

# Rowan Tree Children's School



## NATURE KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

We are delighted to have you join the Rowan Tree Children's School community as part of the Nature Kindergarten class!

1545 Monaghan Rd. Peterborough, Ontario (in The Mount Community Centre)  
[www.rowantreeschool.ca](http://www.rowantreeschool.ca) | [Info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:Info@rowantreeschool.ca)

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## LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL:

Greetings Rowan Tree Children's School Families:

It is with great excitement that I write this letter of introduction as the newly appointed Head of School at Rowan Tree Children's School. I am honoured to step into this leadership role and continue to be part of this beautiful and vibrant school community.

For me, this work is rooted back in the rural village next to the Rideau River—on the outskirts of Ottawa—where I spent my childhood playing in the spring floods, catching frogs, and building fairy houses. Time spent at summer camp and on canoe trips was formative, instilling in me a love of the outdoors and a deep appreciation for wild places. My wish is for all children to have the opportunity to learn in an environment that prioritizes and nurtures connection with nature, and lays the foundation for the environmental stewardship of the future.

I attended Concordia University where I earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Film Production and went on to obtain a Bachelor of Education from Queen's University in Outdoor and Experiential Education. This year will mark my 13th year working in education, where I have served as an outdoor educator, classroom teacher, French teacher, Lead Kindergarten teacher, Curriculum Co-ordinator, and in an administrative capacity as a member of the Leadership Team.

I wholeheartedly believe in the holistic approach to education at Rowan Tree Children's School, and it is my goal to ensure that our children continue to receive a quality education in an environment that is safe and nurturing every day. I am committed to working in partnership with our families, staff, board of directors, and community to support our children's learning and development.

In closing, I look forward to the upcoming school year together learning and growing with our amazing students, dedicated staff, supportive parents and community.

Sincerely,



Sabrina Hale, Head of School  
[sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca)



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## WELCOME TO ROWAN TREE CHILDREN'S SCHOOL:

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.

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 (4-5 yrs) and a Grade School program (grades 1-7). Our school programs run Monday through Friday, from 8:50 am to 3:20 pm.

In 2011, our Preschool became a provincially licensed day care centre and 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.

Our community-based school has flourished with the participation of new families who offer diverse ideas, skills and experiences. 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 and Community Development, Finance and Space, 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.

Parents often reflect upon how their involvement provides a holistic contribution to their family's experience at the school. Getting involved is a great way to get to know other



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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 a sense of belonging in them that includes not just themselves, but their whole family.

## 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.**

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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 curriculum and Forest School principles.

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.



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## INCLUSIVITY, DIVERSITY, EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY:

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.

Rowan Tree Children's School is committed to the following principle from the Association of Waldorf Schools of North America:

"Waldorf schools foster social renewal by cultivating human capacities in service to the individual and society. Waldorf schools foster development so that, throughout life, individuals are motivated to serve humanity with strength of will, depth of feeling, clarity of thought, and the ability to work with others. The educational program is designed to strengthen these fundamental human capacities in our students. Schools are committed to enacting Waldorf education in a place-based manner as a vehicle to foster social renewal for the future. Thus it is essential that schools actively engage in diversity, equity, and inclusion, emphasizing truth and reconciliation and/or racial justice, in school policies and practices."



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## MEET YOUR NATURE KINDERGARTEN TEAM:

A very warm welcome to the Nature Kindergarten Program at Rowan Tree Children's School from the Nature Kindergarten Faculty of 2023-2024:

- **Jasmine Harrison (647) 237-9728**  
Lead Nature Kindergarten Teacher, Monday to Wednesday
- **Jenny Ross (705) 931-3617**  
Lead Nature Kindergarten Teacher, Thursday and Friday
- **Maureen Corrigan**  
Assistant Nature Kindergarten Teacher, Monday, Tuesday and Friday
- **Natasha Rutters**  
Assistant Nature Kindergarten Teacher, Wednesday and Thursday

The Administration of Rowan Tree Children's School also welcomes you warmly:

- **Sabrina Hale** [sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca)  
Head of School
- **Elaine Kempt** [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca)  
Administration and Finance Co-ordinator

Administration hours are from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday to Friday. Our administrators look forward to keeping in touch with parents and community members in person, by telephone, or by email:

For general, financial, enrolment and administration enquiries: [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca)  
For pedagogical enquiries: [sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca)

\*\*\* Please phone / text your child's Lead Teacher if your child will be late or absent. \*\*\*

During school hours, if you are unable to reach the Lead Teacher by phone, please text or call: **Sabrina Hale (705) 768-9967**

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## Program Hours:

The Nature Kindergarten program begins **Tuesday, September 5th**. The school day runs from **8:50 am to 3:20 pm**.

## Rhythm:

Children are carried along by the rhythms of the world they live in—from the rhythms of breathing to the daily rhythms of sleeping, waking, and eating. The Waldorf view is that children flourish when their daily activities reflect the natural order of life with a rhythmic arrangement of the day. Thus, our Nature Kindergarten program flows with a sense of "breathing in" and "breathing out"; from the quiet moments of story and snack to the active moments of rigorous work and play. For example, the children begin with vigorous outdoor play time, followed by lunch, and rest. Then the children are involved in creative indoor play followed by activities which require concentration and group participation. Each day there is a specific activity, and children are encouraged to help with daily classroom chores. All transitions between activities are graced with a song as the teacher creates a rhythm of quiet and active experience for the child.

