



Perth Children's House Inc. - Montessori School

ELEMENTARY 2024-2025 PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK & POLICY STATEMENT

Welcome to Perth Children's House (PCH) Elementary program! We look forward to partnering with you to create an outstanding learning environment for our children to continue their educational journey in the Montessori tradition.

PCH was formed in 1974 by a dedicated group of parents in the Perth area who decided that their children, and their community, needed another option for early education. Forty-six years later, in 2020, the expansion of PCH to include Elementary education was a true labour of love for another small group of parents who believed that the Montessori Method and Perth Children's House provided the best opportunity for their children to receive this rich and engaging learning experience beyond the early years. We knew that this environment would give our children a strong skill set to become successful adults and the leaders of tomorrow.

While the beginnings of this program faced many uncertainties, challenges, and opportunities for growth, our students are currently thriving in this Montessori environment. We look forward to seeing how the program will continue to develop, and are excited that your child and family are joining us on the journey!

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1. Foundation Statements

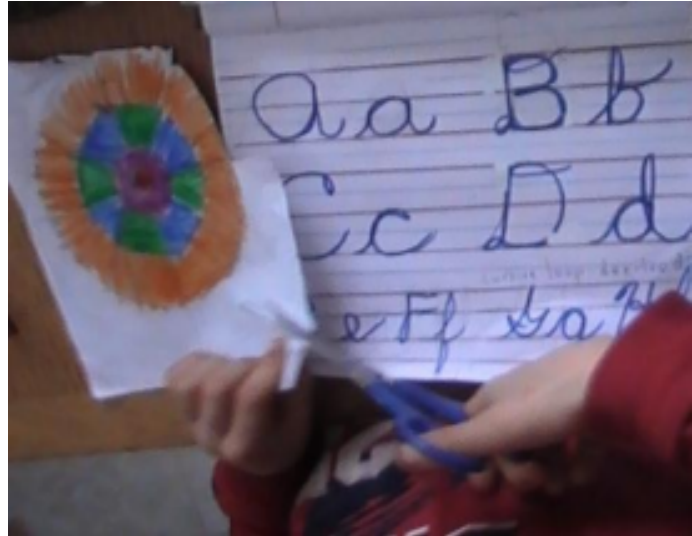
Vision Statement

Our vision is to empower students to acquire, demonstrate, articulate, and value knowledge and skills that will support them, as life-long learners, to participate in and contribute to the wider community, and to practise the core values of the school.

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 charitable 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 work and play. 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?

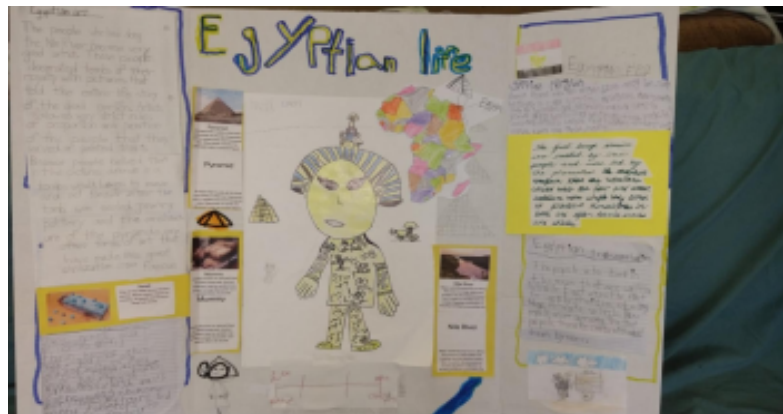
Montessori is an education and a perspective that moves from learning to application through curiosity and creativity. Montessori is a philosophy of education, which was developed by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952) in the early 1900s. The Montessori approach helps children fulfil their own potential. 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 who are connected with others, find fulfilment, and 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 your 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".

Unlike the sensitive period of Casa aged children, students in the second plane of development (ages 6-12) look to revisit concepts in a variety of ways with many different materials. The second plane of development is a very social time. Cosmic education, delivered through the Five Great Lessons, is the focus, particularly in lower elementary, and while exploring these big ideas, students begin building connections with peers, community and understanding their purpose in the world. The classroom is a hive of activity with group projects, problem solving, and classroom conferences. The classroom consists of mixed age groups, which provide opportunities for peer learning and teaching. Three-year learning cycles are 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 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.



