



Perth Children’s House Inc. - Montessori School

CASA 2024-2025 PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK & POLICY STATEMENT

Welcome to Perth Children’s House Casa program. We are happy to have you as part of our community of families and look forward to partnering with you in your child’s educational journey. We are dedicated to providing an engaging, nurturing, and comprehensive program that prepares children with the skills they need to develop into connected, compassionate, collaborative people who, as they grow, become leaders within the global community.

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1. We are Perth Children's House

Identity Statement

Perth Children's House has been serving children and families in Perth and the surrounding areas since 1974. We are a non-profit, parent/guardian-run organization with an active and engaged community of families whose time and talents help keep operating costs and tuition low.

Our program is based on Dr. Maria Montessori's method, which fosters curiosity, leadership, respect, love, peace, accountability, and open-mindedness, both in and out of the classroom. Children benefit from a school and teaching philosophy that is rooted in self-directed activity, hands-on learning, and collaborative play. The Perth Children's House Casa classroom is screen-free. Children are encouraged to make creative choices in their learning, while our highly trained educators offer age and ability appropriate activities to guide the process.

Perth Children's House provides a unique program and learning environment that focuses on independence, collaboration, grace and courtesy, and a sense of community. We endeavour to empower learners so they can grow into confident, independent, capable, respectful citizens of the future.

Core Values

Respect - Integrity - Independence - Community - Trust - Peace - Global - Citizenship

What is a Montessori Education?

Montessori is an education and a perspective that moves from learning to application through curiosity and creativity. Montessori is a philosophy of education, which was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) in the early 1900s. The Montessori approach helps children fulfill their own potential. Each child works at their own pace and level under the guidance of specially trained educators, who use Montessori-designed teaching materials.

Montessori works in every setting for the success of each child. The world has changed, but what it takes to be successful hasn't changed since Maria Montessori created her education approach over a hundred years ago: a strong emotional, behavioural, and moral foundation. Montessori helps children develop into individuals who know right from wrong, who have self-confidence and are connected with others, who find fulfilment, and who connect and contribute to the world.

Montessori philosophy recognizes in the child a natural curiosity and desire to learn. The philosophy stresses that children learn and progress at their own pace so that fast learners are not held back and slower learners



are not frustrated by their need for more time to master a concept. The classroom provides rich learning experiences based on the child's individual developmental needs. Children are presented with concepts at a time when they are most receptive to learning them. Dr. Montessori called these the "Sensitive Periods of learning". The classroom consists of mixed age groups, which provide opportunities for peer learning and teaching. Three-year learning cycles provide the ideal multi-age environment, offering children space and time to develop, to explore, to integrate and to master the planes of development they serve. Respect for others and their work is fostered in this classroom environment. **Everything in the classroom is intentional, we encourage all parents/guardians to further their understanding of the many facets of this prepared environment.** Our school is licensed as a childcare centre for its Casa program and a private school for its Elementary program under the Ministry of Education.

Our Montessori educators have training from centres affiliated with nationally and internationally recognized Montessori associations (NAMC, AMI, AMS, TMI, MACTE). These associations are committed to upholding, publicizing, and furthering the pedagogical principles and practice devised by Dr. Montessori.

Program Statement

Perth Children's House (PCH) program, philosophy, and approach to working with children is inspired by Maria Montessori and as such is built around independence, a sense of order, and completion of tasks. PCH is a non-profit organization and a registered charity with a volunteer Board of Directors. PCH is a parent/guardian-run school, which means that parent/guardian involvement and assistance is required in order to operate the school. In an attempt to keep tuition affordable, the school relies heavily on parent/guardian volunteerism. In addition to the financial benefit, volunteerism helps parents become involved in life at Perth Children's House, which helps build a strong community of families, one of our core values.

The Perth Children's House Casa Montessori program is licensed under the *Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)* under the Ministry of Education and follows *How Does Learning Happen? (HDLH)*, Ontario's pedagogy for the early years. The HDLH document is a resource that models learning through relationships with a focus on the child and the family. Learning and development happens within the context of relationships among children, families, educators, and their environments. The four foundations of HDLH are **Well Being, Engagement, Belonging, and Expression**. PCH educators, along with the Board of Directors, strive to model these four foundations by ensuring that the points stated below are respected and carried out each day. Educators consider these foundations when creating policies and making decisions for our students.



The school offers a Casa Montessori program as well as an Elementary Montessori program. Both

programs operate under the fundamental tenet that a child learns best within a social environment which supports each individual's unique development. The Casa Montessori program is a 3-year program, which includes first year (preschool), second year (JK), and third year (SK). Perth Children's House (PCH) offers children:

- a carefully prepared child-centred environment
- mixed-age groups
- an opportunity to progress at the child's own pace
- activity-based learning
- freedom and responsibility
- cooperation and collaboration - not competition

The Montessori methodology provides opportunities, challenges, and experiences through which the child acquires co-operative and self-guided skills, initiative, and self-expression. In addition, there are a variety of games, songs, drama, arts and crafts, and outdoor play to stimulate the child's interests and development. Individual progress in learning and enjoyment are keynotes of the program.

The Montessori method allows children to develop skills at their own pace. There are also different "works" which promote learning of the same skill in different ways. Progress is tracked individually and encourages proceeding through each skill at its own appropriate pace. Students are taught new materials on a designated day of the week or more often if possible. This ensures all students are given the opportunity with new materials and have one-on-one teacher time. PCH educators invest time with and give their attention to each child, allowing relationships to grow and a better understanding of each child's learning style and individual needs.

PCH will promote the health, safety, nutrition, and well-being of all children. Educators and staff will be considerate of each child's emotional, physical, and psychological state and provide supportive, positive, and responsive daily interactions.

Nutrition - Healthy snacks are provided daily and a healthy Hot Lunch program is available for students at an additional cost. Educators and support staff monitor lunches to ensure that the students are eating healthy, well-balanced foods.

Safety - All staff members and volunteers have Vulnerable Sector Checks completed and have up-to-date First Aid and CPR certifications. PCH follows the ministry requirement of a 1:8 staff to child ratio. With the frequent presence of our classroom monitors and our French teacher, the ratio is often lower ensuring each child is well supported physically, mentally and emotionally. The staff and students practice fire drills on a monthly basis to understand what to do if a fire happens. Students line up and remind themselves to be safe with their saying "...Holding our partner's hand, keeping them safe, walking carefully" while walking to the library and other outings.

Health - The program provides quiet time for resting and recovery; outdoor play provides gross motor movement, fun, exploration, and recreation; children practice safe and regular hand washing to ensure germs are kept at bay.

The one-on-one teaching time, as well as constant observations by our educators, allows a more intimate knowledge of each child's emotional, physical, and psychological state. Staff are conscious of modelling positive interactions and using kind words to reflect the core values of the Montessori Philosophy.

PCH views all children as competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. All children develop at their own pace and will take different cognitive and social skills from our Montessori program. Each child will experience their own unique and individual journey while attending Perth Children's House and will be given equal opportunities in learning. As part of our Grace and Courtesies curriculum, students will be taught self-help tasks (e.g. blowing nose, independent toileting, doing zippers, effective hand-washing, etc.)

On top of providing a Montessori learning environment, we have regular French lessons, which aim to prepare students to start Grade One (1) at the French Immersion level. Students learn diverse vocabulary to emphasize fluency and comprehension as it relates to interactive themes reflecting everyday life. This can be enhanced with the AIM (Accelerated Integrated Method) that incorporates gestures, songs, plays, and games to enhance the Montessori Method. French-language learning is reinforced throughout our time together to emphasize oral communication.

Students also have opportunities to take part in a Winter Solstice play and are encouraged to participate in songs, dance and musical education during circle times.