### Rhythm of the Day:

Although every day in the program brings different seasonal and environmental gifts for the group to engage with, we have a rhythm that flows through the day helping us to create a container for learning. This rhythm helps us to ground the group while also allowing space for spontaneity and lots of play. A 'typical' day in September will look like this (all times are approximate):

8:50 AM	Drop-off at the Nature Kindergarten outdoor hub
9:10 AM	Morning Greeting Circle and Song and Movement Circle
9:35 AM	Walk to Jackson Park
10:00 AM	Snack
10:15 AM	Outdoor play / Forest Exploration
11:10 AM	Walk back to school



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11:30 AM	Transition indoors
12:00 PM	Lunch
12:30 PM	Transition to Rest
1:00 PM	Rest tidy up
1:10 PM	Creative indoor play and artistic / domestic activity
1:45 PM	Tidy up and transition to story
2:00 PM	Story
2:15 PM	Transition outside
2:35 PM	Outdoor Games (teacher led)
2:50 PM	Outdoor play (self-directed)
3:10 PM	Snack and closing circle
3:20 PM	Dismissal

The Nature Kindergarten program fosters the natural curiosity and wonder of children ages four through six by providing a beautiful and caring environment. Through a carefully unified program of structured activities and creative play, the children are given full scope to unfold their creative and imaginative faculties. Simple toys stimulate the child's imagination to create an endless variety of play scenarios both indoors and out. Time outdoors and in nature, painting, singing, oral storytelling, beeswax modelling, drawing, gardening, puppetry, playacting, woodworking, baking, circle games, handwork, and unstructured play are all a part of the Kindergarten rhythm. These essential developmental activities foster the young child's natural aptitude in oral literacy and numeracy and lay a strong foundation for literacy and numeracy in Grade One. An afternoon snack is provided daily.

**Weekly Rhythms:**

Monday: Baking	Tuesday: Handwork	Wednesday: Drawing / Beeswax	Thursday: Painting / Handwork	Friday: Living Arts
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### **Festivals:**

We also mark the rhythms of the year through the changing seasons. As the year weaves from one festival to another we are provided with a true reason for preparation and celebration. For the young child the preparation is half the joy. They love decorating the room, baking special treats and learning songs and verses chosen just for that particular festival. The stories we tell give the children a pictorial understanding of the festival and speak very deeply to them without our need to explain anything. Parents are encouraged to participate in the festivals. Please speak to your child's Lead Teacher if there are festivals that are celebrated in your home that we may share in school.

### **Birthdays:**

Birthdays are a chance for the children to share in celebration together as a class and show appreciation for the birthday child. If you are also having a celebration at home that does not include everyone, **please hand invitations directly to parents** as a way of avoiding awkwardness or hurt feelings.

### **Drop-off / Pick-up Information:**

#### **Parking:**

Parking for all Rowan Tree Children's School families is located to the west of The Mount Community Centre buildings. To access the parking lot, follow the driveway all the way to the end (beside the community garden). Once you have parked, please walk your child(ren) to the outdoor classroom on the east side of the buildings. Your child(ren)'s teacher(s) will be waiting to greet you at the class reception table(s).

Please DO NOT park in front of the building or along the driveway. These are fire routes and need to be accessible at all times.



\*\*\*RTCS parking is marked in red. Class reception area is marked in yellow\*\*\*



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### Drop-off:

The Nature Kindergarten class will meet in the outdoor hub (the area within the cedar trees on the east side of the TMCC buildings). We understand that getting kids ready and out the door on time can be a massive mission(!). However, we do ask that parents drop off their child at the program between 8:50 and 9 am. We will be departing from The Mount Community Centre for our morning nature adventure by 9:35 am and want to make sure all of the children have the chance to settle in with their classmates and participate in our morning circle before we leave. Please make sure that your child has visited the bathroom before school begins.

Please phone / text your child's Lead Teacher if your child will be late or absent.

- **Jasmine Harrison (647) 237-9728**  
Lead Nature Kindergarten Teacher, Monday to Wednesday
- **Jenny Ross (705) 931-3617**  
Lead Nature Kindergarten Teacher, Thursday and Friday

Strive to make your goodbye routine consistent and simple. This is a routine you will have all year long so keep it brief for your sake and for your child's sake. Say your good-bye to your child, then take a moment to share a smile and a "hello" at the reception table with a teacher. It is important that the children see their parents and teachers greeting one another warmly. Your child may feel self-conscious about greeting the teacher at this time, so the children and teachers will have time to greet each other as a group during our morning circle. Trust the teachers to guide your child through the goodbye once you have said you are leaving. **Rest assured that if your child experiences prolonged upset over separation, we will contact you.** When you show trust in your child's teachers, your child will learn to trust them too. Please contact the Lead Teacher if you feel that goodbyes are a challenge. We will be happy to find ways to support you and your child in this process.

Especially during the first month of school, it is helpful that parents not linger after saying goodbye. Parents may continue conversations either in the parking lot or outside the preschool entrance.