All of the Montessori Educators at PCH have training from centres affiliated with nationally and internationally recognized Montessori associations (e.g. NAMC, AMI, AMS, TMI, MACTE). These associations are committed to upholding, publicising 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 Montessori program provides opportunities, challenges, and experiences to help students acquire co-operative and self-guided skills, initiative, and self-expression. Individual progress in self led learning and enjoyment are the basis of the program. Our program's fundamental tenet is that children learn best within a social environment supporting each individual's unique development.

The Montessori Elementary program comprises two separate divisions: Grade 1-3 (Lower Elementary) and Grade 4-6 (Upper Elementary). In the 2020-2021 school year, Perth Children's House opened a Lower Elementary program and expanded to include Upper Elementary in 2022-2023. Perth Children's House (PCH) offers children:

- a carefully prepared child-centred environment
- mixed-age groups
- an opportunity to progress at the child's pace
- activity-based learning
- freedom and responsibility
- cooperation and collaboration
- a low student to educator ratio

PCH views all children as competent, capable, curious, and rich in potential. The Montessori method allows children to develop skills at their own pace. The elementary school focus continues on concrete learning and promoting independence, self-discipline, and social/emotional skills. Each child will experience their own unique and individual journey while attending PCH.

The Elementary program will offer a three-hour uninterrupted work period each morning and a one hour uninterrupted work period each afternoon. The purpose of the uninterrupted work period is to develop essential skills of focus and concentration, as well as to allow the child to engage in deep learning that can occur given that time frame. The academic focus is on Math/Geometry, Practical Life/Science, Language/Reading, History/Geography, and Botany/Zoology. Students start to move from the concrete to the abstract (and back to the concrete). They build their reasoning and problem-solving skills through a variety of tasks and projects.



Elementary school students often work in small groups on a variety of projects. These projects can be in geography, biology, history, language, science, music, art, and other subjects. Interdisciplinary work is done individually or in groups.

Project work may be supplemented with field trips to the library, nearby river, The Table, and other relevant community locations, as well as online resources and virtual field trips. This promotes connectedness with people and places, inspiring students to make contributions to the world.

In addition to their direct learning, students will

begin to explore metacognition, (learning about how they think, process information, and learn). Through classroom conferences and portfolios, students will continue to be active participants in their learning, developing the stages of self discipline and completion of tasks for inherent value. Along with shaping the culture of the classroom, this helps students become more aware of their strengths and needs as an individual, as well as a collective group. Both academic topics and social emotional learning are explored in these small and large group learning experiences.

Alongside the Montessori learning environment, PCH offers French language instruction. The goal of the French program is to ensure that students are prepared to enter a French Immersion program in a publicly-funded school in Grade 7, if desired by the student/family. The structure of the program will include in-class instruction, recommended reading materials and suggested resources that can be accessed at home. The French program will be designed to support the individual needs and desires of each student. The French program in Grade 1-3 will be "Core French". The eventual goal is to progress to offering Extended French programming, beginning in Grade 4, if desired. Since the Montessori philosophy is that learning is best accomplished when child-led, the decision to proceed with, and commit to, French Immersion in Grade 4 will be made collaboratively by the student, the student's parent/guardian, and the Educator. If interested, students will be equipped to enter the French Immersion environment in a public school upon completion of the Upper Elementary program.

The classroom Educators offer a regular music program introducing composers and music vocabulary. Formal instrumental music opportunities during- and after-school are being offered at an additional cost. The music program will continue to evolve as the Elementary program grows.

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.



PCH staff will observe play and allow freedom for students to explore their indoor and outdoor environments. Our PCH philosophy is to promote and provide child-initiated and adult-supported play, as well as to help guide students in their efforts to resolve any conflicts in a respectful and effective manner.

This year, PCH has joined the Ottawa Independent Schools Sporting Association and students in upper elementary will have the opportunity to participate in various tournaments such as soccer, badminton, and basketball throughout the year. We continue to look for additional sporting opportunities for both lower and upper elementary students such as open cross country meets. If you have a talent/skill in a sport/hobby that you would be interested in coaching after school, we are always receptive to ideas. We currently run an afterschool skating program and welcome volunteers to help achieve their volunteer hours by continuing to increase the opportunities presented to our students.

