g muffin mixes, cookies) should avoid products containing allergens.
- Schoolyard cleanliness contributes to the safety of children with life-threatening allergies. Additional yard clean-ups may be advisable after Halloween, Easter or special events.
- Anaphylactic children should not be involved in garbage disposal, yard clean-ups or other activities that could bring them into contact with food wrappers, containers or debris.

In the classrooms in which there is a child with an anaphylactic allergy, the following extra steps need to be taken.

- Safe lunchroom and eating area procedures will be established, including cleaning and hand washing procedures.
- Reasonable efforts will be taken to ensure that anaphylactic students eat only food prepared at home or approved for consumption.
- The anaphylactic student will not be allowed to share food, utensils and containers.
- Lunchtime supervision of the anaphylactic child will be provided.
- The anaphylactic child will take precautions such as placing food on a napkin or waxed paper rather than the table or desk, will take one item at a time out of the lunch bag to prevent other children from touching the food and packing up and leaving the lunch with the teacher if the child needs to leave the room during lunchtime.
- Education about the allergens hidden in non-food materials will be provided (e.g. play materials, play dough, soap, counting aids, science projects, special seasonal activities such as gardening).
- Education about the danger of cross-contamination through shared utensils, papers, towels etc. will be provided.
- Anaphylactic children should not share musical instruments that go in the mouth.

Procedures for holidays and special celebrations are:

- For special events, the parent of the anaphylactic child will provide safe food for the child. The anaphylactic child will be limited to these foods brought from his or her own home.
- If foods are to come into the classroom or school from school homes, remind parents of the anaphylactic child's allergens and insist on ingredient lists.
- Suggest that the parents of the anaphylactic child provide the school with a supply of non-perishable treats for those times when other parents send food into the school.
- Focus on activities rather than exclusively on food for special occasions.

Procedures for field trips and extra-curricular are:

- Include a separate "serious medical conditions" section as part of the school's registration/permission forms for all field trips in which the details of the anaphylactic student's allergens, symptoms, and treatment can be recorded. A copy of this information should be available on site at any time during the field trip.
- Require all supervisors, both staff and parents, to be aware of the identity of the anaphylactic child, the allergens, symptoms, and treatment.
- Ensure that a supervisor with anaphylactic training and training in the use of the EpiPen is assigned responsibility for the anaphylactic child.
- Ensure access to a telephone or cell phone in case of emergency.
- Require the parent of the anaphylactic child to provide two to three EpiPens to be administered every 10 to 20 minutes on route to the nearest hospital in the event that symptoms persist or reoccur.
- If the risk factors are too great to control, the anaphylactic child may be unable to participate in the field trip. Parents should be involved in this decision.

3. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Recognition

An anaphylactic reaction can begin within seconds of exposure or after several hours. Any combination of the following symptoms may signal the onset of a reaction.

- Hives *
- Itching (on any part of the body)
- Swelling (of any body parts, especially eyes, lips, face, tongue)
- Red watery eyes
- Runny nose
- Sneezing

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Stomach cramps
- Change of voice
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Throat tightness or closing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Difficult breathing
- Sense of doom
- Dizziness
- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Change of colour

*Hives may be entirely absent, especially in severe or near fatal cases of anaphylaxis. Symptoms do not always occur in the same order, even in the same individuals. Time from onset of first symptoms to death can be as little as a few minutes if reaction is not treated.

Anaphylactic children usually know when a reaction is taking place. School personnel should be encouraged to listen to the child. If he or she complains of any symptoms that could signal the onset of a reaction, staff should not hesitate to implement the emergency response. There is no danger in reacting too quickly and grave danger in reacting too slowly.

Emergency Response Steps

1. Administer EpiPen® immediately if the child displays any of the symptoms. The EpiPen® buys you 15 minutes to seek medical attention. The location of the EpiPen is noted on the Anaphylaxis Alert sheet.
2. Pull off grey safety cap.
3. Grip with a tight fist and jab/press firmly black tip into outer thigh. Keep pressed against thigh and hold for a count of 10. Do not place thumb at end of EpiPen®. *
4. Keep the child calm.
5. Call 911.
6. Advise dispatcher that the child is having an anaphylactic reaction. Give location of the school, phone number and closest entrance to the school.
7. Call the child's parents.
8. Treat with second dose of epinephrine if necessary in 10 to 15 minutes if an ambulance has not arrived and the symptoms have reappeared.
9. Have the child transported to the hospital immediately even if symptoms subside. Bring anaphylaxis alert sheet, parental consent form and health information card.
10. Remain in Emergency Room for 4 to 6 hours for observation. A staff member remains with the child until the child's parent arrives.

* Note: Used EpiPen® needs to be discarded in a needle-proof container to minimise any chance of injury.