### Pick-up:

Pick-up time is at 3:20 pm. The last hour of the school day will be spent outdoors in the outdoor classroom. We will have your child's backpack and belongings outside with us at pick-up time. A brief check-in with parents / guardians at this time allows teachers to convey any important information about your child. If a longer conversation is required,



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your child's teacher will coordinate a time to connect with you by phone outside of program hours.

### **Some Important Notes about Drop-off and Pick-up:**

- It is a legal requirement that each child be signed in and out each day by the teachers.
- If your child is going to be late or absent from any of our programs, please contact their Lead Teacher as soon as possible.
- Please strive to be punctual at pick-up time. Teachers and Administrative Staff have meetings and duties after school and are usually unavailable to supervise children after this time. If you are unavoidably delayed, please call the Lead Teacher. Children who remain at school past 3:30 PM will be included in After Care.
- To ensure the safety of all students, please supervise your child once they are dismissed from their teacher's care. Playground rules continue to apply after school. Parents will receive seasonal playground rules via email.
- We are pleased to have children bring in treasures from nature to share. These will be returned home. Toys, collections, books and other 'special' items are best left at home (no matter how dear). These may get lost or broken, distract the children, or disrupt the social dynamics of play.
- During early childhood, our children live in the present moment and are unable to recount the day's events intellectually. If you ask at pick-up, "What did you do today in school?" The response is typically a dreamy gaze and/or the statement, "Nothing." Most likely, you'll learn about your child's day by overhearing a fragment of a song or a line of verse, or the name of a new friend. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's experiences, or are simply curious, please do not hesitate to ask a teacher. Teachers will share photos and information about your child's activities through the Seesaw Journal so that you have a little window into their school days.

### **Before / After Care:**

If you require before and/or after care this school year, please contact our Administration and Finance Co-ordinator, Elaine Kempt, at [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca) to register. Families can sign-up on a month by month basis. Invoices are sent mid month.



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<b>Before School Care (8-8:50 am)</b>	<b>After School Care (3:20-4:30 pm)</b>	<b>Before AND After School Care</b>
Monday to Friday - \$10 / day	Monday to Friday - \$10 / day	Monday to Friday - \$15 / day

## Guidelines for Gear, Clothing and Dress:

The Nature Kindergarten classrooms and yards are places of active work and play. Based on our years of experience working with children in our programs, we offer the following guidelines to ensure that your child is comfortable, safe, and fully able to participate in all our activities. For all clothing and accessories (e.g., lunch bags, backpacks, hats), we ask that you choose items that are free of distractions and support unselfconsciousness for your own child and the other children in the class (e.g., items that are free of logos, advertising, or images from electronic media); images that may disturb some members of the class (skulls, monsters, sharks); shoes without lights, wheels or sound effects, shirts without reversible sequins. A central value of our Kindergarten program is to protect young children from the influence of consumerism and commercialism. We also strive to protect our children from the premature awakening of vanity or envy related to their appearance and/or clothing. Thank you for your support.

### Guidelines for Outerwear and Gear:

The Kindergarten classes walk and play outside every day in many kinds of weather, with the exception of extreme conditions. They run, climb trees, wade in puddles, dig in the sand, jump rope, and play in the mud and snow. To allow your child to experience nature and the elements in an enjoyable, comfortable way, clothing is extremely important.

- **Backpack** - Big enough to hold extra clothing, lunch and a water bottle. Your child will be responsible for carrying this backpack on our morning adventures. Please make sure that the backpack is big enough to hold their belongings and also manageable. It is best if the backpack has a chest strap. This feature really helps prevent the shoulder straps from slipping down while walking and enables students to manage their backpack with greater ease.
- **Litterless Lunch** (or as close to litterless as possible)
- **Morning Snack** (packaged separately from their lunch)
- Reusable and durable **water bottle**
- **Two extra changes of clothes** (including underwear and socks) packed in large, labelled ziplock bags. One change of clothes can be left in the classroom.



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- **A plastic grocery bag** for transporting wet clothing home.
- **Sunscreen** (please apply before leaving home in the morning). We will help your child to reapply their sunscreen before we return outside in the afternoon.
- Send your child in layers to allow for unexpected temperature changes during the day (the yards are often much cooler in the morning).
- Dress your child in rain pants or splash pants on days when the ground is wet or it is raining.
- Include an appropriate hat in every season.
- No Crocs, flip-flops, and open-toed shoes or sandals as they do not provide enough support, traction, and protection for play in our yards.
- Send mittens rather than gloves in cold weather. Fingers stay warmer when together. Always send an extra pair of mittens.
- Please label all personal items. It will help us make sure your child's clothing makes it home again. Some families have used Lovable Labels: [www.lovablelabels.ca](http://www.lovablelabels.ca)

**How to dress for success (*and warmth!*) in Nature Kindergarten:**

Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rain gear [waterproof boots, pants, jacket]</li> <li>- Sneakers for running [please no open toe shoes even in summer]</li> <li>- Sun Hat [for warmer months]</li> <li>- Warm Jacket [fleece or other breathable fabric ideal]</li> </ul>
Winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Two winter hats [must cover ears and stay on the head]</li> <li>- Balaclava or neck warmer [no scarves please due to risk of strangulation]</li> <li>- Two pairs of warm, waterproof mitts</li> <li>- One warm, waterproof snowsuit</li> <li>- One set of warm, waterproof boots</li> <li>- Wool socks</li> <li>- Three base layers: thermal shirt and pants, middle layer, wool/fleece sweater [cotton is not recommended for cold weather conditions]</li> </ul>
Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rain gear [waterproof boots, pants, jacket], with extra insulation on colder days</li> <li>- Wool socks on colder days [they insulate even when wet]</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sneakers for running shoes [please no open toe shoes even in summer]</li> <li>- Sun Hat [for warmer months]</li> <li>- Warmer sweater or jacket for colder days</li> </ul>
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For cold weather please consider the following factors when dressing for Nature School:

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

**\*\*Pro tip:** Polyester/fleece two piece pyjamas are an excellent economical option as an insulation and middle layer.