Perth Children's House provides positive and creative learning environments, both in the classroom and during outdoor play, allowing children to take manageable risks through active play and exploration. Children are encouraged to follow their interests and actively explore and investigate their surroundings, promoting a growing sense of self.

In collaboration with promoting peace in our learning environment, PCH staff observe outdoor play and allow students the freedom to explore their indoor and outdoor environments. Our staff will assess whether a child is experiencing distress and determine if intervention from a staff member is necessary. The PCH philosophy is to promote and provide child-initiated and adult supported play, as well as to observe and prevent abusive, controlling, or intentionally harmful or cruel behaviour. We support a stimulating, active, and interesting environment where a child may establish a true sense of self and where self-regulation is encouraged.



Ongoing engagement and communication with families is fostered within our Montessori program and with your child. Communication will be ongoing with the use of the Brightwheel app and via emails. Parents/Guardians are welcome to learn more about the classroom and daily operations through attendance at our yearly orientation evening and through in-class observations that are offered twice a year. A monthly newsletter is distributed via the Brightwheel appl. As a parent, you can expect ongoing feedback on your child's progress, an invitation to participate in many aspects of school life, and an environment where parents/guardians and educators support each other with the desire to help your child be successful.

Outside the classroom we strive to provide a diversity of activities in keeping with the philosophy of learning through play. PCH attends the public library monthly, skates weekly at the local arena during winter months, and participates in community events. We also endeavor to have various field trips throughout the year. There are several events throughout the school year (a welcome social, a wine

and cheese evening, Winter Solstice, fundraisers etc.) which encourage families to become engaged with the program and community.

Perth Children's House is committed to providing a schedule that meets the needs of parents/guardians while maintaining a learning environment consistent with Montessori philosophy. For the 2024-2025 school year, only full-day, full-time (5 days per week) attendance will be offered.

Educators use electronic documentation (such as Brightwheel, whats app and email) to document (pictures and written explanations of observations) and communicate with families. One of our educators also hosts a private and closed Instagram account, where they post photos of works, inquiries, books, Montessori info, projects and topics we are exploring that relate to the Montessori method and the classroom's deep thoughts about the world around them. (Please note that this account is ONLY for current students' families, and pictures show children at work (faces not visible), showcasing the materials, environment, and collaboration. A monthly curriculum for outdoor play and monthly activities will be posted and implemented into our yard. An "Art Wall" or display area is also offered outside for completed works and to show 'how learning happens' in our yard. Through these platforms, educators will regularly show 'how learning happens' in our Montessori Classroom.

PCH staff attend planned professional development opportunities and monthly staff meetings. When possible, time is set aside for reflective practice. Discussions are initiated by THINK, FEEL, ACT videos prepared by the Ministry of Education and follows the "How Does Learning Happen" Pedagogy, as well as daily student observations, books, and literature which allows educators time to reflect on their work and to further observe the classroom and learning experience. Collaborative reflective inquiry and ongoing opportunities allow educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice to support their ongoing professional learning and growth. All educators attend professional learning conferences and workshops to stay current in the field of Montessori and ECE.

Educators at PCH assure both students and their families that all strategies outlined in the program statement will be effectively incorporated into the daily curriculum. This is PCH's commitment to providing a comprehensive educational experience.

Ages of Children

The Perth Children's House has a non-discriminatory admission policy. Any child that meets the age and toilet training requirements may attend. Perth Children's House Casa program has facilities and staff to accommodate 23 children per day, ages 2 1/2 years (30 months) to 6 years. To be clear, your child must be 30 months old by August 31st of the year of enrollment if they are starting in September. If your child is beginning in January, it is preferable that they be 30 months of age by August 31st of the preceding year. (Please note that January starts are dependent on enrollment and are not guaranteed to be available every year). Your child must be toilet trained and is encouraged to have independent toileting skills. Because the Montessori program is a multi-year program, children will not be accepted into the first year of the program once they have reached 44 months of age, unless they are transferring from another Montessori school.

Children with Exceptionalities

Our focus is on providing an inclusive environment for the child by engaging and collaborating with the family and helping the family feel welcome while considering flexibility, dignity, and overall quality of the program. Perth Children's House recognizes that every child is a unique being and each child

will be treated respectfully as an individual.

All children, including returning students, as well as those with exceptionalities, are admitted on a one-month trial basis. The one-month trial period applies to all students and ensures the child and the environment suit each other. The trial period may be extended at the discretion of the Lead Educator, in conjunction with the Liaison.

Perth Children's House can request enhanced support services through the Lanark County organization, ConnectWell/LEIP. After completing a classroom assessment they may be able to offer other strategies and approve enhanced support funding. ConnectWell/LEIP has very specific criteria for assessing the needs of a child within the classroom.

In such cases where a child is deemed by the Lead Teacher and/or the Board of Directors to require individual support within the classroom and is not eligible for ConnectWell/LEIP resources, support must be provided at the expense of the family within the time period as it is outlined in the *Inclusion Policy and Individualized Support Plans*. In order to develop the most appropriate and effective programming for the child, the Lead Teacher may request formalized assessments (i.e. psychoeducational assessment) identification by a health care provider and/or a specialist.

2. Role Of Parents/Guardians In the Program

Montessori at Home

The classroom educators work diligently to develop each child's social-emotional intelligence, natural curiosity, intrinsic motivation, independence, peaceful conflict resolution, and academic potential. High expectations, which are individually and developmentally appropriate, are placed on each child in the program. It is the parent's duty to support this learning in the home environment as well. Grace and courtesy, as well as independence, patience, and persistence are qualities that are expected of all Montessori students, in all aspects of their life.

As a parent/guardian, you can support your child by:

- providing consistent routines for sleep, so that they may function optimally in our classroom.
- being on time for school each day, so that your child may engage in the social aspect of the morning with their friends before the uninterrupted work period begins.
- encouraging your child to practice patience by waiting, and not interrupting you when you are busy.
- promoting peaceful conflict resolution with peers or siblings at home
- Supporting the school policies, such as not bringing toys to school, ensuring that the child is prepared to share the educational components of their show and tell item,
- participating in parent observations to further your understanding of the Montessori method and the classroom.

Volunteer Requirement

PCH is a non-profit, parent/guardian-run school, which means that your involvement and assistance is required in order to operate the school. In an attempt to keep tuition affordable, the school relies heavily on parent/guardian volunteerism. In addition to the financial benefit, volunteerism helps

parents/guardians become involved in life at Perth Children's House, which helps build a strong community of families, one of our core values.

It is expected that each family will contribute their gifts, experience, and time through the different volunteering and fundraising opportunities that occur during the year. PCH requires families to contribute 20 volunteer hours or pay an opt out fee to help operate the school and its various programs and activities. In addition to the opportunity to lend skills to a committee, the school secretary will communicate various volunteer opportunities throughout the year and work with you to ensure they are tracked. The volunteer hours can be completed by parents/guardians or by other family members (e.g. grandparents) on behalf of the family.

Half of the required hours should be completed by January 31. If, at the end of the year, all 20 hours have not been completed, any unmet volunteer hours will be billed at a rate of \$20/hour and must be paid in order to remain in "good standing" for enrollment for the following year.

If your family would prefer to opt out of volunteering time, you can pay a non-refundable \$400 opt-out fee at the start of the school year, which is due with your September tuition. If this fee isn't paid in September, any volunteer hours that remain unfulfilled by June 1st will be charged at a rate of \$20 per hour. If a parent fails to make the appropriate payment, a notice letter will be sent to them at the end of the school year informing them that they are not in good standing with the PCH. At the end of 60 days of non-payment or under-payment, the child is considered withdrawn from the program and will not be allowed to attend PCH. Steps will be taken to recover the funds owing. Please note due to the importance of understanding the PCH community, parents/guardians of first year Casa students cannot opt out of the volunteer commitment.