Outdoor Safety Policy

Staff will ensure the safety of the children always by following strict adherence to supervision for the duration of outdoor play.

During outdoor play staff will be sure to have:

1. First Aid Kit
2. Emergency contact information for the children in their care
3. Cell phone
4. EpiPen (if applicable)

Children will be required to wear sun hats on sunny days and appropriate winter layers will be strictly adhered to during the winter months, including snow pants, coat, hat, mittens, neck warmer, winter boots.

Minor Injuries

Bumps, grazes and bruises will be handled by staff and reported to the parents when they pick up their child. Accidents or illnesses that require medical attention will be reported to the parents immediately.

Fire Drill

We are required to implement a regular fire drill, to ensure the safety of our students. During a fire drill students are guided through the procedure to be taken in case of a fire. Once the whistle is blown, all children line up immediately at the designated door. Teacher leads the way, and the children evacuate the building in single file with the second teacher at the back of the line with an attendance log. Staff lead the students to their class' designated outside location.

Emergency Procedures

Staff will follow the emergency response procedures by following these three phases.

1. Immediate Emergency Response
2. Next Steps during an Emergency
3. Recovery

Staff will ensure that the students are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised always during an emergency.

For situations that require evacuation of the school the meeting place to gather immediately will be:

Preschool: The parking lot behind our building, immediately west of our back door.

Kindergarten & Grade School: In front of the building, east of the front door.

If it is deemed 'unsafe to return' to the classroom, the evacuation site to proceed to is located at: Mount St. Joseph's -1555 Monaghan Rd.

**Please note: all directions given by emergency services personnel will be followed under all circumstances, including directions to evacuate to locations different than those listed above.*

Lost and Found

Each class has a lost and found bin. Lost clothing found in the yard is brought to a bin in the Preschool room. Unclaimed items are donated to charity in December and June. Labelling is essential to ensure against losing valuable items. The school is not responsible for lost or stolen items.

SCHOOL POLICIES & GUIDELINES

These policies and guidelines are applicable to all students and are written with grade level students in mind.

Food, Snacks & Lunches

Please help your child start the day with a wholesome breakfast and pack nutritious snacks and lunches for your grade school child.. For students in the After School program please pack an extra snack.

Please limit the amount of chocolate, candy, pop or any other food with high salt or sugar content. We encourage litter-free lunches by the use of refillable and recyclable containers.

Please note that students will not be permitted to share any food items. Please ensure to send your child(ren) with enough food for the school day. Students are required to bring a reusable water bottle to school each day.

Shoes & Clothing

Please dress your child according to weather conditions. Outdoor time is part of the daily routine for all students and takes place in most weather conditions. More information about dressing for Nature School is provided in our [Recommended Gear Guide](#) and is available on our website.

For Kindergarten students, please send a complete, labelled change of clothes to be left in an extra bag in the classroom and a change of clothes to be kept in their backpack. For Grade School students, please send a complete change of clothes in their backpack.

We require that all students have a pair of indoor and outdoor shoes. Indoor shoes must fit tight and have solid soles (no flip flops, high heels or slippers).

Personal Dress & Appearance

Teachers and staff make an effort to create an environment in the classrooms and in the building to support the healthy development of the students. We ask that the personal dress and appearance support the school's pedagogical values and a safe and healthy learning environment. We ask that students' dress and appearance be age appropriate and free of consumer driven or media images. Parents are asked to guide their children in appropriate choices for school clothing. The list below is a guideline that will help parents and students to balance individual preferences with a positive learning environment.

- Winter weather requires hats, warm jackets and proper hand and footwear.
- Clothing with crude designs and messages and/or advertising are considered inappropriate and are not permitted.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn and laces must be tied. No flip-flops, high heels or sandals that could be a safety hazard. No open shoes in woodwork. Indoor shoes must be worn at all times when inside the school.
- Save makeup, temporary tattoos, and jewellery for home (we have observed these items to be distracting and/or unsafe during our activities).

Toy Policy

Students should keep toys at home unless the class teacher has requested the students bring a toy from home for a specific learning purpose. If toys come to school by mistake, they should remain in the student's backpack throughout the school day. This policy helps prevent loss and/or damage to possessions and social problems between students.

Homework

Homework is given in the upper grades. It is designed to be meaningful, to strengthen the student's work habits, and to develop their ability to work independently. Parents can support this aspect of their child's learning by providing a quiet space, a healthy rhythm in the home life, and by ensuring their child meets deadlines.

Student Assessment

As a Waldorf-inspired school we give consideration to the individual student's quest for wholeness and knowledge through the development of the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing. Teachers create learning opportunities through imitation, explicit instruction, repetition, storytelling, deliberate observations and discovery, self-directed learning and independent working. Each teacher at RTCS makes daily observations of children's interest level, skills level, work ethic, learning style and social interaction.