It’s not necessary to invest in expensive brand names to keep your child warm. Thrift stores are great places to look for children’s wool and fleece clothing as well as outerwear at cheaper prices. If you are looking for a regular store to purchase outdoor clothing, Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) has excellent children’s outdoor wear for all seasons. Ordering from their online store is a convenient option.

Additionally, Rowan Tree Children’s School participates in the [Warmth & Weather](#) Shop and Support program. Shop online for warm layers and earn 10% for the school when you use our [school link](#). During special promotional weeks (fall and spring), you can earn 15% for the school! Fundraising and keeping kids warm – it’s an all around win!

In terms of boots, we recommend purchasing boots that are one size larger than your child’s foot. Again, this creates dead-air space to assist in insulation. Socks help to wick moisture away from the skin, (please note: cotton tends to sweat and doesn’t do a great job at wicking moisture). The best foot insulator would be two pairs of wool socks with waterproof boots that have wiggle room.



**Don't hesitate to ask for help figuring out the perfect outfit for your wee one! We are happy to help, have LOADS of experience keeping wee fingers and toes cozy, and know that everyone plays and learns better when we're warm and dry!**

### **Guidelines for Indoor Clothing and Gear:**

In the Kindergarten classrooms, the children sing, dance, stretch, jump, draw, paint, and help with a variety of classroom tasks, just to name a few of the ways in which we move! In order that your child is able to participate without hindrances in all our activities we ask you to:

- Provide indoor footwear (to be left at school): supportive, soft soled slippers or light shoes with flexible bottoms. Children who are 5 and 6 years old may wear shoes with laces or buckles for practicing their fine motor skills.
- Choose clothing made of natural fibres when possible (more breathable, insulating and flexible).
- Dress your child in layers for inside play as well (our classrooms is drafty and the temperature fluctuates).
- Choose clothing that allows freedom of movement and independent changing (we suggest avoiding jeans and belts).
- Save makeup, nail polish, temporary tattoos, jewelry and watches for home (we have observed these items to be distracting and/or unsafe during our activities).
- Provide an extra clothes bag (see below for more information).
- Label all clothing and footwear.
- All bedding for rest time is provided by the school.

### **Extra Clothes Bags:**

Please provide two complete changes of clothes for your child, all labelled, in clearly labelled bags, one will be kept in their backpack and one to be left at school. We will send the bags home occasionally to ensure that clothes are seasonally appropriate and still fit. If anything is taken out of the bag at school, we will send it home to be refilled and returned. Sample extra clothing bag:

- Pair of pants/shorts depending on season
- Short/long sleeved shirt depending on weather
- Warm layer - fleece, sweater
- Socks and undies
- Plastic bag



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## Laundry:

We use cloth napkins and tablecloths every day. In order to make our classrooms a real experience of sharing, each family will be asked (on a rotational basis) to help with laundry. A laundry schedule for each class will be shared with parents before the beginning of school and updated through the year. Laundry goes home on Friday and returns on Monday morning. All laundry items may be washed together in cold water and dried without fabric softener. The children often proudly tell us that they helped to wash, sort and fold the laundry!

## Health, Safety and Development:

Rowan Tree School's Illness and Attendance Guidelines (below) outline expectations around illness. Please keep in mind that the lively Nature Kindergarten classroom is not a soothing environment for a child who is not well. Please keep your child home when they are exhibiting common cold symptoms, even if they appear full of energy, to prevent illness from spreading through the class (more details below).

Dietary restrictions should be communicated to us so that necessary adjustments can be made.

All classroom volunteers (including parents) must have a current Canadian Police Information Centre (CPIC) criminal record check (including a vulnerable sector check) and provide a copy to keep on file in the school office.

Due to the developmental needs of the young child, we encourage you to consider your child's activities and routines. Waldorf philosophy and our own experience lead us to believe that:

- Children learn by experiencing the world through play, imitation and interaction.
- Times of vigorous play with friends balanced with periods of quiet on their own will give them a sense of satisfaction and peace.
- A regular bedtime and 10 to 12 hours of sleep support health, development, and participation at school.
- A well rested child who is dressed warmly and fed a wholesome diet is best prepared to participate fully in our programs and to withstand the onslaught of winter colds and ailments.



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## Illness and Attendance Guidelines:

\*\*\* Please phone / text your child's Lead Teacher if your child will be late or absent. \*\*\*

Staff will not generally administer medication. Medicine prescribed by a physician in the original container may be administered if accompanied by completed Medication Information and Parent Consent forms, which are available by contacting the Administration and Finance Co-ordinator at [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca).