Working committees:

Working committees exist year after year and are responsible for collaborating with and assisting members of the board, creating ad hoc committees for meeting annual objectives and facilitating the day-to-day operations of the school. Each committee will decide when, how, and where they meet and are not required to attend monthly board meetings.

Committees of 2024/2025

- **Parent + Community Engagement:**
- **Human Resources:**
- **Policies and Procedures:**
- **Financial Oversight:**
- **Development + Donor Relations:**
- **Facilities Management:**

In an effort to educate families about the way the school is run and communicate the organization's needs, **families of incoming first-year students in addition to returning students will also be required to attend the school's Annual General Meeting**, as PCH has transitioned over to the Ontario Not For Profit Corporations Act (ONCA) our usually scheduled June AGM will be adjusted to late 2024/early 2025. Families who are unable to attend the AGM will be required to watch the recording of the meeting prior to the start of school.

Your involvement and assistance makes a tremendous difference in the life of the school and in your child's introduction to school life. It also provides positive role modelling for your children. The continued existence of Perth's Children's House relies on your active participation and we thank you in advance!

3. Board of Directors

The school is parent/guardian-run, which means that it is administered by an elected, volunteer Board of Directors, composed mostly of parents/guardians of current students. The Board's mandate is to oversee the operations of the school, and to lead strategic planning and organizational performance in conjunction with the educators and staff. Board members are the fiduciaries who steer the organization towards a sustainable future by adopting sound, ethical, legal governance and financial management policies, as well as by making sure the nonprofit has adequate resources to advance its mission. Additionally, board members provide foresight, oversight, and insight.

PCH is a charitable nonprofit corporation and its board members serve as volunteers without compensation. Every school year, a number of positions, both on the Board and on committees, are vacated by departing families. New Board members are voted in by Perth Children's House membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The Board of Directors has three primary legal duties known as the "duty of care," "duty of loyalty," and "duty of obedience."

Duty of Care: Take care of the nonprofit by ensuring prudent use of all assets, including facility, people, and good will;

Duty of Loyalty: Ensure that the nonprofit's activities and transactions are, first and foremost, advancing its mission; Recognize and disclose conflicts of interest; Make decisions that are in the best interest of the nonprofit corporation; not in the best interest of the individual board member (or any other individual or for-profit entity).

Duty of Obedience: Ensure that the nonprofit obeys applicable laws and regulations; follows its own bylaws; and that the nonprofit adheres to its stated corporate purposes/mission.

Board members also play very significant roles providing guidance by contributing to the PCH's culture, strategic focus, effectiveness, and financial sustainability, as well as serving as ambassadors and advocates. Beyond fulfilling legal duties, Board members can be important resources for the organization in multiple ways.

PCH's board is composed of 4-8 members: chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary as executives and directors who spearhead committees. The volunteer board meets once per month (or as needed) on a mutually convenient day and time that is scheduled at the beginning of the school year. The majority of members are parents/guardians of children who attend or who have attended the school. All families who pay tuition throughout the school year are Regular Members of the organization. Regular Members also hold one vote at the annual meeting of members (AGM). If a member is interested in a particular topic being brought up or discussed at a board meeting, they can do so, and are encouraged

to fill out this [form to submit a request to present at a Board meeting](#), or contact the board secretary at secretary@perthchildrenshouse.ca to learn about this process.

All communications with members of the Board should be respectful and professional, following the standards laid out in Perth Children's House Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour policy. Board members will attempt to respond to email communications within a 48-hour period. Remember, Board members are volunteers who also lead busy working and family lives.

4. Enrollment and Service Terminations

There is no charge to place a child's name on the waiting list. The waiting list will be managed, maintained, and kept confidential by the secretary. Information of where a child's name is on the list will be given to Parents or Guardians of that child upon request, via the school's secretary. Educators will direct parents/guardians who are inquiring about the waiting list to the proper email: office@perthchildrenshouse.ca

Hard copies of the Pre-Registration Form and this Parent Handbook can be found in the coat room, and soft copies are on the website. These will be given/made available to all interested families, and a link to the Pre-Registration Form is available on the website or by request. It is strongly recommended that Pre-Registration Forms be completed online. These are automatically submitted to the school's secretary who will confirm receipt through email. The secretary will place the child in the appropriate waiting list order based on the information provided in the Pre-Registration Form, and in the order in which it was received.

When a waiting list has been established or is being maintained the following order of enrollment will be honoured.

Priority of Enrollment

The following list describes the priority sequence for children enrolling in the Casa program at Perth Children's House, in descending order of priority:

- i. returning students;
- ii. date of application submitted by siblings of returning student in either the Casa or Elementary program;
- iii. date of application submitted by siblings of former students who have completed the 3-year program;
- iv. date of application submitted by children of full time staff members;
- v. date of application of students transferring from another Montessori program with a completed and approved Transfer Application.
- vi. date of application submitted by siblings who have enrolled this current school year.
- vii. date of application submitted by a new student.

The school secretary will maintain a single waiting list of children for future enrollment. Parents/guardians of currently enrolled children with siblings are encouraged to put the sibling's name

on this list as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

Discharge

If the educators and the Chair of the Board ever determine that a student's continued attendance is not beneficial for the child, the overall classroom, or the PCH community, a meeting will be convened with all involved parties. During this meeting, the parents or guardians will be informed of the decision.

A written notice will also be given to this effect. Parents/guardians may be given up to one month's notice to make alternative arrangements for their child, unless the educators and Board of Directors determine that immediate discharge from the school is in the best interest of all parties. In all such cases every effort shall be made to advance the interests of the particular child, keeping in mind the interests of the school at large.

Perth Children's House has a strict policy against bullying. Bullying is aggressive physical contact, words or actions to cause another person injury or discomfort. Any instances of bullying will be dealt with immediately. If the issue continues, it may lead to the student being removed from the program. This is to ensure a safe and positive environment for all. PCH urges students to report any bullying incidents to staff and also recommends that parents or guardians reinforce this practice at home.

Withdrawal

One month's notice is required if parents/guardians decide to withdraw their child from Perth Children's House at any point during the school year. In addition to notifying the educators, parents/guardians should also email the school's Secretary as well as the Treasurer to provide notice of the intent to withdraw their child. The child may still attend the school during the paid notice period. Tuition for the month that the notice period occurs in will be retained by the school. Please note that in all cases, the last month's tuition prepayment will *not* be refunded.

At the discretion of the Board, in consultation with the educators, a temporary withdrawal for personal reasons can be requested and may be possible. Your child's spot in the program will be held as long as tuition is paid during the absence.

5. Registration and Orientation Procedures

Parents/Guardians may pre-register their child at any time after they are born by completing a Pre-Registration Form. Unborn children are not able to be added to the waitlist. Pre-registration entitles the child to be placed in sequence on a waiting list. If you wish, you may even pre-register an infant to reserve a spot 2 to 3 years in the future.

No child will be offered a spot at Perth Children's House without a completed Pre-Registration Form on file at the school. Please note that, as with most other policies, a more detailed enrollment procedure is available at the school or on the website.

Registration Periods

During the registration process each year, the school's secretary will contact families in the order of

Perth Children's House priority of enrollment. Returnings students will be offered their space first, followed by remaining students on the waitlist using the outlined priority of enrollment sequence. This process begins in March and depending on various factors may extend into the summer, as space allows.

Re-enrolment for Returning Students

The process of re-enrolling returning students starts in March. Returning students are not required to complete a pre-registration form each year as they already have one file from their first year. After the registration of returning students is finalized, the available slots for new students - which may include siblings of existing students or graduates of the 3-year program - are determined, and the registration process for these new students can then begin.

Registration Procedure for New Students

The process for registering new students begins in April (exact dates will vary from year to year).