Academic assessment is an on-going process for class and subject teachers who meet regularly to discuss student progress and share both successes and concerns. In addition to this rigorous daily observation of RTCS students' progress, we have certain check-points to assess the development of each child as they move through the grades. Formal assessment gradually increases as student's progress through the Grade School.

Academic Proficiency Checkpoints

All students from grade 1-7 receive a mid-year and end of year report from their class teacher as well as from each subject teacher, which in narrative form gives a description of each student's progress in every subject.

In grade four, during the fall term, the class teacher assesses each child's reading ability together with any other reading teachers of the class. Results are presented to all faculty. During fall parent-teacher conferences, parents are informed of discoveries especially if it is deemed necessary that extra measures need to be taken, such as additional help from home or outside tutoring.

Marking, Grading and Testing

In the early grades, teachers guide students in correcting their work as they create it. From about grade four on, regular take-home assignments are given, as well as spelling tests both of which will be marked, with corrections expected from the children. In the upper grades; 6, 7 expectations increase for students to stay up to date with their main lesson books, homework assignments, independent projects and book reports. These are now assessed more overtly by teachers using letter or number grading with helpful comments and reflection.

Evaluations are made of main lesson books assessing content, completion and quality. More formal testing begins and the students write tests from their main lesson blocks as well as from some subject lessons.

Probation Policy

All new students at Rowan Tree Children's School are subject to a probationary period of one month. This policy is included in the contract signed by the parents. During the probation period on-going communication between the class teacher and the parents will take place to bring forth any difficulties, either behavioural or social, and every reasonable attempt will be made to work with the student and the family.

At any time during or at the end of the probationary period the faculty decides and will inform the parents if the decision is one of acceptance. This will be followed up with a letter on the school letterhead. If the decision is one of further provisional enrollment or dismissal, a meeting is scheduled with the teacher, the parents and the faculty lead and the reasons for the decision are given. The decision is followed up by a letter sent to the parents outlining the new provisional enrollment period or the reasons for dismissal.

Electronic Devices

We choose to restrict the use of electronic devices in order to maintain and promote an environment that supports the pedagogical and social goals of Waldorf education. We do not

allow the use of electronic devices by the students while at the school. This includes, but is not restricted to iPods, electronic games, cameras and cell phones.

Any exception for lengthy car drives or train rides in the upper grades, or for projects, will be at the discretion of the teacher.

Television, Internet & Other Media

Rowan Tree Children's School encourages parents to limit their children's exposure to electronic media; television, computer, tablets, and phones, as much as possible. Waldorf schools work with developmentally appropriate curriculum and activities to help children thrive and blossom as they grow. We believe the well-being of the child is increased when their open imaginations are guided by human interaction with caring adults and peers rather than electronic media impressions. It is the view of Rowan Tree Children's School that school-aged children learn and grow with greater health when access to electronic media is kept to the barest possible minimum.

We recommend that students are not exposed to any electronic media or computers during the school week or any day preceding school. Our experience is that whatever one child is exposed to, affects the rest of the class. We make this recommendation out of respect for all families at Rowan Tree Children's School and for the protection of the children.

News broadcasts heard from either the radio or television go deep within the child affecting their inner beings. Please help us protect our youngest children from the stress associated with upsetting world and local events.

We appreciate every endeavour by parents to support this limited exposure to electronic media in their daily home lives.

Money at School

We discourage the students from bringing money to school, except when specifically requested to do so. The school is not responsible for money or valuables that are lost on the school premises.

STUDENT CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

Reverence, Respect and Responsibility

Throughout all of the artistic, social, and academic work at Rowan Tree Children's School, the students are encouraged to develop reverence and respect for the world around them. The cultivation of wonder and gratitude begins in early childhood through imitation and is fostered throughout the grades. The curriculum and pedagogy of the grades continues to promote respect and reverence for the living world. Opportunities to develop and strengthen the will of each student lead to a healthy growth of responsibility and accountability. At a Waldorf school, discipline finds its place first and foremost with the class teacher who develops their knowledge of each student through observation and meditative practices. This connection with each student enables the teacher to find the right approach to the individual situation and builds healthy relationships based on trust and respect. The faculty work collaboratively during regular meetings to support all of the students in the school.

Expected Behaviour & Attitudes

While allowing for differences between classes and individuals, there remains some basic school wide agreement on what is acceptable behaviour. The familiarity of understood rules creates a sense of security within which the freedom of the individual student is fostered. If boundaries and form are clearly understood by all, a breathing space is created in which mutual respect and

understanding can arise, and the authentic needs of the students can be met. The following rules and expectations apply to school sponsored events and class trips.