Rowan Tree Children's School strives to provide a healthy environment for children, staff and parents. To avoid many common illnesses, teach children HOW and WHEN to wash their hands properly: Wash regularly before eating and after using the toilet.

When a child becomes ill during the day, parents will be contacted to make arrangements for the child to be taken home if the symptoms:

- prevent the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- result in greater needs for care than the staff can provide without compromising the care of other children
- may be contagious

Keep your child home if any of the following are present to avoid spreading illness to other children or staff:

- Unusual behaviour: including extreme lethargy or irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing, or other signs of possible illness. Your child should be kept home until a healthcare professional indicates that the child can attend the program.
- Diarrhea: An episode of diarrhea within the past 24 hours. Children should stay home until the child is symptom-free for 48 hours.
- Vomiting: An episode of vomiting during the previous 24 hours. Children should stay home until the child is symptom-free for 48 hours.
- Fever: Oral/tympanic temperature equal to or greater than 38C (100.4F). Auxiliary temperature equal to or greater than 38C (100.4F). Temperature above 102F is likely a sign of influenza or infection. Children should stay home until the child is fever-free without medication for 24 hours.
- Rash: A rash appearing with fever or behaviour change. Exclusion from school should continue until the child is evaluated by a healthcare professional. (See Impetigo)
- Colds and Coughs: We request that a child be kept home for the first 24 to 48 hours of a cold if it is accompanied by a fever, extreme lethargy or irritability or a



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runny nose that is persistent and/or of a clear colour. This kind of discharge makes the child more contagious. (A persistent runny nose with a green/yellow colour may indicate an infection.) In the case of a severe or 'chesty' sounding cough exclusion could be required until a healthcare professional has been consulted. A healthcare professional's note may be required to return to the program. Teachers should be informed when cold or cough-like symptoms are due to allergies, asthma or other non contagious conditions.

- **Sore Throat:** May be accompanied by head cold, runny nose or ear infection. Majority are due to minor viral illnesses. One third of cases are diagnosed as 'strep' which is highly contagious and requires seeing a physician ASAP.
- **Impetigo:** Rough, cracked reddened area, commonly on face or legs. Itching lesions (pinhead to bean sized); fluid filled blisters form and change to honey coloured crusts; fluid from blisters spreads a highly contagious infection.
- **Pinworms:** Itchy and irritated anal area. Persistent scratching; difficulty sleeping. Wash hands often and see a physician. Notify school if there is any possibility of pinworms as it is highly contagious. Children must be treated before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.
- **Lice:** Child complains of itchy head; persistent scratching. Check for adult lice or nits (eggs). Notify school if there is any suspicion of head lice as it is highly contagious. Children should be treated before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.
- **Pink Eye:** Itchy, red, weepy or watery eye(s) with or without mucous. Highly contagious. Children must be treated before returning to school to avoid an outbreak.

### **COVID-19 Policies:**

You can find the comprehensive version of Rowan Tree Children's School's COVID-19 policy on our website on the [Parent Portal](#) page. For the most recent updates to Public Health Policies and Procedures please refer to the [Peterborough Public Health Guidelines](#).

### **Masks:**

Masks are no longer required by the current Public Health regulations, please let your Lead Teacher know if you wish your child to be masked. We will support each person's individual preference.

### **A Special Note about Media:**

Many families at Rowan Tree Children's School have made a commitment to reducing or eliminating screens in their homes and there is much evidence to support this action, especially for young children. The strong influence of television and other electronic



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devices in a child's life is often observed in the classroom. A child may speak in the tone of a certain character or machine, where speech can be reduced to the sound of robots or mechanical noises and movements. A child may seem "stuck" in their play, unable to play anything but a superhero, transformer, or other character. Other children seem to lose their ability to engage in imaginative play. There may be an expectation on the child's part to be entertained rather than to co-participate in learning. Subtle changes may be noted in a child who cannot sit still during a story, making it a distressing time instead of a time of wonderment and delight.

We recommend that students are not exposed to any electronic media or computers during the school week or any day preceding school. In *Simplicity Parenting*, Kim John Payne states that, "although 'media saturation' characterizes our era, it need not flood our children's childhood." He also offers three compelling reasons to eliminate media exposure in children under 7 years: A) Negative long-lasting effects strongly outweigh any benefits to young children ; B) Its absence greatly supports the goals of simplification; C) Based on experience, dispensing with television is not as hard as most families fear. 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.

For additional information about screens and young children, please follow this link from the Canadian Paediatric Society:

<https://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/screen-time-and-young-children>

News broadcasts heard from either the radio or television go deep within the child and can affect them on an emotional and psychological level. Please help us protect our youngest children from the stress associated with upsetting world and local events.

**Our food policy:**

Sitting to eat food together is an important part of building community in Nature Kindergarten. We want to ensure our snack and mealtimes are a healthy, safe and happy part of our program. Please read our food policy before packing a lunch and snacks for your wee one.

**Snacks & Mealtime:**

Morning Snack	➤ Please send a healthy snack (packed separately from their lunch) for your child to enjoy during the morning nature adventure.
Lunch	➤ A garbage-less lunch will be sent from home. ➤ Please limit 'treats'!
Afternoon Snack	➤ The afternoon snack will often be made with the students during the



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	day and eaten prior to home time..
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### Winter Warmers

When packing your child's lunch for the program, you might consider including a thermos with warm food or drink. This can be very helpful on cold days!

