

University Heights Nursery School

Parent Handbook

Table of Contents

1.0 Parent Handbook

1.1	Our Nursery School	3
1.2	Goal of our Program	4
1.3	In Class Guide for Parents	4
1.4	Nutritional Standards for Snack	6
1.5	Snack Suggestions	6
1.6	Treatment and Notification of Illness or Injury	6
1.7	Discipline Policy	7
1.8	Operational Days	8
1.9	Emergency Evacuation of Terrace Road Elem.	8
2.0	Committee Descriptions	8

1.0 PARENT HANDBOOK

1.1 OUR NURSERY SCHOOL

Welcome parents and children to University Heights Nursery School! We're pleased that you have chosen UHNSA because we believe it is a special place. We are a cooperative school that began in 1973 and the reason it remains strong today is because of that cooperative effort.

What does "cooperative" mean? Simply put, with our Nursery School there is no 'they' who will do things, make decisions or run the program. There is only "us" - we, the parents are responsible for making the school a happy, productive and exciting place for our children. We are all involved.

In addition to the committee roles, the teachers welcome each family's involvement (that includes grandparents, nannies, aunts and uncles, etc.) throughout the year. Bring something of interest to share with the class - your job, your hobby or special interest. Not only is your child proud to be involved in a "special day", the rest of the class learns something new as well. Ideas from previous years include making lanterns for St. Martin's Day, singing along with a parent accompanied with a guitar, learning to use chop sticks at Chinese New Year and celebrating Kurdish New Year. These are just a few examples of how we can enrich the learning experiences for our children.

Probably the most important aspect of the involvement in a cooperative is that we all pitch in—

- *Attend the general meetings. You are a part of the team and we need your input.

- *Talk to the teachers and other parents - share ideas, share the work, and share the fun.

Our high caliber, caring, and experienced professionals are part of what makes us special. Gwen Schaefer, who teaches our three-year-olds, joined us July 2002. Gwen has a B.Ed. in Elementary Education. She has been on the UHNSA Executive, and has many years experience with preschool children. Our four year olds are taught by Ryder Richards. Ryder has her Bachelor of Fine Arts and her Child Development Supervisor Certificate. She enriches the lives of children by offering a creative and dynamic learning environment. Our teachers constantly demonstrate the joy they find in working with our children.

Our children can only benefit from our involvement. Seeing us as part of their school gives them a sense of community and security. Their opportunities for exploration and growth are increased and school is a happy, interesting place to be.

1.2 GOAL OF OUR PROGRAM

The goal of our program is to provide maximum opportunities for the child to develop to his/her potential through the five developmental needs: intellectual and social growth, creativity, physical and emotional development. There are many ways to foster these developmental needs. The following are a few examples:

Activities which promote the child's intellectual growth, with emphasis on language

development include: discussions, listening to stories, learning poems and finger plays and developing a better understanding of his/her world through field trips.

The child finds him/herself in many situations in which social growth is encouraged. "Taking turns", sharing toys and materials, and learning appropriate manners are some examples.

Growth of creativity is stimulated by a variety of activities in the areas of art, music and drama. In art a child can express him/herself through painting, manipulating play dough and other crafts. Singing, listening to cds and tapes and playing simple instruments, promotes musical development. Role playing, a basic form of dramatic experience, allows the child to express his/her joys or frustrations in an acceptable manner.

Through participation in free play, a wide variety of planned activities and by learning the routines, the child will grow emotionally. Self-respect, self-sufficiency and self-responsibility will develop as he/she learns to cope with new situations.

Physical development occurs through various activities such as climbing, skipping, crawling, tumbling and running. We utilize the gym and outdoor play space for most physical activities. In the classroom physical development occurs through different forms of creative movement.

The play-oriented activities are important for effective learning. They provide the children with many opportunities for adventure and the development of appreciation and skills. During free play periods, the child may choose to spend his/her time in one or more activities: playing with the sand or water, looking at a book, playing the role of "mommy" or "daddy" in the home centre, building with blocks, painting a picture, solving a puzzle, or participating in small and large muscle activities.

We also have various directed activities, which will promote all aspects of the child's growth. All of these activities are structured around a theme: the seasons, friendship, farm life, transportation, dinosaurs, under water, topics of interest, etc.