General Expectations

- Everyone's personal safety and well-being is foremost.
- Treat teachers, staff, parents, and students with the same courtesy and respect.
- Find peaceful ways to resolve disagreements and request the help of teachers/staff if necessary.
- Speak in a polite and courteous manner.
- Listen to a faculty/staff member who finds reason to speak with you, and follow directions given.
- No physical fighting.
- Verbal abuse, profanity and/or aggressive physical behaviour are never acceptable.
- Malicious practical jokes and teasing are not acceptable.
- No matches, lighters, fireworks and caps.
- Penknives or other tools brought to school for class purposes must be handed to class teachers upon arrival at school.
- Remain on school property during school hours.
- Walk, not run in the school.
- Treat school property and the belongings of others with care and respect.
- Help to keep the classrooms, washrooms and the school grounds clean and tidy.

In the Classroom

- Be at school and in the classroom on time for every lesson.
- Conduct yourself during the lessons in such a way that the teacher can teach the whole class.
- Complete class work to the best of your ability.
- Respect the rules or expectations that a teacher may set for the class.
- Keep school books in good order, up to date, and in good condition.

Recess Rules

- Students must be within sight of the supervising teachers and the boundaries of the play area.
- Branches must not be broken off trees.
- Sticks may not be used as swords, guns, etc.
- Students are not to climb trees unsupervised.
- "GT's", snowboards, roller blades, skateboards, remote controlled toys and/or other toys of any sort from home are not permitted unless the class teacher gives permission.
- Play and games involving physical contact are allowed when permission has been given and the activity is supervised. These following basic rules apply:
 - o Students must be the same physical size.
 - o They may not come from behind one another.
 - o They may not touch the neck area.
 - o Each participant must agree to the activity.

Discipline & Consequences

When students cross the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, the teacher involved will manage the situation and support the student and the group as a whole.

Students may lose privileges or free time or be removed from the class for a period of time if these procedures seem to be useful in helping the student regain self-control. The main point of any disciplinary measure is to help awaken the child to the error of their behaviour, to help them return to appropriate behaviour and to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for the class.

In case of on-going problems, the teacher will seek the cooperation of the child's parents and work

together with them to find a satisfactory solution. The teacher may enlist the support of a mentor or another faculty member.

Suspension & Dismissal

1. Suspension:

If students are involved in behaviour that presents a consistent breaking of school rules, bullying, profound misbehaviour, and especially in cases of physical fighting or violence that result in injury to another or damage to school property the following steps will be taken. Each step must be documented by a member of faculty involved and class teacher:

- A conversation between the student(s) and teacher is held and appropriate consequences determined by the teacher. If physical fighting or violence is involved, a warning is given and the student is informed that subsequent incidences will result in a suspension.
- A meeting will be arranged with the parents and followed up with a letter confirming the results of the conversation and consequences.
- A report is written up and given to full faculty at the next pedagogical meeting.
- Should a second violent incident occur, parents will be immediately informed and a meeting arranged. The student(s) will be given an at home suspension for 1-3 days. A work assignment of some kind is given and must be completed.
- A report is written up and given to full faculty at the next meeting.

2. Dismissal:

The School reserves the right to dismiss a student where the continued attendance of that student would not be in the best interests of that student or the school. The school also reserves the right to dismiss a student where his or her behaviour seriously jeopardises the ability of the School to guarantee the well-being and safety of its students, or interferes with learning.

2.1 Dismissal in response to violence, fighting or profound misconduct:

The teacher or staff member who observed violence, fighting or profound misconduct writes a detailed report and informs the class teacher and the faculty chair group. Parents will be informed immediately of the incident and the possible consequence of dismissal, preferably in a face to face meeting, otherwise by phone, and in writing. The decision of dismissal is made by the Leadership Team in consultation with the Faculty Committee. The school reserves the right to suspend the student immediately until the final decision has been made.

2.2 Dismissal because the school can't meet a student's needs:

In certain circumstances the school is unable to meet student's educational needs. After a number of meetings with parents and colleagues and having tried various approaches to support the student, the class teacher will inform the Curriculum Coordinator who will bring the proposed decision to dismiss the student to the Leadership Team.

GOVERNANCE & SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Our self-administered school depends on the participation of many different bodies to inform the overall governance of the school:

The Leadership Team consists of the Preschool Faculty Lead, Kindergarten & Grade School Faculty Lead / Curriculum Coordinator, and the Office Administrator. Our Leadership Team manages the

day-to-day operations of the school and supports the governing bodies along with community engagement and the overall sustainability of the school.

The *Faculty Team* are the teachers as a group and carry responsibility for the life of the school in conjunction with the Leadership Team.

Board of Directors

Board members are parents and friends of the school. They do not represent any “interest groups” but work for the well-being of the school as a whole. They bring a commitment to education and often specific expertise and knowledge that is needed to address the tasks of the Board. New Board members are chosen by the Board. The Board Handbook provides more information on how the Board works. The Leadership Team attends Board meetings as non-voting participants.