The pre-registered students will be contacted according to their position on the priority of enrollment list. Parents/guardians have 72 hours in which to accept or decline the offer of a position. If the position is not accepted within the 72 hour window, then that position will be offered to the next student on the waiting list. A completed registration form, supporting documents, and payments are due within two weeks of accepting an offer of admission.

If necessary, late registration occurs from June to September, and happens only if vacancies exist once the initial registration period ends.

Registration for a January Start

Perth Children's House school year runs from September to June. New first-year students start in September, provided they meet the minimum requirements. In the **rare** event that a spot is available for a January-start, children on the waiting list may be offered a spot in January.

In order for a child to start in January, the PCH Admittance Policy requires students to have reached the minimum age of 30 months by August 31st of the current school year. To uphold Perth Children's House operational goals and budget, which relies on maintaining 90% capacity, children who are at least 30 months old as of January 1st of the current school year may be considered for admission. This decision is at the discretion of the Board and the educators, and is based on an evaluation of both the classroom environment and the individual child. Each case is considered individually.

Annual Intake Procedures for New Students

For new, first-year students, an Entrance Interview with the educators and the incoming student and their parents/guardians, is required before the child attends in order to introduce the child to the staff and for the staff to begin to get to know them. This entrance meeting will occur at the end of June. In addition, the student and parents/guardians are required to attend an Orientation session that occurs the last week in August. All students, including returning students, are admitted on a one-month trial basis, beginning on the first day they attend in the current school year.

New students are staggered into the classroom after the first day of the school year. In an effort to adjust the child to the new environment and to allow more one-on-one time with educators, new students are welcomed one per day until all new students have joined the classroom. Each child's

particular start date will be determined and communicated by the educators no later than the last week in August. A refund will be issued to reimburse the family for days the child doesn't attend prior to their start date. **New students will not start on the first day of the school year.**

Trial Period

Our focus is on providing an inclusive environment for the child by engaging and collaborating with the family, helping the family feel welcome while considering flexibility, dignity, and overall quality of the program. Perth Children's House recognizes that every child is a unique being and each child will be treated respectfully as an individual. At the beginning of every school year, all children, including returning students, are admitted on a one-month trial basis. The one-month trial period ensures the child and the environment suit each other. Concerns may include, but are not limited to, challenges around toileting or disruptive classroom behaviour. If concerns arise during the trial period, parents/guardians will be contacted by the Lead Teacher and/or a member of the board and parents/guardians and educators will work together to decide on how to best meet the needs of the child, while remaining in compliance with PCH's policies and procedures. The trial period may also be extended at the discretion of the Lead Teacher, in conjunction with the BOD, on a case-by-case basis. If the strategies identified are not successful, the child will be withdrawn or discharged from the program. parents/guardians will be informed when their child is released from the trial period.

6. Illness in Staff/Children and Degree of Illness

Illness In a Child

Do not send your child to school if they are ill, sending sick children to school increases the chances of spreading the disease and is unfair to staff and other students. Parents/Guardians who send children to school when they are ill will be called to pick up their child immediately.

Reporting Absences

All communication regarding absences should be sent to classroom teachers via messaging on the Brightwheel App. A response by a classroom staff member will confirm receipt of the message. If a matter requires urgency you are also welcome to call the school at 613-267-5199.

If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be contacted to take them home. Illness in a child which would exclude them from the classroom are vomiting, diarrhea, fever, or abnormal behaviour that prevents them from participating, along with [other reportable diseases](#) that are listed on the Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit website. If one of the above symptoms should occur, the child will be given a quiet spot to rest until they are picked up.

Please ensure that your emergency contact information, including names and phone numbers, is up to date. This is crucial in case the school needs to reach out to someone other than yourself.

Fever

Should your child develop a fever while at PCH you will be contacted to come and pick up your child. Your child will be isolated from other children and given rest until you arrive.

Your child must be fever-free without medication (e.g. Tylenol) for 24 hours before returning to school. If a fever develops at home, or elsewhere, the 24-hour exclusion policy still applies. **Please do not treat your child's fever with medication at home and proceed to send them to school.** Please

accurately and fully complete the Absence Reporting Tool to let us know your child's health status. We are required by the Health Unit to report certain types of illnesses ASAP.

Vomiting and Diarrhea

If your child has any vomiting or diarrhea while at PCH you will be contacted to come and pick up your child. Your child will be isolated from the other children and given rest until you arrive.

Your child must be symptom free without any medication for 48 hours before returning to school.

If vomiting develops at home, or elsewhere, the 48-hour exclusion policy still applies. Please call the school to let us know your child's health status. We are required by the Health Unit to report certain types of illnesses as soon as possible.

Communicable and Reportable Diseases

Please refer to the [Leeds, Grenville and Lanark Health Unit Communicable Diseases handout](#). It gives specific exclusion times for specific childhood illnesses as well as illness which must be reported.

Immunizations

The Child Care and Early Years Act stipulates that prior to admission, each child must be immunized according to the local Medical Officer of Health standards. You are responsible for providing a photocopy of your child's up-to-date immunization records, which must be submitted along with the completed Registration Form. A photocopy of your child's up-to-date immunization records must be submitted each and every year your child attends PCH, regardless if there haven't been any changes to the record that we have on file. A visit with your health care provider is not required, but parents/guardians must provide medical history and relevant medical information and/or conditions affecting their child's health.

If you choose not to immunize your child, you must contact The Corporation of the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit at 1-800-660-5853.

For exemptions for medical reasons, you must fill out a Statement of Medical Exemption form that has been signed by a physician or nurse practitioner and submit it to your local public health unit and provide a copy to be kept on file at the school.

For exemptions for conscience or religious belief, you will need to complete an education session at the health unit. At the end of the session, you'll receive a Vaccine Education Certificate signed and dated by your public health unit. PCH requires an affidavit or statement of conscience or religious belief to be completed and filed for exemption of immunization. PCH will provide these forms to be filled out upon request. Make copies of your certificate and your signed Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief form and submit the originals to your local public health unit (they will tell you how). It is important that you keep your copy because the ministry and local public health units do not keep records of your exemption documents.

Health Requirements for Staff

All Casa staff members are required by licensing to have a health assessment and immunization as directed by the local medical officer of health. Unless there is a medical or personal reason why they cannot be immunized.

7. Health and Safety Procedures

Increased Sanitization

In the event of increased illness in the classroom, extra cleaning of high touch surfaces will be done throughout the day to help reduce spread. Any widespread illnesses of concern will be communicated to families by email from the lead teacher.

Pre-existing Health Conditions

It is of the utmost importance that staff are aware if your child has a pre-existing medical condition that may require emergency action (i.e. anaphylactic allergy, asthma, diabetes, etc.). Any such condition(s) must be disclosed on the registration form, and a Plan of Care will be created by the teacher in consultation with the family, prior to the start of school, to ensure that necessary actions can be taken in the event of an emergency.

Accident Procedure

If a child is injured while at school, staff will assess the nature and severity of the injury. All staff are trained and certified in CPR Level C, which includes children choking, and in the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). An accident report will be filled out for any students that sustain an injury. A copy of this report will be given to the parents/guardians.

Injury requiring emergency care

If a child is injured while at school, the staff will assess the nature and severity of the injury. If emergency medical attention is needed, the educator will call 9-1-1. The child will be kept calm until an ambulance arrives and a staff member will accompany the child to the hospital. The child's parents/guardians will be notified immediately by the educator and direct them to the appropriate location. The educator will also call for a substitute staff to assist in the classroom in order to maintain the 8:1 student-to-staff ratio.

Injury requiring care

If the injury is not an emergency but does necessitate urgent care, parents/guardians will be notified immediately and will be required to come and take their child to be examined by a medical professional.