1.3 IN CLASS GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Our prime concern in you being in the class is to help promote an atmosphere in which social physical interaction can occur. We are responsible for the safety of the children under our care. The most important contribution you can make is yourself; feel free to participate in any way that feels comfortable to you. Using common sense and having fun while you are helping in the classroom are two guidelines you might want to use as a basis for participation. Join in with the children's activities: assist them, but don't necessarily do it for them, rather encourage them to do it themselves. If you are unsure of what to do in any situation, ask the teacher.

Parent participation is essential to ensure successful operation of the school. Assistance from parents in the classroom is required on a regular basis. One parent helper is required for each class. A schedule is distributed to indicate what day each family is required to help. If a parent is unable to fulfill his/her helper day, it is his/her responsibility to exchange days with another parent, and to notify the teacher of the change.

Younger children are not to be brought to the school when you are the parent helper.

Suggestions for Parent Helpers:

Parent helpers are requested to arrive early enough to settle their own child, find out the general plan for the day, greet other children and help with the "long" good-byes. No child should be left at the school until the parent helper is in the room and is ready to participate in the activities.

During centre time, participate in a way that feels comfortable to you. Assist with the craft. Talk about children's pictures with them and ensure the child's name is on his/her artwork. Play with the children. Help them become involved in activities, and suggest activities for those who are uncertain of what to do. Escort children to the washroom; encourage children to try and alternate activities when the noise level or their behaviour warrants the change; encourage children to return things neatly to their proper place.

During clean-up time, assist children with cleaning up; check all areas to make sure all toys are put together and are in their proper place; put cover on sand table, drain the water table and wash with a disinfectant; wash table tops with a bleach solution; sweep-up sand and play dough; prepare snack.

During the washroom break, supervise children going down the hall, and in the washroom.

During snack and circle time, finish clean up; join in activities and help supervise children. The parent helper must accompany the class to the gym.

When you are working in the classroom you are helping the teacher, it is a learning situation for both the child and the parent. Parents can be supportive of each other in dealing with parenting problems, and can benefit by receiving advice from a trained teacher.

1.4 NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS FOR SNACK

Alberta Children and Youth Services require that the daily snack should be comprised of items from at least two of the food groups. Please provide quantities which are realistic for small children.

Foods that are prohibited: These foods shall not be served to children under 4 years of age because they are hazardous and difficult to modify or hazardous and a poor source of nutrients. Examples are: Nuts and Seeds, Hard Candies, Caramels/Toffee, Chewing Gum, Popcorn, Gumdrops, or Jellybeans.

Our Nursery School policy requires that every snack be **peanut/nut free**. Read the labels on all commercially prepared foods every time you buy the product for preschool.

Health Services requires food be non-perishable, or if perishable that it is kept at 4 degrees C. We do have use of a refrigerator in the school should the need arise.

1.5 SNACK SUGGESTIONS

Sliced fruit – grapes (must be cut in half), apples, oranges, peaches, bananas, pears, plums, watermelon (may also be canned)

Dried fruit - apricots, raisins, cranberries

Sliced vegetables (with dip) - carrots, celery, cucumber, cauliflower, broccoli, peppers
Dairy - cheese stick/slices, yogurt tubes/tubs
Grain products - rice cakes, crackers, bagels, dried cereal, muffins, bread

1.6 TREATMENT AND NOTIFICATION OF ILLNESS OR INJURY

Children are not to come to school when they have infectious conditions. The teacher has the right to ask that a child be taken home if she feels that the situation is detrimental to the other children.

When a child suddenly becomes ill during class time, the child will be isolated from the others and the parent will be notified immediately. If the parent cannot be contacted, the alternative emergency person will be notified. The isolated child will be supervised by either the teacher or parent helper until the parent can assume responsibility for the child.

In case of injury, first aid will be applied and then the parent will be notified.

If the injury is minor, the child will be able to resume activities after first aid is applied. The parent will be notified at the end of class of the injury and the action taken.

In the case of a major injury or serious illness involving a child, the parent will be notified as soon as possible. Staff will immediately ensure that the child receives medical attention as necessary by administering first aid and/or by calling 911.

