



Parent Handbook

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Program Statement

Willowglen School's interpretation of Montessori pedagogy and programming is consistent with the Minister of Education's Policy Statement as set out in "*How Does Learning Happen (HDLH)?*"

This Ministry program statement will be reviewed with childcare staff and volunteers annually or whenever an amendment is made.

Willowglen School holds the view that all children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. We promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our care by diligently meeting all the requirements of ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15.

We support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, child care providers and staff by communicating, promoting and adhering to our 'Code of Conduct.' These are communicated in our staff policies and in the parent handbook and calendar. They are applied to all members of the Willowglen School community – staff, Board, interns, students, parents, volunteers, observers and visitors.

We encourage the children to interact and communicate in a positive way and we support their ability to self-regulate by having mixed-age Montessori communities where children remain with the same adults for three years. This provides many opportunities for interactions with children older and younger than themselves, and with adults.

We foster the children's exploration play and inquiry by having fully equipped Montessori play/learn environments in which activities are present for the full range of three ages in each room. There are activities that assist children to become independent or able to assist others in care of the self, care of the environment and care of others (Grace and Courtesy); activities to explore and refine all the senses as well as discover sequencing and order; activities to increase vocabulary, encourage discussion, explore sounds, and begin to develop the process of writing and reading, and activities to develop number sense, numeracy, understanding of large quantities, the mathematical operations, geometry and even rudimentary algebra concepts and then lots of activities to introduce all the wonderful things in our world. In addition there are activities for cutting, colouring, painting, exploring colour, shape and texture, pasting, etc. Children understand where everything is kept and they are able to choose and return things independently and with their friends.



All Montessori materials are introduced to a child by an adult or by another child, and while the Montessori adults are always observing children to see what support each child might need, they are very sensitive to allowing children their own initiative as this most often results in children being deeply engaged and peaceful in what they are doing. Adults are always trying to find exactly the right moment to introduce a child to something new so that they have enough time to master something but also are always being gently challenged.

We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences in which each child's learning and development is supported by using the international Montessori curriculum and materials that have been proven through research to be effective with children from all socio-economic and cultural groups.

We incorporate indoor and outdoor play, as well

as active play, rest and quiet time, into the day, and give consideration to the individual needs of the children by allowing the children to manage a great deal of their day. Children can choose to move about the class carrying things or building things, or sit quietly at a table moving intricate pieces. Children can choose to have snack or a drink when they are hungry or thirsty; they do not have to wait for the whole group. We have a large, well equipped, outdoor playground that children access in groups twice or three times each day.

We foster the engagement of and communication with parents about the program and their children by having regular report cards and parent-teacher interviews, inviting parents in to observe their children, writing monthly newsletters and sending home little explanations of the creations that children bring home. Parents can access their child's teacher via email or by chatting briefly at the door during arrival and dismissal. We also have whole school events where the parents of the younger children can meet and discuss their child's experience with parents of older children.

We are involved in the local community in several ways. Willowglen School has sponsored a child through Plan Canada. We regularly hold fundraising events to continue this. We regularly make use of community members as guest speakers in the classrooms. We hold annual food drives and charity donations to community groups such as the Salvation Army and Children's Wish Foundation.

We support our staff and others who interact with the children in relation to continuous professional learning by having planned group professional development as well as encouraging and supporting individual professional development. Financial support is available to all staff who wish to pursue additional training via courses or workshops. We also hold staff

training each August at which time all staff review and complete all necessary documentation required by ONTARIO REGULATION 137/15. We have two Professional Development days set aside each school year to meet as a whole staff and in smaller groups to review our work and plan for improvements. We have monthly staff meetings during which we discuss common concerns, plan

larger school wide events, collaborate and share in the development of new ideas.

We document and review the impact of the above strategies on the children and their families through observation, conversation, meetings, surveys, etc.

Willowglen Programs

Education

Willowglen School is a proud accredited member of the CCMA. As such our Montessori programs follow the highest standards of Montessori pedagogy. In addition to the full Montessori curriculum we offer French language instruction, music and art. One of the foundations of the Montessori pedagogy is individual educational plans. While there is some group lessons every child will have their own educational plan in which the teachers have mapped out their goals and achievements.