Fire Safety and Emergency Procedures

Our designated emergency shelter is the Perth & District Union Library.

General fire safety rules are as follows: no smoking allowed on the premises; flammables are stored in the kitchen away from the classroom; there are no open flames (e.g. jack-o-lanterns, candles, or lit Christmas trees); fire drill procedures are written out and posted in prominent places.

Fire Drills are held as frequently as necessary at the beginning of the year so that all children have a chance to practice the drill. Once all children have been taught the drill and are comfortable with the procedures, fire drills are to be practised once a month until the end of the year.

In the case of an actual emergency, parents/guardians will be contacted, a message will be left on the school answering machine if possible and a note will be placed on the school entrances, if the school

has been evacuated. The school is prepared to care for children during regular school hours. If you are unable to pick up your child or cannot be reached during an emergency, the school staff will care for your child until the end of the school day.

8. Administration of Medications

Perth Children's House staff may administer prescribed medication and over-the-counter medications. Prescribed medication must not be expired and must be supplied in the original container with pharmacist's label and have the following information:

- the child's name
- name of medication
- exact dosage to be administered
- time and interval of dosage
- date medication was dispensed
- instruction for storage and administration

Over the counter medication must also be in original packaging and labeled with the child's name and date of purchase along with dosage and frequency. An **Administering Medication Form** must be filled out for written consent and signed by the parent before any medication is given. **The first dose of any medication must be given at home.**

*****Never leave medication of any kind in your child's cubby or backpack. Always hand-deliver medication to staff with your child's name on it.*****

9. Fee Payment Policy and Payment Options

Perth Children's House is in discussion with the county regarding the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC) system. We will update parents of any changes with regards to our payment and tuition structure when the information becomes available.

At Perth Children's House, tuition fees, fundraising activities, and donations must cover our annual operating expenses. In the Casa program, tuition fees are calculated on an annual basis and tuition payments can be made on a monthly basis, semi-annually, or with a lump sum (one annual payment), as outlined below.

A non-refundable registration/administration fee of \$250 (base fee) per family for the first student plus \$50 (base fee) per additional sibling is due upon registration. Regardless of the payment schedule chosen, a non-refundable payment equivalent to one month's tuition (which covers June tuition for the upcoming year) is also due upon registration.

Tuition for the 2024-2025 school year will be calculated monthly and will be \$866 (returning students) and \$948 (new students) and is due on the 1st of each month from September to May; this is a base fee of \$43.00 (returning students) and \$47.40 (new students) per day. Tuition for June of the upcoming year is due upon registration with the administration fee (base fee). Students who are delayed in starting the year due to the schedule will receive a credit for tuition fees for days they were not in attendance. This will be processed after their start date. Please note that this means that full tuition is due according to the schedule below, even if the child is entering on a staggered start schedule.

Payments can be made in lump sum upon registration, by semi-annual payments, or monthly

according to the following schedule:

Payment schedule deadlines for installment payments:

| Date due | One annual payment | | Semi-annual payments | | Monthly Payments | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | New Students | Returning Students | New Students | Returning Students | New Students | Returning Students |
| DEPOSIT: June 1st of current year for returning students, or within 2 weeks of acceptance of offer for new students. | \$1198 \$948 for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee | \$1116 \$866 for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee | \$1198 \$948 for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee | \$1116 \$866 for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee | \$1198 \$948 for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee | \$1116 \$866 for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee |
| Sept 1, 2024 | \$8532 | \$7794 | \$4266 | \$3897 | \$948 month (Sept to May) | \$866 month (Sept to May) |
| January 1, 2025 | | | \$4266 | \$3897 | | |

Payment of tuition fees may be made in three possible ways: via the Brightwheel App, by email money transfer or Royal Bank e-transfer. Details for each payment option are as follows:

Brightwheel - Steps to follow

1. Set Up Your Brightwheel Account: You will receive an email invitation shortly to create your Brightwheel account. Please check your spam or junk folder if you don't see it in your inbox by tomorrow.
2. Update Your Child's Information: Once your account is set up, please take a moment to update or confirm your child's information in the app. This will help us ensure we have the most accurate and up-to-date details on file.
3. Payment Options: With Brightwheel, you can pay tuition directly through the app. Please note that there is a small fee for online payments. If you prefer, you can continue using the existing payment methods listed in your tuition letter.

*Please note that all transfers through Brightwheel have a small charge set by the payment processor and are not controlled by Perth Children's House. Fees associated include:
Bank Transfers (ACH): 0.6% per transaction, with a maximum fee of \$2.75 (CAD)
Credit Card Payments: 2.95% per transaction

Email Money Transfers are to be sent to deposits@perthchildrenshouse.ca with a comment indicating "tuition for [child's name]" as it is not always clear based on the email address alone.

Please verify the maximum amount you can transfer daily before sending your first transfer. Payments can be made on consecutive days in the event the total due exceeds the daily transfer amount, but please make sure to indicate clearly your name and your child's name in the message section. **The final consecutive transfer must be made on or before the due date outlined above.**

Royal Bank E-Transfers, may be made in RBC online banking:

Please verify the maximum amount you can transfer daily before sending your transfer. Payments can be made on consecutive days in the event the total due exceeds the daily transfer amount, but please make sure to indicate clearly your name and your child's name in the message section. **The final consecutive transfer must be made on or before the due date outlined above.**

1. Choose *Pay Bills & Transfer Funds*.
2. Choose *Other Royal Bank Customer*. Click *Submit*.
3. Fill in Branch Number 03762, Account Number 1005230.
4. To Company Name: *Perth Children's House*. Click *Confirm*.
5. Please email deposits@perthchildrenshouse.ca to let our bookkeeper know who the payment is for.

Additional fees will be charged on any late payments. Late payments will result in an administrative fee of \$20.00 being charged. Furthermore, late payments will incur a monthly interest charge of 1.5%. This interest applies to the total tuition amount owing, irrespective of the degree of lateness.

If you are paying by electronic transfer, we **strongly suggest that you set up a reminder system** so that there are no delays in payment. Being responsible for prompt payment alleviates the risk of additional fees and interest accruing, and minimizes unnecessary work for the volunteer Treasurer.

If a parent fails to make the appropriate payments, a written notice will be sent to them at the end of 30 days of non- or under-payment informing them that they are not in good standing with the PCH. At the end of 60 days of non- or under-payment, the child is considered withdrawn from the program and will not be allowed to attend the PCH. Steps will be taken to recover the funds owing.

PCH provides payment receipts annually for all tuition fees paid.

Sibling Discounts

PCH offers a sibling discount policy, which applies as follows:

- I. When 2 children of the same family attend at the same time, there is a 5% discount on the oldest child's tuition fees;
- II. When 3 children of the same family attend at the same time, there is a 40% discount on the oldest child's tuition fees;
- III. When 4 children of the same family attend at the same time, there is a 50% discount on the oldest and the second oldest children's tuition fees (the two younger children are charged full tuition)

NOTE: A personalized payment schedule for your family can be provided upon request as the one provided above does not take into account multiple children and sibling discounts. Please email treasurer@perthchildrenshouse.ca if you require a personalized payment schedule.

Fee Summary

Base Fees:

| | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Registration Fee | \$250 [see page 19] |
|------------------|---------------------|

Perth Children's House

2024-2025 CASA PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK & POLICY STATEMENT

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Tuition Fees (paid monthly, semi-annually or annually based on a daily rate) | Varies [see table on page 20] |
| Hot Lunch Program - first year students | \$6/day [see page 33] |

Non-Base Fees:

| | |
|--|--|
| Volunteer Hours Opt-Out | \$20/hour up to a maximum of \$400 [see page 11] |
| Hot Lunch Program - second and third year students | \$6/day [see page 33] |
| Late Payment Fees, where applicable | \$20 + 1.5% monthly interest [see page 21] |
| Late Pick-Up Fees, where applicable | \$15+ [see page 26] |

10. Fee Payment Policy relating to absences due to illness and/or Vacation, and PA days and Statutory Holidays

In the event that your child is ill on a day that they would regularly attend PCH, no refund will be provided. All sick days and vacation days are non-refundable. Additionally, no refund will be provided for staff Professional Activity (PA) days or statutory holidays that fall on days your child attends. Your tuition reserves your child's spot at PCH.

