

Northern Lights School After School Care Parent Handbook

Program Statement

The Northern Lights School is a not-for-profit independent school offering Waldorf-inspired full and part-time JK/SK kindergarten, Grade One/Two and licensed After School Care Program. Our vision is to re-imagine education in Thunder Bay. Our mission sees the unfolding of each unique individual through an education for the head, heart and hands.

www.northernlightsschool.ca The school grows each year as the lead class moves up a grade.

Waldorf schools are worldwide with 1000 schools in 50 countries. Waldorf education celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2019. The education is developmentally appropriate, rigorous, creative and relevant to its space and time.

Northern Lights School is located at Tapiola Nature Reserve. After School Care is offered next door at the North McIntyre Recreation Centre.

Dedicated Teachers

The children love their teachers and the teachers love the children. Guided by the philosophy, understanding of the stages of human development and practices of Waldorf education, teachers are free to teach a child-centered program. They meet the children through their own understanding, imagination, compassion and creativity. They become 'Artists of the Education' freed from the constraints of the Ministry curriculum and standardized tests. Parents sense an enthusiasm in the teachers that builds in the child a love for learning, their teacher and being at school.

The teachers are trained on inner practices of teaching. Waldorf-inspired teachers seek guidance through the spirit; work on their work/life balance; relationships with the children and community; and their own search for meaning and purpose. They regularly continue their professional training through weekly study and inner development, attend summer courses and

yearly conferences. Waldorf teachers stay with their class over multiple years building deep, personal connections with each student and their family.

Fields, Forest and Stream

Healthy bodies build healthy minds. Move to learn, go outside in nature and it will improve test scores and increase wellbeing. But what we really LOVE is the pure joy being outside in nature brings to the students. Our students are fortunate to be at nature based campuses. The North McIntyre Rec. Centre campus is in a country setting surrounded by woods, trails and streams. The facilities has outdoor play equipment, an outdoor skating/hockey/roller blading rink maintained by the City of Thunder Bay and a baseball field. The property is well suited for outdoor activities. The program will be offered on site and **not include off campus trips.**

Play and Experiential Based Learning

Play and outside time improves academics, but what it really improves is the daily lives and health of the children. It makes school fun because children are given the time and space to be kids. By dressing appropriately, children can enjoy outdoor play in most types of weather. This enables children to play in wet weather and to enjoy puddles without inconvenience to the parent. The role of the adult is to observe their play, notice their interests, emerging ideas and developmental needs, plan and offer experiences accordingly, finding ways to extend the learning and therefore optimize the child's development. At times the adult may role model a new experience, inviting the child to join in and supporting their learning through the process which encourages on-going learning. Our goal is for children to be self-motivated learners. The emphasis is on process rather than an end result and healthy play is observed, valued, encouraged and supported by the staff.

Relationship Based Education

Each child is seen and cared for by staff and teachers that are able to cultivate a relationship with the child as unique in body, soul and spirit. In such an environment the child can 'live' into their own being and the unfolding of their own inner light.

Staff members strive to communicate verbally with parents. Over time this develops into a trusting relationship which facilitates open communication. A trusting relationship between staff, teachers and Board members is also fostered. Weekly faculty meetings give a time to discuss the children, the program and issues. Monthly Board meetings are opportunities for organizational decisions.

After School Care Program

The school offers a licensed nature-based After School Care program at the North McIntyre Recreation Centre (NMRC) located at 2051 Government Road, Thunder Bay, Ontario. The program is for children from kindergarten to 13 years of age. The campus is in a country setting surrounded by woods, trails and streams. The facilities has outdoor play equipment, an outdoor skating/hockey rink maintained by the City of Thunder Bay and a baseball field. The property is well suited for after school outdoor activities. The program will be offered on site and **not include off campus trips**.

The program will begin with an outside activity time from arrival until 3:30. The children will then come inside for snack and activities such as board games, stories, art and relaxation time. We invite you to give your child the gift of a nature based After School Program and invite you and your family into the Northern Lights community.

Care is offered Monday to Friday throughout the school year from 2:30 - 6 pm.

Fall Term: September 4, 2019 - December 22, 2019

Winter Term: January 3, 2020 - March 13, 2019

Spring Term: March 23, 2020 - June 26, 2020

Statutory Holidays

Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Victoria Day. After School Care will not be offered for two weeks of the Christmas Break or one week in the March Break while public schools are closed. Care will not be offered on Professional Development Days.

Admissions

Application for After Care is available at www.northernlightsschool.ca and done online. Once the application has been received a tour of the program site will be arranged to familiarize the family with the staff, the surroundings and our policies. A completed registration and acceptance into the program when a signed contract is received and payment is made for the first term.

Fees

Care - 2.5 hours - 2:30-5:00 - \$15, 3.5 hours - 2:30 - 6:00 - \$22

Payment

After School care is paid per term by sending an e-transfer to northernlightstbay@gmail.com There is no deduction in fees for absences as a spot is being held for your child in the program. Two weeks written notice is to be given to remove a child from the program.