Montessori programs are designed around a 3 year age grouping. Children who are 18 months are eligible to enroll in our Pre-Casa program. Here there will be a focus on gross motor development, independence building, and academic skills such as counting and letter recognition.

For children 3 to 5 years of age we offer the Casa program. Children must be turning 3 by December of the year they start. They must also be fully toilet trained and able to demonstrate the ability to work independently.

In Casa they will continue to develop independence but also work on more advanced academic skills. It is very common for children who graduate from our Casa program to be reading short stories and performing multiplication and division.

French and Music

Young children's brains are especially open to language acquisition in a way that adult brains are not. Willowglen has a strong French language program in which the Casa age children receive instruction 4 days per week. French is taught in small groups with a focus on vocabulary when the children are young and builds up to include written French as the children are capable.

In addition to the daily musical songs and learning children receive specialized music instruction every week. They learn rhythm, beats, musical notation and musical theory. The highlight of the school music program is our Spring Concert. This is the children's opportunity to perform on stage at the Oakville Centre for the Performing Arts.

Physical Activity

Physical activity is important for young children's physical and emotional health. Weather permitting students will have outdoor playtime before school, after school and at recess. These will usually be held outside in our playground, or may occasionally involve leaving the school campus. There are several parks nearby and classes may make use of these from time to time.

Summer Camp

During the school year September through June, Willowglen programs focus on academic development following the Montessori pedagogy. The Summer Adventure Camp ensures that year round child care is available while giving children a chance to enjoy crafts and games, outdoor time, exciting field trips and special guest entertainers.

There is a separate enrollment for summer camp. Parents may enroll for as many weeks as required or not enroll for the weeks when there is family vacation or other plans.

Nap and Sleeping Policy

Rest is extra important for young growing children. Cots are provided to children who nap and children are welcome to bring a blanket or small stuffed toy to help them nap if desired. Children will not leave their normal room in order to nap.

During nap time staff shall periodically perform a direct visual check of each sleeping child by being physically present beside the child and looking for indicators of distress or unusual behaviours. Staff will ensure that there is sufficient light in the room to conduct these direct visual checks.

Any significant changes in a child's sleeping patterns will be communicated to parents and will result in adjustments to the manner in which the child is supervised.



Willowglen Faculty

Faculty

The faculty at Willowglen School are dedicated professionals who have chosen a career in education. They understand the unique needs of younger children and have trained for years to become an early childhood teacher. The educational background varies and includes teachers with Montessori training, Bachelor or Master of Education, RECE and College of Teachers members.

All faculty members have provided a Police Vulnerable Sector Check, immunization records, and have up to date first aid and CPR. In addition to their preservice training and experience Willowglen provides continuing professional development. The teachers are trained in the developmental stages of young children including speech acquisition, gross motor development and social development. They know what to look for and which other professionals to coordinate with.

Part of the Montessori pedagogy includes individual educational plans for all children.

Teachers keep their students individual needs in mind as they prepare these educational lesson plans.

Students / volunteers

Part of the training to become a certified educator includes co-op placements at accredited facilities. Willowglen School accepts students from relevant college/university programs. All students/volunteers shall be familiar with Willowglen's Policies and Procedures and agree to abide by them. They must also produce a current and acceptable Police Vulnerable Sector Check and have up to date first aid training.

Students/volunteers shall not have unsupervised access to children and shall themselves be supervised by a staff member at all times.

Teacher Child Ratios

Willowglen School always maintains at least the teacher child ratios as set out by the Ministry of Education. In our Pre-Casa classrooms this is 1 teacher for every 5 children. In the Casa classrooms this is 1 teacher for every 8 children.



Code of Conduct

Most children enjoy playing with others and are respectful of each other. Part of the Montessori pedagogy is teaching grace and courtesy. Teachers reinforce good manners and encourage the children to be polite at all times.

For all children Willowglen's Code of Conduct includes:

- Acting respectfully towards others
- No biting or scratching others
- Treating classroom materials carefully
- Sharing and taking turns
- Following classroom routines and teacher's instruction

What to Bring

Toddlers

- Diapers and wipes
- Diaper cream
- Blanket
- Extra clothes

Casa Children

- Change of clothes
- Blanket if the child is napping
- Water bottle

Please label all articles of clothing, bottles, blankets and any other items brought to school.