11. Arrival, Departures, and Release of Children from the Program

Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

Purpose:

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of students attending Perth Children's House, Casa program.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of students receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the school as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

Policy:

General

- Perth Children's House will ensure that any students under the care of Perth Children's House, Casa program are only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided prior written authorization to the school as an authorized person that the student may be released to.
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

Procedures:

Accepting a child into care

- 1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:**
 - Greet each student with eye contact and by shaking hands each morning as they arrive.
 - Greet the parents/guardians verbally and ask how the students morning has been.
 - Sign the student in on the classroom attendance record. The time must be noted and an electronic format can be used as well as paper hard copy in the coatroom. Students who are attending the upstairs classroom must be signed into the program at the gate and then signed out and into the upstairs classroom. This is recorded on a separate attendance sheet for the upstairs classroom for all the daily up and down transitions.
- 2. Where a child has not arrived in care as expected**
 - Where a child does not arrive at the school and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off the program staff must:
 - Inform the lead teacher and commence calling the child's parent/guardian no later than 10:00 a.m. Staff shall attempt contacting families via phone, email or whatsapp and leave a message.
 - Attempts to contact will be documented with the date, times contacted, how contacted and outcome on a safe arrival call form that will be kept in the child's file.
 - Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

Releasing a child from care

1. The staff who is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
 - Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - Where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the

parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

- o Shake each student's hand upon departure and sign out each child once they have left the yard or coat room with their parent/guardian or person who has written or verbal consent to pick up the child.
- o Written or verbal consent must be provided by a parent/guardian in advance. The non-parent/guardian picking up the child must be able to provide government issued ID upon request.
- o Without a court order on file, Perth Children's House staff are unable to legally prevent the release of a child to his/her non-custodial parent. Perth Children's House must have a copy of the court order on file.

Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before school closes)

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or time frame that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up by the end of day, the Lead Teacher or designated staff member shall contact the parent/guardian by phone call, email and whatsapp and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - o Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must notify the lead teacher, check that no Brightwheel messages or emails or whatsapp messages have been sent to educators and call again and leave a message for the parent/guardian. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the school.
 - o Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child a designated staff member shall wait until program closes and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and program is closed".

Where a child has not been picked up and the school is closed

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 4:25 p.m, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian.
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall proceed to call the child's emergency contacts.

4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by 5:30 p.m, the staff shall proceed with contacting Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville, by calling 1-855-667-2726. Staff shall follow their direction with respect to next steps.

Additional Procedures

Staff shall not prevent a parent from entering the premises while child care is provided for their child except if,

- (a) the person believes on reasonable grounds that the parent does not have a legal right of access to the child;
- (b) the person believes on reasonable grounds that the parent could be dangerous to the children at the premises;
- (c) the parent is behaving in a disruptive manner.

Hours of Operation

Perth Children's House (PCH) operates Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:15 p.m.

Arrival and Departures

Morning drop-off occurs between 8:30 - 8:45 a.m. in the backyard or coat room, depending on the weather. Children present at the end of the school day are to be picked up at 4:00 p.m. and no later than 4:15 p.m. as the school closes at 4:15 p.m.

If the children are in the indoor environment, please let the educator know that you have arrived and allow time for your child to disengage from their activities. If the children are outdoors when you arrive, please enter the yard, gather your child's belongings and come to get your child. Please ensure that your child says goodbye to the staff member on duty. All children in this program must be released to a parent or designate (whose name has been previously recorded on file).

Before Care Programming

Some years, we are able to provide early drop off at an added cost, depending on teacher availability and family interest. **Please note that this option is not available every year.** If there are enough interested students to support a before care program, it will not begin until at least the 3rd week of September or until all new students have entered the classroom. Please note that **IF** this programming is available, there will be exceptions to its operation (i.e. staff absences, inclement weather and poor road conditions, etc); please plan accordingly and ensure that you can arrange alternate care for these instances. Before care staff will require a monthly payment in advance and a clearly communicated commitment of the days that your child will require early drop off. Staff will communicate further instructions in late August.

School Year Calendar

PCH generally follows the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) calendar. However, our Montessori program ends a week earlier than the UCDSB. The first day of school (for returning students) will be September 4th, 2024 and the last day of school will be June 20th, 2025. Please refer to the Important Dates Calendar for specific dates. PCH produces a school calendar which details all PA days, Holidays, March Break, and special events. Please hang it prominently in your home and refer

to it often. Alternatively, it can be found in the shared google folder, [The PCH Coatroom](#).

Release of Children to Custodial Parents

Please note that *without a court order on file*, Perth Children's House staff are unable to legally prevent the release of a child to his/her non-custodial parent. Perth Children's House *must* have a copy of the court order on file.

Late Fees

A late pick-up fee of \$15 for any part of the first 15 minutes, \$20 for every 15-minute increment thereafter following scheduled pick-up time will be charged to parents/guardians who are late picking up their child(ren).

After the third occurrence of late pick-up, the fees are doubled (\$30 for any part of the first 15 minutes, \$40 for every 15-minute increment thereafter).

educators will note date(s) and time(s) of the late pick-up(s) and advise the Treasurer and Liaison of the infraction(s). The Treasurer will send an invoice for the accumulated late fees incurred directly to the parents/guardians.

If you know you will be late to pick up, please inform the educators ahead of time as accommodations may be able to be arranged in rare occurrences. Late fees are designed to limit late pick-ups to real and infrequent emergencies. Consistent lateness is stressful for the child and inconsiderate to the staff. If your schedule prevents timely pick-up, please make alternate arrangements for child care or pick-up. Speak to the educators about the options available to you.

Parking

When dropping off and picking up your child, please observe parking restrictions along the streets adjacent to the school. Perth Children's House wants to maintain friendly relations with local residents and other tenants.

Parking in the school driveway or the adjacent driveway is strictly prohibited, please ensure that anyone dropping off or picking up your child is aware of this.

Perth Children's House requests that you turn off your vehicle while picking up and dropping off your child. Idling vehicles are a large source of dangerous air pollution that adds to human health problems. Additionally, children feel the effects of air pollution more than adults. They breathe faster and inhale more air per kg of body weight. For the health of our children, please turn off your vehicles.

Snow days

PCH will operate on days deemed "snow days" by the UCDSB. When the UCDSB declares a "snow day" and the buses are cancelled, but the UCDSB schools remain open, then PCH will be open providing there are no serious safety concerns at either location (eg. fallen branches obstructing the road). Lead teacher Amy Neron will send an email to Parent/Guardians and educators by 6:45am.

****Parents/Guardians please check your email to make sure that you are fully informed!****

If your children will **NOT be attending** that day, please respond to the email sent by Amy Neron so that all staff will be fully informed of student attendance.

When the UCDSB schools close due to inclement weather, PCH will close too. Lead teacher Amy Neron will send an email to Parents/Guardians and educators by 6:45am to notify them.

PCH may close midday if the UCDSB closes their Perth area schools midday, or if the educators and the board agree that the school should be closed down. In the case that the school closes midday, the educators will call the parents/guardians to come and pick up their child(ren) as soon as possible.

12. Important Routines

Establishing and following routines is integral to the Montessori philosophy as it provides a sense of security for the child who can then focus on their learning journey.