### Nuts

The Mount Community Centre is not a nut-free facility. We cannot guarantee that your child will not be exposed to nut-related allergens.

### Snack-Sharing

We ask that participants do not share or trade food that is brought from home, as this ensures the health, safety, and happiness of the community.

### Special Occasion Food

Due to different dietary restrictions and needs within our community of learners, please check with the Lead Teacher before sending or bringing special occasion treats to the program.

### Garbage-Less Lunches

We encourage participants to try to bring a garbage-less lunch. At the same time, we ask that parents/caregivers consider the size/weight/safety of the containers in which their child's snacks are packed. At Rowan Tree Children's School we seek to empower even our youngest participants to carry their own snacks and water bottles on our adventures, which is totally possible with small containers.

### **Toileting:**

The Nature Kindergarten class uses the bathroom stalls in The Mount Community Centre. We make group trips before lunch and before returning outside in the afternoon. If students need to use the bathroom outside of these times, a teacher will escort them.

The bathrooms adjacent to the kitchen and Preschool room (on the main floor) are the most convenient bathrooms for parents / guardians to take their child to before drop-off in the morning. You can enter the school through the Preschool door between 8 and 8:50 am.

Independent toileting by the first day of school is a requirement. Teachers will support children that require occasional assistance if needed. Please inform the Lead Teacher if you have any concerns about your child's ability to toilet independently.



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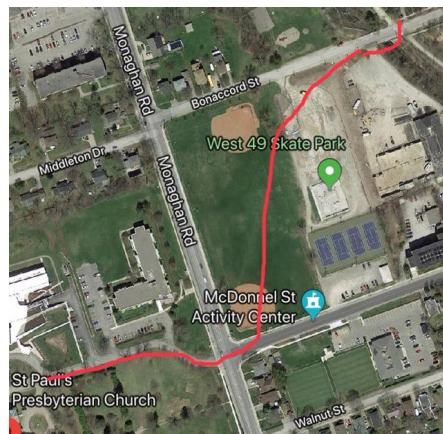
### In the Forest

The kindergarten teachers carry a toileting kit on our morning adventures. Teachers support children in finding appropriate spots to do 'nature pees' and remain nearby for safety.

### Our route to Jackson Creek Park:

When venturing off the grounds of The Mount Community Centre, Kindergarten staff and students will walk in the following formation: one of the Kindergarten teachers will lead, children will follow in a buddy system or holding onto our rope buddy, Scarlet the Snake, and one of the Kindergarten teachers will follow behind the children (sandwich formation!). The route we will take to and from Jackson Creek Park has been carefully considered with safety as the highest priority.

We will cross at the crosswalk at the corner of Monaghan Road and McDonnel Street. We will then walk across the baseball field, past the skatepark to Bonaccord Street. We will cross Bonaccord Street (a quiet residential street) at the Trans Canada Trail on the East side of Jackson Creek.



### Safety in the park:

We will use the 'sandwich formation' when walking through the park. The teacher in front will lead the way while the teacher in the back will ensure the children are following safely.



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We will be establishing familiar spaces within the park that we return to regularly and get to know well. When exploring an area, the teachers will help the children recognize the boundaries of that space by walking the perimeter, identifying features of the landscape that act as a boundary, and / or placing markers (rope / flagging tape). Teachers will be able to see all the children at all times.

The children will be taught to respond to particular sound signals that will let them know when to come back together as a group, as well as a call/response that lets others know where they are and keeps the group in communication during play.

In Nature Kindergarten we practice dynamic risk assessment; risks are discussed and identified as we come across them. The children are included in conversations about potential risks and, with support, learn to identify risks and how to manage them. Not only is this a vitally important life skill, but it helps children build confidence and independence!

**Safety Procedures / Risk Management:**

Our number one priority is keeping participants and teachers safe. We do our utmost to reduce and manage risks. However, encountering some level of risk is an inevitable part of going outside.

All Nature Kindergarten staff have current CPR and Standard First Aid qualifications. Staff carry a first aid kit at all times. Safety procedures and protocols are reviewed regularly with all staff members.

Our goal in providing the information below is to inform and educate the families in the Rowan Tree Children’s School community about specific risks and what practices, procedures, and protocols we have in place to manage them.

Lost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Prevention</b> is key!</li> <li>➤ Children should always be able to see one of their teachers.</li> <li>➤ Teachers do regular head counts.</li> <li>➤ On a hike, the lead teacher will stop at all forks in the trail to ensure the front and back of the line stay together.</li> <li>➤ If separated, children are to: STOP, SIT &amp; SHOUT. This is taught explicitly to the children at the beginning of the school year.</li> <li>➤ Preliminary Search protocol begins as soon as a child is out of sight and not responsive to the sound signals.</li> </ul>
Branches overhead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Staff perform visual inspections as they move through areas of dead overhead branches.</li> <li>➤ The group will avoid areas that are potentially hazardous due to dead overhead branches.</li> </ul>