The Board of Directors is the decision-making body for the financial and legal realm. The Board has several committees that support their work.

Committees of the Board:

- Finance
- Marketing, Fundraising and Communication
- Human Resources
- Space Development

COMMUNICATION

Calendar

The school calendar provides an overview of the year, supplemented by regular updates through the email and the seasonal newsletter. The calendar includes professional development days, holidays, and school community events.

Seasonal e-newsletter

The school newsletter is shared seasonally and shares information from the school.

Parent Evenings

There are two to three annual parent evenings for each grade class. The teacher offers insights into child development and the class curriculum and often includes an artistic activity. Class meetings are an opportunity to discuss specific pedagogical questions as well as practical issues, e.g. class trips or support to the class. We request attendance of at least one parent and strongly recommend attendance of both parents at all class meetings.

Parent Teacher Conferences

Individual parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year, at the end of October and at the end of February. These interviews are important for maintaining open communication about each child's progress and development. Parents are expected to attend and meet with the class teachers and subject teachers. Additional parent-teacher meetings can be requested by the teacher or parent if needed.

Reports

A written report on the grade students' progress is provided twice during the academic year. A mid-term progress report is sent home in February and the final report is sent home at the completion of the school year. These reports include a detailed description of the student's progress by the class teacher and written comments from each of the specialty teachers.

Letter and number grades are gradually introduced in Grades Six, Seven and Eight and are used to

indicate achievement on main lesson work and assigned projects.

Communication with Teachers

At the beginning of the school year the teacher will inform parents of when and where they can be reached. In addition to the class meetings held two to three times per year, teachers provide written communications via Seesaw and e-mail to inform parents of what is happening in the classroom.

Any concerns that require longer conversations should be addressed in pre-arranged meetings. Please refrain from lengthy conversations before and after school.

Parent Questions and Concerns

We value healthy communication in all aspects of the school's life that model a civil society and learning community for our students. It is natural for concerns to arise within any school system, and we ask that such concerns be communicated in a productive and constructive manner.

We seek to create an environment that supports growth of all members of the community and we are first and foremost committed to what is best for the students, and the school as a whole.

Please note that more than one group may be involved in complex issues, and that resolutions of questions or concerns sometimes require patience and basic understanding of the roles of the governing bodies of the school.

Parent/Teacher Concerns:

Procedure for Concerns about a Specific Student or Class

It is hoped that most questions and concerns will be resolved in the first step, the parent-teacher meeting.

1. If a parent or teacher has a question or concern, they can address these in a phone call or a meeting. Parents contact their child's class teacher directly. If the concern relates to a subject class, parents contact the subject teacher directly. The class teacher, the subject teacher or the parents may ask for a meeting. The teacher may request that both of the child's parents be present during these conversations. The teacher or parent(s) may request that the Faculty Lead for that section of the school or the Curriculum Coordinator join the conversation to add a broader perspective.
2. The division Faculty Lead will take the concerns to the Leadership Team who will review the situation.
3. Recommendations will be brought to the teacher and parents involved. Written follow-up will be provided.
4. If these recommendations for a solution are not accepted by the parent(s) or the teacher, the Leadership Team will review the situation and make the final determination as to a solution.
5. If there is still no resolution the matter could be referred to the Board of Directors.

Procedures for Concerns About the School as a Whole

The following procedure is applicable when a parent has a concern about the school as a whole, usually regarding non-pedagogical matters. It is hoped that most issues concerning the whole school will be resolved by meeting with the division Faculty Lead, Curriculum Coordinator or the Leadership Team.

1. The first step a parent should take is to initiate a meeting with the division Faculty Lead, Curriculum Coordinator to share concerns. The division Faculty Lead, Curriculum Coordinator will listen and gain clarity about the nature of concern, and will work with the parent(s) to establish an action plan.
2. After the meeting, if either the parent, the division Faculty Lead, Curriculum Coordinator,

does not feel that the concern has been resolved, the parent or the division Faculty Lead, Curriculum Coordinator may request that another member of the Leadership Team or a member of the Board join a second meeting to add a broader perspective.

3. If either the parent or the governance representative (Faculty Lead, Curriculum Coordinator, Leadership Team, Board member) do not feel that the concern has been resolved, they agree that the governance representative will write a summary of the concerns and solutions that were reviewed.
4. The written summary will be reviewed by the Board of Directors and the Leadership Team who will review the situation and make the final determination as to a solution.

Expectations for Adult Communication

All adult interactions, large and small, should build a healthy environment for students learning and serve as role models for adult behaviour.