Separation Anxiety

Students are not the only ones who suffer from separation anxiety. Parents/guardians suffer as well. As an adult, be honest about your feelings and recognize how you feel about leaving your child. Your child picks up cues from you. When dropping off your child, be cheerful and positive; wish them a great day, and then leave. Watching your child from a distance and/or dragging out farewells for one more hug is very stressful for your child and heightens their anxiety.

Staff are ready and willing to accept responsibility for your child from the moment they enter the school. Students experiencing distress are given attention immediately and typically stop crying as soon as the parent has left. If your child continues to cry for an extended period you will be notified and strategies will be discussed to make the separation process as smooth as possible.

Punctuality

A sense of order and punctuality is consistent with Montessori learning. We strongly encourage students to arrive in time for the start of the work session. The work session begins between 8:30-8:45 AM, once they have been greeted, welcomed into the classroom, and have dropped their lunches off in the fridge. A student arriving late for class is both disruptive and distracting to the ongoing learning process. Children who arrive late miss out on the invaluable introduction of new topics and materials by the teacher. If you are running late dropping off your child, please call the school or send a message via Brightwheel and let the staff know so that we can anticipate your arrival and help create the least disruptive entry possible.

Nap and Rest Period

First-year Casa students have the opportunity to nap daily. If a Casa child is awake at approximately 45 minutes into the sleep time, they will return to their classroom. Older children, who normally nap in the afternoon, will continue to have the opportunity to do so. Children who have this rest period are provided with bedding and a small pillow, which are laundered weekly, and may bring a sleep toy for comfort. Naps or rest time can also be offered if requested by the parents/guardians or, in keeping with Montessori philosophy which encourages self-advocacy, by the child, if the child doesn't normally nap, but seems tired.

Birthdays

If your child is celebrating a birthday during the school year, please check with the Lead Teacher before bringing anything special into the school. Please refrain from distributing party invitations at school, unless every student in the class is included. Children can be extremely sensitive and we wish to avoid unnecessary hurt feelings.

Birthdays are celebrated with a special Montessori ritual which acknowledges the passage of time - an important concept for children to understand. A light, representing the Sun, sits in the middle of the room. Small labels of the calendar months are placed around the sun. The children and educators sit in a wide circle around the Sun while the birthday child stands next to it holding a globe to represent the Earth. The child then walks around the Sun as many times as needed to reach their age. As the child walks, the teacher and children sing "It takes a year for the Earth to travel around the Sun, it takes a year, it takes a year, it takes a year for the Earth to travel around the Sun". After each turn (therefore each year), the child stops and we look at the picture of themselves (provided by the family) for that year and read a few interesting things they learned or did that year. When they reach the current year, we sing Happy Birthday in French and English and a Birthday stamp is given on their hand.

13. Guiding Children's Behaviour/Code of Conduct

Guidance

Children are redirected in a positive manner in order to promote self-discipline, ensure health and safety, respect the rights of others, and maintain equipment. Any guidance will be administered at a level appropriate to the child's actions, age, and understanding.

Behaviour that interferes with the proper procedure and conduct of the class is discouraged and corrected. We encourage respect for the learning environment, our educators/staff, and other students.

Should conflicts arise, students are encouraged to talk at the peace table. If conflicts cannot be resolved and behaviour continues to be challenging parents/guardians will be contacted by staff. The following is an outline of our procedure, as outlined in the Guidance policy:

- a. The child will be talked to by the teacher on an individual basis.
- b. If the behaviour continues, the child will be removed from the situation and other children, and again told that that type of behaviour is not acceptable.
- c. If the behaviour persists, the educators will call/email the parents/guardians to discuss the behaviour as well as how it should be dealt with.
- d. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of either the parent or the educators, a further meeting will take place. This meeting will be attended by the parents/guardians, Lead Teacher, and/or Chair and an action plan will be devised for a set trial period. A second meeting will be held once the trial period is over to follow up on the effectiveness of the action plan and to address any remaining issues.

Violent behaviour directed toward other students, staff, or volunteers will not be tolerated. In a situation that the staff feels puts other children at risk the staff may, at their discretion, request that a parent/guardian remove the child from the PCH environment for the remainder of the day. Tuition will not be reimbursed for that day. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to discuss the incident and to

draft an action plan to prevent further incidents.

Prohibited Practice

Classroom volunteers and practicum students will be supervised by an Employee at all times.

Volunteers are NOT permitted to be alone with any child.

PCH does not permit physical restraint unless for the purpose of protecting the child from harm. PCH does not permit yelling, demeaning language, corporal punishment, verbal, physical, or psychological abuse. It does not permit locking of exits for the purpose of confining the child or the use of degrading measures or threats, nor humiliating language that would shame or undermine his or her self-respect, self-worth, or dignity.

No child will be deprived of basic needs, shelter, toilet use, food, drink, or clothing. PCH will not permit any infliction of bodily harm or force on a child.

In the interest of maintaining a positive school climate and a safe and welcoming school environment, PCH will adhere to its *Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour Policy*, which outlines standards of behaviour for all involved in PCH; including students, parents/guardians, volunteers, educators, and other staff members.

Parent-Teacher Communication

Each school year, there are four formal opportunities for the educators to communicate how your child is doing in the classroom and on the playground. Twice per year, the educators will provide a written report in which they will describe your child's social and academic activities and progress to that point in the year. Twice a year, you will have the opportunity to meet with the educators in a "parent-teacher interview" to discuss in more detail your child's progress. Informal communication is encouraged on a daily basis through a variety of methods, which may include a chat at drop-off/pick-up, Brightwheel message, etc. Parents/guardians are encouraged to communicate directly with the educators at any time during designated pick-up and drop-off times; important information for that day can be delivered during these transitions or using the Brightwheel messenger. Please note that drop off and pick up are busy times, so communication that requires a more in depth conversation may need to be arranged at an alternate time; this decision is at the teacher's discretion. If parents/caregivers require a conversation to share sensitive details and/or significant content, this should take place at a different time; our educators are happy to have these conversations in a way that would benefit all those involved.

Please note: Staff will post information on the school information board in the coatroom regarding special outings, fundraising activities, cleaning sessions, and snack and lunch menus, etc, and it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to check the board periodically.

Classroom Observations

We encourage you to schedule at least two (2) observations during the year to get a true sense of the development of the classroom throughout the year. Observations are offered from November until May. Sign up sheets will be posted in the coatroom.

Dr. Maria Montessori felt that observation was an important tool for education of the observer, whether it be a parent, teacher, or child. The purpose of an observation is to capture the child or

children as they naturally respond to the Montessori environment.

Prior to your observation, prepare your child for your visit. Explain that you will be coming to the classroom to quietly watch him/her doing work. Let them know that you will be leaving after 30 minutes and that you will be back to get them at pick up time. Please note that your child may be more excited in the classroom than is typical. It is often difficult for young children to manage their emotional attachment to you and at the same time maintain their independence in the classroom.

Please refrain from initiating conversation with the children during your observation. If a child approaches you to greet you, feel free to say "hello", and tell them you are here to watch them work. Feel free to accept or decline any snacks that the children offer to you as part of the 'food preparation' and 'grace and courtesy' works.

Enjoy watching your child and the group dynamics. Some things to notice:

- the variety of choices the children make
- how they interact with each other
- the respect with which they treat their environment and the responsibility they take for it
- different levels of concentration
- different levels of independence/self directedness

If you have interested extended family members (grandparents or aunts and uncles), you are welcome to arrange observations for them as well.

Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour

Our Registered Early Childhood Educators (R.E.C.E.) are responsible to the children, parents/guardians, colleagues and to the profession. R.E.C.E.s are responsible to the Community and to the Society. This code of ethics and standard of practice define the professional knowledge, expertise, and ethical values and behaviours expected of R.E.C.E and as members of the College of Early Childhood Educators.