Late Pick-up Charges

Any child(ren) picked up after the agreed upon time will receive a late charge invoice. Late pick up fees will be \$10 per 15 minutes after the first 15 minutes.

Pickup

When picking up your child, the parent(s)/ guardian(s) should inform the staff that the child is leaving. This is essential for the safety of all children. Unless otherwise arranged, children will not be released to any person other than those specified on the registration form. A person delegated by

the parent(s)/ guardian(s) will be required to show identification when picking up the child to indicate such a person is indeed the delegate.

Illness and Absence

Please call to let us know if your child will not attend for any reason, including illness, as it will allow the program to continue with the planned activities. Staff will not be waiting unnecessarily for your child's arrival.

Please text or call Hailey Surette, Program Supervisor for absences at 807-708-4231.

We ask, out of consideration to other families at our centre, that you keep your child at home if she/he is ill with a contagious condition or a fever. All children attending must be able to participate in all parts of the program, including outside playtime. A child who is not well enough to play outdoors is not well enough to participate fully in the program.

If your child becomes ill while attending a program, he/she will be cared for until arrangements for pickup have been made. Please ensure that your emergency contact information is updated and complete, including phone numbers.

According to guidelines set by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, for protection of all children, your child must be kept home when any of the following occur:

- Fever, runny red eyes, diarrhea, head lice, impetigo, swollen glands, ear ache
- Persistent itching, vomiting, sore throat, jaundice, undiagnosed or contagious rash
- Thick mucus or pus draining from the eyes or nose, heavy or persistent cough
- Grey or white stool, dark (tea coloured) urine, sores with crusty yellow or green drainage.

Clothing

Appropriate outdoor clothing is required, as the children will be participating in outdoor play daily. Clothing such as splash pants and boots for rainy weather, snowsuits, mitts, neck tubes and hats for winter. Children should wear warm breathable base layers such as wool/silk allows for an enjoyable outdoors

experience. A local Thunder Bay company Warmth and Weather supplies wool and wool/silk clothing for children as well as mitts and rainwear.

www.warmthandweather.ca

A second set of clothing for your child should be kept at the program to be used when necessary. All clothing and shoes should be labelled to avoid losing articles. Please note that for safety reasons we request that no strings be attached to any article of clothing. We request that indoor shoes or slippers be left at the program. This is especially important in case of a fire drill, as the children must exit the building.

Drug Administration

Northern Lights School staff will administer both prescription and non-prescription medication to children in accordance with provincial legislation. The legislation requires that parents provide:

- i) Written authorization form, including dosage, reason for taking the medication and time medication is to be administered.
- ii) The medication must be in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's name, name of medication, the dosage, the date of purchase, and instructions for storage and administration.
- iii) Parents must give all medication to a staff person, who will place it in a locked medication box.

Discharge of a Child from the Program

Should the child's behavior problems be deemed to be beyond the expertise of the centre staff, pose a risk to safety to him or herself or infringe upon the rights of another child to participate in a safe and secure childcare environment, recommendations will be made in writing to the parent(s)/

guardian to withdraw the child from the program and seek services with appropriate agencies within the community. The parent will be given two weeks notice to make alternate arrangements. Please be aware that if a child's behavior is deemed unsafe for themselves, or other children, or staff persons, parents will be asked to find alternate arrangements **immediately**.

Waiting List

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for a child care centre that maintains a waiting list to have related policies and procedures.

- Northern Lights School will strive to accommodate all requests for the registration of a child at the child care centre.
- Where the maximum capacity of a program has been reached and spaces are unavailable for new children to be enrolled, the waiting list procedures set out below will be followed.
- No fee will be charged to parents for placing a child on the waiting list.
- The Northern Lights School office will manage all waitlist needs. The waitlist will be on a first come, first basis and an interview will take place with parents and the child. Successful applicants will be enrolled. Application form will be available on our website. Once application has been sent to Northern Lights School, the child(ren) will be added next in line to interview waitlist.

Receiving a Request to Place a Child on the Waiting List

1. The licensee or designate will receive parental requests to place children on a waiting list via online application
2. The licensee or designate will place a child on the waiting list in chronological order, based on the date and time that the request was received.

3. Once a child has been placed on the waiting list, the licensee or designate will inform parents of their child's position on the list.

Determining Placement Priority when a Space Becomes Available

1. When space becomes available in the program, priority will be given to first come, first served.
2. Once these children have been placed, other children on the waiting list will be prioritized based on program availability and the chronology in which the child was placed on the list.

Offering an Available Space

1. Parents of children on the waiting list will be notified via e-mail that a space has become available in their requested program.
2. Parents will be provided a timeframe of 48 hours in which a response is required before the next child on the waiting list will be offered the space. Where a parent has not responded within the given timeframe, the licensee or designate will contact the parent of the next child on the waiting list to offer them the space.

Responding to Parents who inquire about their Child's Placement on the Waiting List

1. Northern Lights School Director will be the contact person for parents who wish to inquire about the status of their child's place on the waiting list.
2. Northern Lights Director will respond to parent inquiries and provide the child's current position on the list and an estimated likelihood of the child being offered a space in the program.