Communication with families is ongoing through Brightwheel and via email. A monthly newsletter is distributed by Brightwheel. As a parent/guardian, 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 the educators support each other with the shared desire to help your child be successful.

Outside the classroom, we will be focused on activities that support the good things that are happening in our community. There are also several events throughout the school year (BBQs, fundraisers, a wine and cheese evening, etc.) which encourage families to become engaged with the program and community.

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 have the opportunity to attend professional learning conferences and workshops in person or online to stay current in the field of Montessori.

Ages of Children

The Elementary program consists of a Lower Elementary program (grades 1-3) and an Upper Elementary program (grades 4-6). Perth Children's House adheres to an admissions policy that respects and welcomes all, without any form of discrimination. Children are currently welcome to enter our elementary program from years 1-4 unless they are transferring from another school and/or at the discretion of the educators.

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 and Supervisor, in conjunction with the Liaison.

In such cases where a child is deemed by the classroom Educator to require individual support within the classroom, an individualized support plan (ISP) will be developed in cooperation with the family. In order to develop the most appropriate and effective programming for the child, the Educator may request formalized assessments (e.g. psychoeducational assessment) by a health care provider and/or a specialist. If a support worker is required to satisfy the requirements of an ISP, this will be paid for by the family as outlined in our *Equity, Inclusion, and Individualized Support Plan Policy*.

2. Role Of Parents/Guardians In 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 in these areas, which are individually and developmentally appropriate, are placed on each child in the program. It is the parent's/guardian's duty to support this learning in the home

environment as well. Grace and courtesy, independence, patience, and task 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 when you are busy.
- Promoting peaceful conflict resolution with peers or siblings at home
- Participating in parent/guardian observations to further your understanding of the Montessori method and the classroom.

Volunteer Requirements

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

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. PCH is a charitable nonprofit corporation and its board members serve as volunteers without receiving compensation. Board members are voted in by PCH's membership at the AGM.

PCH relies on parent/guardian volunteers and volunteer board members to participate in the daily management and operational activities of the organization. Additionally, board members provide foresight, oversight, and insight.

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.

Communication with the board should be respectful and professional, following the standards laid out in the *PCH 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 parent/guardian volunteers who also lead busy working and family lives.

4. Smoke-Free Environment

Perth Children's House has a smoke-free environment with policies and procedures in place for staff, volunteers, and students. There is no smoking on school property.

5. Enrollment and Service Terminations

There is no charge to place a child's name on the PCH Elementary waiting list. The waiting list will be managed, maintained, and kept confidential by the school Secretary. All parents/guardians will have access to the knowledge of where their child is placed on the waiting list via the school Secretary. The educator will direct parents/guardians who are inquiring about the elementary waiting list to the Secretary.

The pre-registration form is available on our website and may only be completed online. This information is automatically submitted to the Secretary who will confirm receipt through email. The Secretary will place the child on the waiting list in the order of the priority of enrollment, and the date and time the pre-registration form is submitted.

Priority of Enrollment

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

1. returning students (including students having graduated the Casa program in the previous year);
2. date of application submitted by siblings of returning students (at Casa or Elementary);
3. date of application submitted by children of full-time PCH Casa or Elementary staff members;
4. date of application submitted by students who completed the PCH Casa program and who desire to re-enter the program;
5. date of application submitted by students who have completed another Montessori Casa program or are transferring from another Montessori Elementary program;
6. date of application submitted by former students who attended but did not complete the 3-year PCH Casa program;
7. date of application submitted by siblings who have enrolled this current school year.
8. date of application of new students entering grade 1, followed by students entering grade 2, then 3, 4, 5, and 6. A student's birth age will determine their grade for the purposes of the waiting list. Once the Lower Elementary classroom has reached capacity, students entering into the Upper Elementary classroom will then be given priority until program capacity has been reached.

If a student meets more than one of these conditions, they will be placed on the waitlist in the position that grants them the earlier offer of enrollment.

The Registrar will maintain a single elementary waiting list of children for future enrollment based on the above priority of 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 Educator 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 notify them of the notice to withdraw the 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. Any non-refundable fees will be retained by Perth Children's House. 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.