Additionally, promoting a positive, safe, and welcoming school environment are essential if students are to succeed in school. A positive school climate means everyone feels they are safe, welcome, and respected. All students, parents/guardians/caregivers/family members responsible for raising the child, educators, staff, and members of the school community have the right to be safe, and feel safe, in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility for everyone to be accountable for their actions and contribute to a positive school climate. Therefore, PCH's [Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour Policy](#) will be strictly adhered to. By signing the handbook, you are confirming your understanding of, and commitment to uphold, these expectations.

14. Process for Expressing Concerns

If a parent, teacher, or board member is unhappy or concerned about a situation at the school, they should first try to raise the issue with the lead Casa teacher, Holly Hall. If they are uncomfortable doing so, a board member can be asked to intervene to help resolve the issue(s).

If a serious issue arises, such as a breach of policy by a member of the staff, a board member, or a parent/family, concerns should be brought to the Chair of the Board chair@perthchildrenshouse.ca or the board Secretary secretary@perthchildrenshouse.ca

Any staff or parent may approach the Board of Directors to notify them of possible contravention of

Policy. All matters will be dealt with in strict confidence.

15. Field Trips and Off-site Activities

Field trips are made to places of special interest during the year. Walking excursions may occur whenever the educators deem appropriate. Included within the registration package is a consent section, granting permission for your child to participate in each of these walking activities with their classmates.

Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of the details of any excursion that requires transportation, usually via email. Parents/guardians will be asked to list any individuals who might transport and be responsible for their child on a field trip if they can not attend. This is part of the Registration Package called “**Release Of Child**”. A **transportation form** will be sent with any Field trip information via email and will **need to be signed and returned before each field trip that involves travel in a vehicle**. Any volunteer drivers who are acting on behalf of PCH rather than specifically for another PCH family will be required to have a Vulnerable Persons Police Check on file at the school and provide confirmation that they have a personal insurance policy of a minimum of 2 million dollars in automobile coverage prior to the transportation of any students.

In accordance with the Highway Traffic Act (Reg. 613(4.5.50)), where a child is transported in a personal vehicle for the purposes of a field trip, child seating and restraint systems used are:

- Based on the birth date, age, height, or weight of the child
- Installed in accordance with manufacturer recommendations
- Certified by the Canadian Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (CMVSS)
- The child is observed to be in a seating and restraint system based on the birth date, age, height, or weight of the child and is properly secured.

Please ensure that your seat is in compliance with the Act.

16. Children's Belongings

School Attire

Your child should come to school dressed in comfortable clothing that is suitable for the current season and learning environment. In our mixed-age environment, it's important for students to set a good example for their younger peers. Tops should cover the midsection and be free of inappropriate images or wording. We aim to foster self-confidence among students and prefer that fashion statements be reserved for out of school hours.

Perth Children's House promotes self-sufficiency in dressing and undressing. Therefore, your child should wear shoes and clothing that they can put on and take off independently (for example, shoes with laces if your child can tie them, or velcro or slip-on shoes if not). Clothes should fasten at the front, not the back.

Ensure your child comes to school with sufficient outdoor clothing and footwear. In cold, wet weather, an extra pair of socks and mittens can be useful. Depending on the day's activities or outdoor conditions, your child's clothes may come home dirty.

Please provide a pair of non-marking clean shoes or slippers for indoor use and a full set of season-appropriate clothes, all labeled with your child's name. In addition, the Child Care and Early Years Act requires that each child's name be written on the front of lunch bags or boxes. For easy labeling, we have an account with Mabel's Labels, please visit [our campaign page](#).

Toys

Children may NOT bring toys into the school. Please leave them at home or in the car. The one exception to this is for children who may want a soft toy for naptime. If your child is bringing a toy for naptime, please let the staff on duty at drop-off know and leave it in your child's backpack.

Lost and found

Lost and found articles are kept in a bin on a shelf in the coat room. You may take a look for any items that are lost and take them home. All unmarked, unclaimed articles are periodically donated to charity.

Items from school

Many of the classroom materials consist of small, attractive objects that are appealing to students. Should any of these "mysterious objects" find their way into your home, please return them to school. They may be part of a puzzle or other "set" of materials. These sets are expensive to replace and it is very difficult to replace individual parts.

17. Food and Snacks

Lunch

A bagged lunch prepared by the parent/guardian or a catered hot lunch are required at PCH for all students. **All first year students** are required by the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) to be part of the catered hot lunch program. If your child has an allergy, dietary restriction, or other personal reason why your family wishes for an exemption, you must make this request in writing, after which time an appropriate bagged lunch from home may be provided. Any child in second or third year is also eligible to participate in the hot program, if it is of interest. The cost of this program for 2024-2025 was \$6/day and commitment is required for the duration of the semester. The educators will contact all parents/guardians about the Hot Lunch Program prior to the start of school, and will confirm the cost for the 2024-2025 year then. Please indicate your interest on your registration form.

For all families providing a bagged lunch, the following policy must be followed:

1. A letter of exemption if the child is under 44 months must be provided to PCH staff to be kept on file along with the Bag Lunch Policy document below.
2. Parents/Guardians must ensure that their child's lunch is nutritious and meets the guidelines of the Canada Food Guide. Foods should also promote healthy dental hygiene. Lunch should include items from each of the food groups plus one (1) extra fruit or vegetable. A few examples of recommended food items are:

| | | |
|-------------------|------------|----------|
| FRUIT | GRANOLA | MEATS |
| WHOLE WHEAT BREAD | MILK | EGG |
| CHEESE | VEGETABLES | HUMMUS |
| PASTA | YOGURT | CRACKERS |

PLEASE DO NOT include foods which are low in nutritional value and/or high in sugar content such as: POTATO CHIPS/CHEESIES, SODA/POP, CANDY, FRUIT ROLL UPS, CHOCOLATE BARS, COOKIES, etc.

3. PCH is a nut-safe zone. NO nut products, or products which may contain nuts, are allowed in children's lunches or snacks.
4. PCH staff along with the Parents/Guardians of each child share the responsibility to ensure that we support the needs of a child with any severe allergy. As such, Parents/Guardians must ensure that all food sent with the child reads and follows the [PCH Anaphylaxis and Allergy Policy](#)
5. The Child Care and Early Years Act requires that lunch containers and water bottles be labeled with the child's name.
6. Food allergies and sensitivities are posted in the room where the lunch program takes place. We ask parents/guardians to keep PCH updated in writing regarding your child's food allergies, sensitivities and/or intolerances.
7. No food items are provided at lunch for children who do not participate in the hot lunch program unless a child has forgotten his/her lunch. When a lunch is forgotten, PCH staff will provide a meal, either an extra from a hot lunch or make one from foods available. Parents/Guardians will be charged the hot lunch fee when this occurs.
8. For more information on Canada's Food Guide visit Health Canada's Website at http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html

Hot Lunch orders are placed for the whole semester (ie: September-December and January-June) There is no monthly option and only one meal option is provided daily. When going on vacation from the school, please give 2 weeks notice and you will be reimbursed, along with snow days. Reimbursement for missed days is given at the end of the year.

Snacks

A snack is served twice daily. Snacks are supplied by the school and meet the Canada Food Guide recommendations and the Child Care and Early Years Act requirements. Please advise the school, at the time of registration, of any food allergies, dietary restrictions, or sensitivities your child may have.

Please note: Perth Children's House (Casa) is a nut-safe school. No nut products are allowed in the school. If you have any concerns or questions regarding our nut-safe policies and procedures please refer to our Allergy Policy, which can be found at the school or can be e-mailed upon request.

18. Smoke-Free Environment

Perth Children's House is a smoke-free environment. There is no smoking on school property.