Every major injury will be recorded, noting the date, nature of injury, and first aid required.

1.7 DISCIPLINE

Children benefit most from an environment in which parents and teacher work together:

- Setting positive role models for the children to follow and expecting children to treat fellow classmates and adults with respect and politeness.
- Promoting a positive self-concept in every child.
- Encouraging children to feel responsible for classroom toys.
- Encouraging the children to feel responsible for their actions.
- Helping children find acceptable ways of expressing feelings of joy, anger or sadness.
- Offering choices.
- Setting reasonable limits.

Parents will be kept informed of any persistent behaviour problems so parents and teacher will work together toward positive solutions. In the event that a successful resolution is not achieved in a reasonable amount of time the parents will be asked to withdraw their child.

Methods of Discipline

Providing positive reinforcement for good behaviour rather than drawing constant attention to inappropriate behaviour.

Allowing children the opportunity to learn to handle "difficult" situations independently but being prepared to step in if one child is on the verge of hurting another.

Aiding the child in finding positive solutions to his/her problems, or redirecting him/her to a different activity, whichever is appropriate at the time.

Time out is used as a form of redirection. For example, when a child is at a centre and a problem arises, the child may be unable or unwilling to find solutions. At that point, the child would be moved to a different centre (i.e. books). The situation would be explained to the child, the child could be given books to look at and then be told that she/he can leave the book centre when she/he feels ready to cooperate, work out a solution or whatever is an appropriate course of action.

University Heights Nursery School staff and parental volunteers will not inflict or cause to be inflicted any form of physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation; deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity; or use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation. Any child disciplinary action taken will be reasonable in the circumstances.

1.8 OPERATIONAL DAYS

The school year is from September to mid-June inclusive.

All statutory and Calgary Board of Education holidays will be observed (including Teacher's Convention).

If Public Schools are closed due to weather conditions, our Nursery School will also be closed.

1.9 EMERGENCY EVACUATION OF TERRACE ROAD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In the case of an emergency, which requires evacuation of Terrace Road Elementary School, the following plan will be used:

The teacher will call for the children's attention and lead them outside. The parents will ensure that all children follow the teacher. The teacher will be in charge of the emergency file box. The parent will turn out lights and close the door.

If any adult is supervising children outside the classroom (i.e. washrooms), they will leave by the closest exit and then join the class at their assigned meeting place in the schoolyard.

Once outside, the children will proceed to James Shouldice Lodge (4730 19th Avenue NW).

Parents will be notified at this time by telephone, of their children's location, and will be instructed as to where to pick up their child as soon as possible.

2.0 COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

(Executive Descriptions - See UHNS By-Laws)

Laundry: Responsible for the laundering of towels.

Sewing: Responsible for repairs to dress-up clothes, doll clothes, and puppets.

Play dough: Keep the classroom supplied with fresh play dough (usually every 2 weeks). Recipe is available from the teacher. Bills can be submitted for expenses.

Handy Person: Minor types of home repairs.

Crafts and Projects: Help teachers with the preparation of various crafts, usually would involve tracing and cutting that can be done at home from time to time.

Parent Helper Schedulers: Someone from each class to schedule the parents for classroom duty. A calendar is drawn up to show the days and parent helping. This job does not require the person to co-ordinate trading of days or finding replacements for people who cannot attend on their scheduled day. Trading and/or replacements are the responsibility of the person scheduled to help.

Music: Someone who can come and share some music time with the children, this can be singing or instrumental, or both, or may supply the classroom with music for the listening centre.

Liaison: This committee will receive and consider, from any member of the Nursery School, written communication of a dispute or concern involving the Nursery School. The Liaison Committee will use its discretion in determining whether to decide the solution to the area of concern through arbitration or by putting their recommendation to a vote of the membership.

Web Master: Update website with pictures, newsletters, and calendar.

Housekeeping Duties: Once a month dust a portion of the classroom which is assigned to that particular class.

Bookkeeper: Assist the treasurer in the collection and depositing of cheques and providing receipts to parents.

Assistant Registrar: Assist the registrar in preparing the packages in August to new parents, assist the registrar as required and should the registrar be absent, the assistant registrar will assume the duties of the registrar until the registrar returns.