Maintaining Privacy and Confidentiality

1. The waiting list will be maintained in a manner that protects the privacy and confidentiality of the children and families on the list and therefore only the child's position on the waiting list will be provided to parents.
2. Names of other children or families and/or their placement on the waiting list will not be shared with other individuals.

Emergency Management

Staff will follow the emergency response procedures outlined in this document by following these three phases:

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

Staff will ensure that children are kept safe, are accounted for and are supervised at all times during an emergency situation.

For any emergency situations involving a child with an individualized plan in place, the procedures in the child's individualized plan will be followed.

If any emergency situations happen that are not described in this document, the Supervisor or Designate will provide direction to staff for the immediate response and next steps. Staff will follow the direction given.

Communication to Parents

Upon arrival to the emergency evacuation site, the Supervisor or Designate/Program Staff will notify parents/guardians of the emergency situation, evacuation and the location to pick up their children at Five Mile School. 2025 Dawson Rd., Thunder Bay.

If any emergency situations result in a serious occurrence, the serious occurrence policy and procedures will also be followed.

All emergency situations will be documented in detail by the Supervisor in the daily written record.

Supervision of Students and Volunteers Policy

Northern Lights School welcomes both placement students and volunteers into our After Care Program. We believe it is a valuable part in gaining experience in an educational environment. Volunteers and students also play an important role in supporting staff in the daily operation of child care programs.

The Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding volunteers and students for child care centres will govern our obligations. This policy will provide supervising staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Students and volunteers will always be supervised by an employee and never be permitted to be alone with any child or group of children who receive care. Students and volunteers will not be counted in staff to child ratios.

Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures

The purpose of this policy is to provide a transparent process for parents/guardians, the child care licensee and staff to use when parents/guardians bring forward issues/concerns.

Definitions

Licensee: The individual or agency licensed by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of each child care centre it operates (i.e. the operator).

Staff: Individual employed by the licensee (e.g. program room staff).

Program Supervisor: Individual responsible to the Licensee for the program.

Policy

Northern Lights School will conduct every effort to address concerns brought forth by parents or guardians in a professional and timely manner. Any issue that is brought forth, that requires attention, will be responded to within 24 hours and addressed within 5 days.

General

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child

care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by the Program Supervisor and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 1 business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our school maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will

therefore not be tolerated from any party. If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a Child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*. For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/children-said/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

Prohibited Practices

We follow the Ministry of Education regulations regarding prohibited practices and other internal policies which are there for the protection of children and families. We shall not permit physical, emotional, psychological or economic abuse of a client, which may include but is not limited to the following:

- a) Any corporal punishment of a child by an employee or by another child or group of children.
- b) Physical restraint of the child, such as confining the child to a device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;

- c) Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining the child, or confining the child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- d) Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self respect, dignity or self-worth;
- e) Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding;
- f) Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will;
- g) Any verbal attack on the self-esteem of a child or parent by staff.
- h) Ostracism or isolation of a child.
- i) Unsafe play that may be hazardous to a child's well-being.
- j) Any form of racism.

Challenging Behaviour Policy

It is our policy to make every effort to serve all the children and to work collaboratively with parents, staff and various community support systems to meet the individual needs of each child. It is our policy to assist children and parents to make any behaviour changes that are felt by staff, administration and/or outside agencies to be necessary for the health, needs and safety of the child and the other children in our care.

Continual attempts will be made to find appropriate solutions to resolve any problems. Support and guidance through this process will be provided by the Site Supervisor to ensure that parents are actively involved.

In the event that a child is experiencing problems that may pose a direct threat to the safety of the other children or staff, the parent/guardian may be required to withdraw the child from the program and make other childcare arrangements. The following procedure will be followed when a child's behaviour is an issue:

1. The initial interview will be an informal meeting between the parent(s) and staff member. At this meeting, the parent(s) will be informed of the child's social behaviour(s).
2. The staff will ask for the After Care Supervisor's support and advice.
3. Support may be requested from the Resource Teacher at the child's school with parent's consent.
4. The Educator, Site Supervisor, Resource Educator, and members of the Northern Lights School faculty and parent(s) will collaborate to facilitate further evaluation of the child's needs, to determine the nature and severity of the problem, and appropriate programming is provided.
5. Should the child's behaviour problems be deemed to be beyond the expertise of the staff, pose a risk to safety to him or herself or infringe upon the rights of another child to participate in a safe and secure child-care environment, recommendations will be made in writing to the parent (s)/guardian to withdraw the child from the program and seek services with appropriate agencies within the community. The parent will be given two weeks notice to make alternate arrangements. Please be aware that if a child's behaviour issues are deemed unsafe for themselves, or other children, or staff persons, parents will be asked to find alternate arrangements **immediately**.

We invite you to give your child the gift of a nature based After School Program and invite you and your family into the Northern Lights School community. For more information about Northern Lights School, its programs and to enquire about registering please visit www.northernlightsschool.ca