- Speak directly with the party involved when you have a question or concern.
- Focus on issues, not individuals. Keep an open mind. Ask questions first.
- E-mail, voicemail and a fast-paced lifestyle present new challenges to effective and civil communication. We ask that email be used for organising or confirming meetings or other practicalities. It should not be used to discuss pedagogical questions or concerns.
- Be mindful of the amount of time an individual concern may take.
- Demonstrate care and respect for each other.
- Schedule appointments if a discussion is needed instead of dropping by or raising concerns in public settings.
- Respect that teachers need to focus on the children before and at the end of the day and during school hours.
- Understand that conversations may be documented and that a third person may be present.
- Verbal, physical or sexual harassment will not be condoned or tolerated.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Community Events

Parents play an important role in supporting the social fabric of our school. There are many opportunities throughout the year to gather in small groups, with individual classes, and with the entire school community to learn and deepen our understanding of Waldorf education and Forest School, and support the education of our children. Please refer to the school calendar for these events.

Participating in other aspects of the school's life, such as committees, class events, performances, and meetings, offers further opportunities to strengthen the community, your child's educational journey and meet your individual interests.

Parent Volunteers

Due to the independent, self-administered structure of our school, faculty and parents share the tasks and joys that comprise the on-going function of our school. Volunteers are an essential part of life at the Rowan Tree Children's School. We invite every family to consider how they might offer their gift of time and expertise to the school. It is a personally rewarding experience and allows everyone the opportunity to participate in the children's education and solidify our connections as a community. Your contribution as a volunteer is as vital to the school's well-being as tuition.

Parents are an integral part of the fabric of the school and each family's participation is welcome and essential to the continued strength of our school community. Here are a few of the possibilities for involvement:

Enhance your child's classroom experience

Parents are welcome to work with the teacher to share a celebration or festival and/or share knowledge and experience in support of the class curriculum in many different areas.

Strengthen the school's governance structure

Parents and community members are welcome to join Committees of the Board such as Marketing, Fundraising, Space development among others.

Join an intentional and collaborative community

Parents are welcome to all social events such as festivals, class plays, assemblies, class parent meetings and school parent engagement events.

Getting involved is a great way to get to know other parents, teachers, staff and the wider community. Most importantly, our children sense the meaningfulness that comes with their parents' contribution to the school. It cultivates in them a sense of belonging in them that includes not just themselves, but their whole family.

For further information and volunteer opportunities please contact our Office Administrator. Volunteers within the classroom and for field trips are required to have a Criminal Record Check that includes a Vulnerable Sector Screening on file.

Guidelines for Visitors and Volunteers

Upon arrival, text / phone the class teacher to let them know you have arrived. The class teacher will let you into the building. Then, proceed to the classroom in which you will be volunteering.

Visitors and volunteers are expected to wear casual, professional dress. Comfortable clothes, without large logos or media images, and that allow range of movement are preferred. Please bring a pair of indoor shoes and a water bottle (optional). We expect visitors and volunteers to model wearing appropriate outdoor clothing if they will be outside with students--be prepared to be outdoors in all weather! Personal belongings may be kept with you in the classroom. You may choose how you would like students to address you (at RTCS students use the title Teacher and the teacher's given name).

Please turn your cell phone off or set it to "airplane mode". Cell phones may be used in the staff room or kitchen ONLY. They should not be used in the presence of students.

Preschool & Kindergarten Guidelines

Work:

- Engaging in meaningful work such as yard work and gardening outside including raking, planting, watering plants, weeding, and snow shovelling in the winter.
- Indoor chores include sweeping, cleaning, watering plants, folding laundry, and mending.

Guiding Children:

- Guide children to help them resolve conflicts and solve problems ---- avoid telling them to "Say you're sorry" or "You need to share."

Talking with Children:

- Engage children's sense of wonder by allowing them to imagine and wonder about the world without adult labelling and explanations.
- Avoid "naming" objects and defining things for children.

- Sometimes being next to a child is enough; adults don't need to be constantly talking to them and engaging them in conversations.
- Often the use of 'I wonder' can satisfy a young child's curiosity.

Imitation:

- Young children are great imitators and this is their primary tool for learning in the early years. As adults we must strive to be worthy of children's imitations. Adults visiting early childhood classrooms are encouraged to sing along in the circle and during the transitions as well as follow the gestures of the teachers.

Grade School Guidelines

Observing:

- Ask the teacher to show you the best place from which to observe.
- We encourage you to imitate the teacher during daily routines (e.g., stand when the teacher and students stand to say morning verse).
- Show positive interest in classroom activities to provide a role model for the students and encourage their participation.
- If you are observing over a snack or lunch period, please feel free to bring food with you and eat and drink at this time along with the students. NOTE: we strive to role model nutritious food and drinks.
- Limit questions and discussion with the teacher during class time as their focus needs to remain on the students conversations with the teacher during class times as teacher.
- Please enter and leave quietly if the class is engaged in a teacher-led lesson.