Extreme weather	<p>Thunder &amp; Lightning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Check the forecast first!</li> <li>➤ Seek shelter inside a building (The Mount)</li> <li>➤ If caught out: we will avoid tall trees and stay as low to the ground as possible, and move towards shelter at the first signs of a storm.</li> </ul> <p>High Winds or Tornados</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Seek shelter inside a building (The Mount)</li> </ul>
Dogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Children will keep their distance from all dogs encountered in the park.</li> <li>➤ Teachers will request the owner's name and phone number if a dog is off-leash and / or at all aggressive and will report it to the appropriate authorities.</li> </ul>
Ticks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Staff are trained to remove ticks properly.</li> <li>➤ Parents are encouraged to do TICK CHECKS in the evening.</li> <li>➤ If a tick is found during the program, it will be bagged and given to the parent / guardian to take to the Peterborough Health Unit for a species ID and to be tested for Lyme Disease.</li> </ul>
Poison Ivy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Teachers and children will develop an awareness of where poison ivy is growing in the area.</li> <li>➤ Children are taught to identify poison ivy and avoid it.</li> <li>➤ If contacted: the area will be washed with soap and water immediately to reduce the chance of a rash.</li> </ul>

## Rowan Tree Children's School Communication Guidelines:

Healthy communication between parents, teachers and community members is important to all of us and vital to our school's success. We hope to use parent-teacher communication, including email, to build bridges between home and school that help support learning and strengthen relationships. We have created these guidelines in the interest of fostering healthy relationships among all members of our school community.

- Teachers will respond to emails within 24 – 48 hours. When emails are sent after 6 p.m. or on weekends, teachers will respond within 24 hours - 48 hours of the next working day.
- Emails that are sent to the class list should be sent blind carbon copy (bcc:).
- Other forms of communication are encouraged: sending a note in a child's agenda (for older students) or lunchbox (for younger students), or speaking briefly at pick-up or drop-off time. For students in grades four and up, children are encouraged to speak to their teacher directly.
- In the morning, teachers are setting up the classroom and preparing for the day's lessons. This is not an ideal time to meet with your child's teacher other than to relay information pertinent to the school day.





- Parent/teacher interviews are scheduled twice a year. In the event that an additional meeting is necessary, we ask everyone to be considerate of each other's time, to keep meeting lengths within the agreed upon timeframe and to consider other forms of communication first.

### **Communication Channels:**

As Rowan Tree Children's School faculty, we see ourselves as team members in supporting, guiding, and caring for your child.

Here are some of the ways we will communicate and stay connected during the school year:

#### **Seesaw**

- Class teachers will post photos of student work and updates on class activities to the class Seesaw Journal on a regular basis. The frequency of posts will be determined by the class teacher. Posts may also include pedagogical information about students' classroom experiences (i.e. "why we are doing what we are doing").
- Class teachers may also message parents using the Seesaw messaging feature. Seesaw automatically sends email notifications to parents when new items are added.

#### **Email**

- Information regarding class activities and events may be sent by email as well as through the Seesaw messaging feature (i.e. you may receive the same information twice!).
- If you have a question or concern pertaining to your child, please email the class teacher to set up a mutually convenient time to meet in person or connect by phone. Indicate the issue to be discussed as some lead time provides an opportunity for the teacher to give prior thought to the matter. This meeting can include the Head of School at the request of the teacher or the parent.
- For enrolment and questions regarding fees please contact the Administration and Finance Co-ordinator at [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca)

#### **Phone**

- Class teachers provide their personal phone numbers so that they can be reached during the school day in case of an emergency or if information needs to be relayed regarding a change in the student's routine.
- During school hours, if you are unable to reach the class Lead Teacher by phone, please call: **Sabrina Hale (705) 768-9967**



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- When a supply teacher is present, the Lead Teacher will let parents know the contact number for the day.

### **Parent – Teacher Conferences**

- Formal parent-teacher conferences are conducted twice per year (early November and mid-February) to exchange information about the progress (social, academic, learning skills) of each student and to set mutually agreed upon goals.

### **School Newsletters**

- Information and news pertaining to the whole school community will be included in the School Newsletter. Newsletters will be sent at least once per season.
- Newsletters will be delivered to your inbox

### **Rowan Tree Children’s School’s Website and Social Media**

- [www.rowantreeschool.ca](http://www.rowantreeschool.ca)
- See also the Facebook, and Instagram pages for updated school events.

The Rowan Tree Children’s School Faculty, Staff and Board of Directors are committed to ongoing improvements in the area of communication as our school continues to grow. We are committed to working in partnership with parents in order to build bridges between home and school. All pedagogical, administrative and financial questions are treated with respect and confidentiality.

### **Parent-Teacher Communication in Kindergarten:**

- Honest, respectful, and timely communication is the key to our success. We will contact you immediately if there are any concerns about the safety, development, or well being of your child. In turn, we encourage you to speak to us about your concerns or questions. If you have concerns that involve another child or family please speak first to your child’s Lead Teacher. Please inform us as soon as possible of any significant changes in home life or routine so that we can be sensitive to your child’s needs. *Note: At pick-up and drop-off times, teachers are supervising children and are unavailable at that time for in-depth discussions. You may use email or a written note to schedule a time to speak with your child’s teacher by phone or in person.*
- If it is necessary to leave a message for a teacher or arrange changes regarding your child’s routine (e.g., going home with someone else) please write it down and give the note to a teacher in the morning. Although we try to remember everything, it is always best to have it in writing. If your child is going to be late or absent, please contact the Lead Teacher as early as possible.
- Please read class letters that are sent by email.