Each child has a cubby where they keep their belongings.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

When dropping off children in the morning parents should help them get changed, hang up their coats and walk them to class. Take a moment to tell the teacher of any important information or changes in the child.

For security reasons the front doors are locked during the day and afterschool. At the end of the school day parents should wait at the front of the school for the teachers to bring the children to them. During aftercare parents should ring the doorbell and wait for a teacher to answer. If someone other than the parent is picking up a child the school should be notified in advance and that person must have identification with them. Children being picked up during aftercare will need to sign out their child.

General Information

Communication

Regular communication is an integral part of ensuring that parents are aware of their child's progress. Willowglen uses many different methods of communication. In addition to directly speaking to a teacher when dropping off or picking up your child, all faculty have a school email account of the format lastname@willowglenschool.com

Willowglen also uses a wide variety of social media. Parents are given a password to access Classroom Dojo, and are encouraged to follow us on Twitter and Facebook. There is a monthly newsletter and our website is regularly updated.

There is a written progress report in October and Report Cards twice a year. Parent-Teacher Interviews are held each semester following the report cards. And of course there is daily communication as children are dropped off or picked up.

Behaviour Management

Children sometimes misbehave and need to be redirected.

Proper behaviour management should be:

- Appropriate to the developmental level of the child
- Implemented as soon as possible after the incident
- Assist the child in learning appropriate behaviour

Willowglen School strictly prohibits the following

- 1) Corporal punishment of a child
 - 2) Harsh or degrading measures that humiliate a child
 - 3) Deprivation of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding
- Children shall not be removed from a room without supervision
 - Never lock a child in a room
 - Re-direct a child rather than use time outs

Steps for Positive Behaviour Management

- 1) Give positive re-direction
- 2) Offer choices
- 3) Ignore provocations
- 4) Provide reinforcement
- 5) Give renewal time
- 6) Give children positive reinforcement in a consistent manner throughout the day
- 7) Model attitudes and behaviour patterns as expected of the children

Security

Willowglen's campus is located in a quiet suburban location in Oakville. None the less security is an important part of providing quality education and child care.

Other than during morning drop off the build shall remain locked at all times. At dismissal parents will wait outside for their children. Teachers will bring a child to the front door when the parents arrive.

Visitors to the school shall ring the bell to the front door where a staff member will greet them. Visitors to the school shall never be left unattended.

All staff members and volunteers shall submit a Vulnerable Sector Police Record Check prior to working with children. Volunteers or students on an internship placement shall not be left unsupervised with children.

Health

Illness

Children who are sick should be kept at home. Willowglen School does not have the facilities to care for ill children. If a student becomes ill during the day, the parents will be contacted and arrangements made for the early pick up of the student. Please note the periods of exclusion as issued by the Public Health Department.

Measles	7 days from appearance of rash
German Measles	5 days from appearance of rash
Chicken pox	when the child feels well enough to return
Mumps	until swelling disappears
Strep Throat	48 hours from first dose of medication
Whooping Cough	3 weeks from onset
Pink Eye	24 Hours from the first dose of medication
Fever	24 hours from the return to normal
Vomiting / diarrhea	24 hours from the last episode.

If the family doctor feels that the preceding periods of exclusion are not necessary, then a note from the doctor will be required to this effect. Please notify Willowglen School immediately if your child has contacted an infectious illness.

Immunization

Bill 142 Immunization of School Pupils Act, 1983, states that all pupils in school be fully immunized against Measles, Mumps, Rubella (German Measles), Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio. A copy of your child's immunization record must be provided upon enrollment.

Serious Occurrence

Ensuring a safe environment for all children is a prime objective at Willowglen School. As a licensed childcare center in Ontario we are required to work with the Ministry of Education in collecting and reporting serious occurrences. The Ministry defines serious occurrences to include a serious injury to a child, an alleged abuse/mistreatment, a fire or other disaster onsite, a missing child or the death of a child.

In accordance with the Ontario government policies, should a serious occurrence happen then the "Serious Occurrence Notification Form" shall be posted in the front lobby and remain posted for a period of 10 days.