Working with Students:

At Rowan Tree Children's School, it is our intention to build healthy human relationships and create a safe, inclusive, and positive school environment, which is essential for student well-being and learning. Students are expected to follow our School Code of Conduct, based on our Code of: Respect for yourself, others, and the environment.

Our Code of Conduct is:

1. Listen attentively and raise your hand to ask a question.
2. Participate fully and with a positive attitude.
3. Speak and act respectfully with all students and staff.
4. Treat our building, playground, equipment, and materials with care and respect.

You may help support this code of conduct by:

- Acting with warm authority – speak warmly but firmly; address the students by name or as "students," rather than "friends" or "buddies."
- Engage with children's feeling, imagination, and aesthetic sensitivity to help redirect behaviour.
- Move closer to a student or use non-verbal cues: more talking is not always helpful. Do not respond to a student who speaks out of turn.
- Share observations with the teacher; ask for help when you are not comfortable intervening.

Other ways to support classroom work:

- Role model attending to the teacher and imitation of the teacher during group activities.
- During initial visits to the classroom, observe and ask the teacher how you can help. Once you are more familiar with the teacher's approach, and the rhythm and needs of the class, take initiative to provide help where needed.
- Remember that children need permission from the teacher to leave the classroom.

School Committees

Important work would not take place without the many committees and the hard-working parents and friends of the school who contribute and take responsibility for aspects of the school's life. Our school as an organisation and the education of our children is strengthened by the deeds of each individual making a contribution to the community. If you are interested in serving on one or more of the committees, please speak to a member of the Leadership Team.

Festivals and Community Celebrations

The celebration of seasonal festivals forms an important part of our school year. Their purpose is to provide nourishment for each individual as well as to bring the community together. While sometimes similar in form to traditional festivals, it is the intention of festivals in a Waldorf school to contribute to the inner development of the children, transcending specific denominations or traditional religion. The festivals also offer an opportunity for the children to share a small piece of their classroom work.

In addition to all-school festivals, a class may celebrate festivals and events as they are related to the curriculum or to a particular tradition that is important for the teacher and/or a family of the class. If you wish to share some of your cultural or religious traditions with the class of your child, please contact the class teacher.

In addition to the festivals that arise out of the pedagogical work, there are some days when we celebrate together as a school community, inviting also our neighbours and the wider community. The fairs are also fundraising events for the school.

Welcome & Orientation

Prior to the start of school in September, the Welcome & Orientation event offers new and current families an opportunity to get to know each other and to meet their teachers.

Opening Day Assembly

We welcome the students back to school and honour the new Grade One students as they cross the threshold from kindergarten into Grade school. The children hear a story from the Grade One teacher and each Grade One student is welcomed by an older student with a flower.

Michaelmas

Celebrated on or near September 29 Michaelmas takes place near the autumnal equinox when daylight grows shorter. The festival is named for St. Michael, known as the protector of humanity, who inspires universal human qualities of courage, initiative and steadfastness. The grades students engage in community activities and cooperative games. In preschool and kindergarten, the emphasis is on celebrating the harvest and appreciating the gifts of the Earth.

Remembrance Day

On November 11 we remember those that have contributed to a peaceful world and remind us of possibilities for hope and change.

Martinmas

This festival is celebrated on or near November 11 and recognizes the beginning of deep darkness and winter. St. Martin was a Roman soldier who sought to share his light with others. The children make lanterns as an effort to bring their inner light to this darkest time ahead. This festival is celebrated with a lantern walk.

Advent

Advent is a festival of preparation, quiet waiting and listening for what is to come. During the first week, the mineral kingdom is the focus of our gratitude and the first candle is lit on the Advent wreath. The second week is the celebration of the plant kingdom, the realm of life and growth. The third candle is lit with recognition of the animal kingdom, finally the fourth candle is lit in recognition of the human spirit.

Winter Fair

An event organised by the Fundraising Committee for students, families and friends where you can enjoy activities for the children, an artisan market, refreshments, and raffle.

May Fair

A day to celebrate the arrival of Spring with good food, activities, music and a traditional maypole dance.

End of Year Ceremony

Following the last day of school students, their families, and faculty gather one last time to celebrate the achievements of the students and bid farewell to each other for the summer.

The Nature Kindergarten class participates in a flower ceremony with a puppet show put on by the kindergarten teachers.

Sharing Assemblies

These assemblies are an opportunity for the grades to share aspects of their classroom work with each other. They happen several times throughout the school year.

Class Plays

Every class performs a play that is connected to the curriculum and reflects the social and developmental needs of the students.

Birthday Celebrations

Throughout the year, there are special celebrations and traditions in each grade and kindergarten class to honour a child's birthday.