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- Please sign up for parent-teacher interviews (November and February). Parent-teacher interviews provide a means of strengthening the parent-teacher bond, an opportunity for your child's teacher to share observations about your child, and an opportunity for deepening the teacher's understanding of your child. Sign up sheets will be emailed to you prior to interview days. If the times listed are not convenient, please speak to your child's Lead Teacher to find an alternative.
- Parent Evenings provide a valuable opportunity for teachers and parents to learn about Waldorf Early Childhood Education and child development, and to share our experiences, strengthening the loving circle of parents and teachers around each child. Thus, there is both a social and a pedagogical aspect to our parent evenings.
- Because our focus in the Early Childhood programs is on the child's social, emotional and physical development, our crafts and activities emphasize process rather than product. We generally do not send many projects home. The ones we do complete often take time and are completed at each child's pace. When all projects are complete, they will all be sent home. At the end of each term, you will receive a package of your child's beautiful paintings and drawings.
- Report Cards are sent home in February and at the end of the school year.

### **Pedagogical Questions**

Please speak to your child's teacher directly on matters concerning the curriculum, discipline, social relationships, schoolwork and academic standards.

For further advice, please contact the Head of School (Sabrina Hale) [sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca), who will pursue concerns in collaboration with the parent and teacher. If an additional step is desired, the Administrative Committee (Head of School--Sabrina Hale [sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:sabrinahale@rowantreeschool.ca); Administration and Finance Co-ordinator--Elaine Kempt [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca); Board Chair--Mike Hendren [mikejhendren@gmail.com](mailto:mikejhendren@gmail.com)) will strive for a satisfactory resolution.

### **Administrative Questions**

If you have questions concerning school policies and/or procedures, please contact the Administration and Finance Co-ordinator at [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca). Parents seeking further resolution with any concern may submit a letter to the Administrative Committee.

### **Behaviour Management**

A daily rhythm and activities appropriate to the developmental needs of the children keeps problems to a minimum. Boundaries and expectations are established early to ensure the safety and protection of children. Teachers redirect disruptive play and



model caring responses to elicit gentle play and learning among classmates. When a problem does exist, teachers will speak with parents to arrange a meeting.

## Inclement Weather Days / School Closures

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. 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. If the school is required to close, each family will receive an email.

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. A communication will be sent early that morning. 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.



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## Professional Development/Activity Days:

Throughout the year there are days set aside for professional development work for our faculty and staff. There will be no regular classes on these days (with the exception of the Preschool program). Where possible we have scheduled our professional development days to coincide with those of the local Public and Catholic District School Boards so that our families may take advantage of city-wide programming and to provide consistency with siblings attending other schools. Please see the 2023-24 calendar.

## Tuition Payments:

Our Administration and Finance Co-ordinator Office, Elaine Kempt, will send you an invoice at the beginning of each month. Tuition fee payments are equalized over the 10 months of the school year.

Tuition payments are due on the **first day of every month** and are payable by e-transfer to [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca)

If you are paying by e-transfer, please send a separate e-transfer for each child you have registered in Rowan Tree Children's School programs or identify in the message section the amount you are paying for each child, for example:

*John Smith - Nature Kindergarten, October \$876.69*  
*Sarah Smith -Grade 1, October \$876.69*

Any questions regarding invoicing and fee payments can be addressed to Elaine Kempt at [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca)

Please note: in the case of a school lockdown due to COVID-19, families will be charged 50% of regular tuition fees and online learning options will be offered by the class teachers. We are not able to offer tuition refunds.

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.

We do not issue refunds in the case of a participant's dismissal from the program.



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## Additional Documents:

Please complete and return Form 1 (Waiver) and Form 2 (Alternate Pick-up Authorization) and provide a copy of your child's immunization record. These documents can be emailed to [info@rowantreeschool.ca](mailto:info@rowantreeschool.ca) (subject line: child's first and last name, program name) or submitted in person on your child's first day of Nature Kindergarten.

## How to join our parent communication forum (Seesaw):

This year we are using Seesaw to share and communicate with families! We will post to Seesaw to share your child's learning and experiences in Nature Kindergarten. We'll also use Seesaw to send you messages and reminders.

Seesaw is private; you'll only see posts we've created about your child. Content can only be accessed on the password protected site and cannot be downloaded for further distribution. If there is content you would love a copy of, that only involves your child, don't hesitate to contact us so that we can share it with you!

Please Sign Up Now

1. Click on this link: <https://app.seesaw.me/s/080-029-106>
2. Choose your child from the list
3. Create your account
4. Once approved you can then see content from your child

After you sign up, download the free Seesaw Family app and sign in. You can also access Seesaw from a computer at <https://app.seesaw.me>.

Thank you for supporting your child's learning journey!  
Jasmine, Jenny, Maureen and Natasha

P.S. If you used Seesaw last year or have more than one child using Seesaw, follow the link above, then click the 'Sign in' tab at the top of the screen. You do not need to create a new account.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this document. Keep it handy throughout the year as a helpful resource. Please refer to the [All School Parent Handbook](#) for additional policies and procedures.**



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