Medication

Only medication authorized by a doctor can be given to a child while they are in attendance at school. All medications must have a prescription label on them.

Parents must complete an Administration of Medicine form for each medication which needs to be given to a child. The form will be kept on file by the school.

Non-prescription sunscreen, lotion, bug spray and diaper cream will be applied as needed by staff.

Faculty can only accept medications which are in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's name, name of medication and instructions for administration.

Medications shall be stored in a locked container, out of reach of children. This does not apply to emergency asthma or allergy medication. Epi-pens shall be kept in a waist pouch and worn by the child. In this way it shall be with the child at all times and readily available should it be needed.

Uniforms

At Willowglen School children are required to wear the school uniform. We believe this helps create a sense of community and belonging among the students.

Boys and girls will wear a white crested shirt. Boys will wear gray pants and girls will wear the school tunic. Girls may also wear blue or white socks or tights.

Children will also need black dress shoes without laces for indoor use as well as outdoor shoes or boots.

Parents should provide an extra set of clothing to be kept at school in case of an accident. Spare clothing does not need to be uniform items.

Our uniform supplier is Uniform Basics. Sample sizes are available at Willowglen School and the clothing can be ordered online at www.uniformbasics.com



Nutrition

Proper nutrition is a key component in ensuring growing children's good health. Children are given healthy snacks 3 times a day and a hot well balanced lunch. Willowglen uses the services of Food for Tots. They are a catering company that specialized in the unique nutritional needs of young children.

Menus are posted in the front lobby of the school so that parents know ahead of time what their children will be served each day.

Allergies are a growing concern for more and more parents. Willowglen and Food for Tots are both nut free environments. Other allergies can usually be accommodated by Food for Tots who will send a separate labelled dish for children with identified allergies.

To ensure the highest standards of children's safety, outside food is permitted only with the permission of the school's administration. All food products brought into the school must be labelled as nut free.

Waitlist

Most of our programs are full prior to the start of the school year. Willowglen maintains a waitlist for people interested in joining part way through the school year or interested in registering for future years. There is no charge to be on this waitlist and spaces are offered on a first come first served basis.

Information contained on this waitlist shall be treated as confidential. Parents may ascertain their place on the list by speaking directly with the school administration who will inform them of their position

Privacy Policies

Protecting your personal information is an important part of providing a quality education for your child. All staff members are aware of how important privacy is. Information will not be shared without prior written permission.

Willowglen only asked for information which is needed to ensure a safe and high quality education for your child.

Parent Issues and Concerns

Parents are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their children 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. Our staff are available to engage parents in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously 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 by the next business day. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

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).

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 directly.

Procedure

Issues which are classroom or program related should be first brought to the attention of the classroom teacher. Concerns or questions about the general operation of the school should be discussed with the Vice Principal. All faculty members have a Willowglen School email account and parents can either discuss the issue directly or via email.

We will either address the concern directly at the time or investigate further if necessary and report back as soon as possible. If a resolution is not satisfactory, parents are encouraged to bring the concern to the attention of the principal.

Daily Schedule

7:30 am - 8:45 am	School Opens - Before school programs for registered students
8:45 am - 9:00 am	Students arrive for morning classes
9:00 am -11:30 am	Morning Classes
11:30 am - 12:30 pm	Recess and Lunch Period
12:30 am - 1:00 pm	Quiet Activity / Nap Period
1:00 pm - 3:30 pm	Afternoon Classes
3:30 pm - 6:00 pm	After School Programs for registered students
6:00 pm	School closes promptly at 6:00 pm.

If Willowglen Isn't Right for Your Child

Willowglen is an inclusive and caring environment where we go above and beyond to accommodate the unique needs of children. However there are times when the school will need to ask a student to withdraw from Willowglen.

Teachers and staff will work with the parents to ensure clear and honest communication about any concerns they have. The faculty is committed to working with other professionals to assist the child however there are times when a child's continued behaviour means other children's education and/or safety is at risk.

Parents will be informed verbally and/or in writing of the situation. If an improvement in behaviour is not forthcoming Willowglen School will ask the child to be withdrawn. The notice period will vary according to the severity of the behaviour issues.