Learning more about Waldorf Education

Our school and faculty try to provide various ways for interested parents and friends to learn about the Waldorf school curriculum and the thinking that lies behind it. These opportunities are valuable for families new to or interested in Waldorf education as well as for current families who want to gain further insights into the developmental stages of their growing children and how the Waldorf curriculum meets their needs.

Parent Evenings, organised by the class teacher, provide a more in depth look at the curriculum, and the approach taken during that year to meet the needs of the developmental stages of the children.

Parents are encouraged to connect with the Curriculum Coordinator if they would like some recommendations for resources to delve deeper into their learning about Waldorf education

ADMISSIONS

Registration Timeline

Registration for the upcoming school year begins in January of the current school year. There are three enrolment phases:

1. **Early Bird Registration:** Registration opens to current families only for a two week period.
2. **Waitlist Registration:** Following the Early Bird registration period, families on the waitlist are contacted one at a time, in order of their position on the waitlist.
3. **Open Registration:** Registration is open to the public. Marketing campaigns are employed to fill any remaining openings.

Midterm admissions are available, depending on space, our school's capacity to meet the needs of the student, and the class needs/resources.

General Admissions Criteria

Rowan Tree Children's School aspires to a non-selective admissions policy and does not discriminate on grounds of physical/intellectual; spiritual; gender; religious; ethnic origin or for any other reason than its capacity to meet the applicant's education needs. Our admissions criteria includes:

- Availability of space in the class appropriate to the applicant's age.
- The capacity of the school to meet the applicant's educational needs taking into account its responsibility to the children already in the class and the distinctive nature of the curriculum;
- The agreement of the applicant's family to read the parent handbook and contribute financially.

Applicant Considerations

Dependent on availability, consideration will be given to applicants to::

- Children of staff coming to or already working at the school;
- To siblings of existing pupils;
- To children of past pupils of the school;
- To the families who have requested that their child's name be put on the waiting list.

Registration Process for New Students

1) Email Inquiry

First step is to inquire about space and eligibility for the child (age/birthdate; school year; number of days etc.) by emailing info@rowantreeschool.ca. Our Office Administrator will respond to inquiries by either putting the child on a waitlist or asking for further information.

2) Tour

If there is space in the desired class, the Office Administrator will schedule a tour for the parent and prospective student with either the Preschool Faculty Lead or the Curriculum Coordinator to determine the school's ability to meet the educational needs of the child. Tour guides will notify the Class Teachers of the time of the tour in advance. At the time of scheduling the tour, the family will receive a copy of the parent handbook.

3) Complete Online Registration Form

Following the tour, if the family would like to proceed with enrollment and the prospective student has been approved, they will be asked to complete an online registration form and submit a \$100 registration fee (If applying before September enrollment a deposit of \$300 is required to hold the spot). Medical/Immunization records and any additional information (physiological assessments; etc.) should also be submitted at this time.

4) Confirmation of Provisional Enrollment

Once the registration form, registration fee and the deposit have been received, a letter confirming provisional enrollment is sent to the family.

5) Probation Period

All new students beginning in September are on a 30 day probationary period. During the probation period on-going communication between the class teacher and the parents will take place to bring forth any difficulties, either behavioural or social, and every reasonable attempt will be made to work with the student and the family. If the decision is one of further provisional enrollment or dismissal, a meeting is scheduled with the teacher, the parents and the faculty lead and the reasons for the decision are given. The decision is followed up by a letter sent to the parents outlining the new provisional enrollment period or the reasons for dismissal.

6) Mid-year Probation Period

Students joining after the school year is underway will have a 2 week trial period. During the probation period on-going communication between the class teacher and the parents will take place to bring forth any difficulties, either behavioural or social, and every reasonable attempt will be made to work with the student and the family. If the decision is one of further provisional enrollment or dismissal, a meeting is scheduled with the teacher, the parents and the faculty lead and the reasons for the decision are given. The decision is followed up by a letter sent to the parents outlining the new provisional enrollment period or the reasons for dismissal. In the case of dismissal, the one-month notice does not apply and there is no additional fee.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Tuition Deposit Refunds

Tuition Deposits will only be refunded if withdrawal occurs before the end of May, 2023. After May 31, 2023, refunds of tuition deposits will not be issued.

Mid-Term Withdrawal

Should a child need to be withdrawn from the program mid-school year due to unforeseen circumstances, Rowan Tree Children's School requires at least one month's notice.

Changes to Enrolment Schedule

There is no charge to change enrolment schedules occurring between the date of registration and July 31, 2023. Changes made after July 31, 2023 will be charged for the tuition rate of the original registration schedule for the month of September.

During the school year, changes that reduce the number of enrollment days will be charged for one month at the original tuition rate.