6. Registration and Orientation Procedures

Children may be pre-registered at any time after their date of birth by completing a Pre-Registration Form. 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, years in the future!) Please note that, at present, there are separate Pre-registration forms for [Casa](#) and [Elementary](#). Pre-Registering for Casa does not automatically pre-register the child for Elementary. No child will be offered a spot at Perth Children's House without a completed Pre-Registration Form, for the appropriate program, on file at the school. Please note that, as with most other policies, a more detailed enrollment procedure is available at the school.

Trial Period

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. The trial period may be extended at the discretion of the Lead Educator. If concerns arise during the trial period, parents/guardians will be contacted by the Lead Teacher or the BOD. Parents/Guardians and educators will work together to decide on how to best meet the needs of the child, while remaining in compliance with our policies and procedures.

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. Students

graduating from Casa and who are continuing to Elementary must have a completed Elementary Pre-Registration Form on file. 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 and Intake Procedure for New Students

The process for new students who have already pre-registered begins in February with a phone interview with the lead teacher followed by in person meetings in April and ends when spaces are filled or the school year begins (exact dates will vary from year to year).

Once the Secretary reviews the enrollment of returning students and the approximate number of vacant spots that may be available, families will be contacted according to their position on the waiting list. The Acceptance of New Students Policy outlines the process by which families will be contacted, by the Lead Teacher, for whom a potential spot exists. Families go through the screening process to determine if students and the program are a good fit for each other. Once the process has been completed, an offer of admissions may be extended if space in the program permits and only if it is determined to be a good fit. Parents/guardians have 72 hours in which to accept or decline the offer of a spot. If it is not accepted within 72 hours, the spot will be offered to the next person on the waiting list. Once a spot has been accepted, completed Registration Forms, supporting documents, and payments are due within two weeks, a process that usually occurs by mid-May. Late registration occurs from June to September and happens only if vacancies exist once the initial registration period ends. Students transferring from another Montessori school, with an Approved Transfer Application, may be considered for a mid-year acceptance into our program.

Mid-Year Registration Procedure for New Students

If vacancies remain in the program, new students may be admitted in January, on a case-by-case basis, depending upon the program capacity, individual classroom dynamics, and ultimately at the discretion of the educator, Supervisor and/or Board of Directors.

New Student Intake Procedures

In order for everyone to get to know each other, an entrance interview between the educators, the incoming student, and their parents/guardians is required. Entrance interviews will likely occur in the last week of June or at the end of August as the situation warrants.

Orientation procedures for incoming students who don't have previous Montessori education will be finalized by the Educator and will be communicated to families as soon as possible.

7. Health and Safety

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.

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

If your child is ill you need to communicate their absence to their teachers for each day of their absence. Please use the Brightwheel messaging option to inform teachers. If an emergency situation arises or you do not receive confirmation from teachers, a phone call may also be made to our elementary classroom at 613-201-5500.

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.

Health Requirements for Staff

Staff members are required to have immunizations as directed by the local medical officer of health, unless there is a medical or personal reason why they cannot be immunized.

Fever

Should your child develop a fever while at PCH you will be contacted to come and pick up your child immediately. The 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 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.

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 immediately. 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 ASAP.

Communicable and Reportable Diseases

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

Immunizations

In alignment with Ontario's Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA), before admission, each child must be immunized for the diseases found on the [School Immunization Checklist](#). All immunization requirements for school attendance align with [Ontario's publicly funded immunization schedule](#). 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 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.

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. 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.

Administration of Medications

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

backpack. Always hand-deliver medication to staff with your child's name on it.***

Accident Procedure

If a child is injured while at school, the 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).

Injury requiring emergency care

If emergency medical attention is needed, the educator will call 9-1-1. The child will be kept calm until an ambulance arrives. If alternate supervision for the remaining students is possible, the educator 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.

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 being determined and will be clarified in the next version of this Handbook prior to the start of the school year.

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 involve total evacuation and are held at least three times a 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), a note will be placed on the school entrance if the school has been evacuated, and a message will be sent out on the What's App Elementary group chat. 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. Fee Payment Policy and Payment Options

At Perth Children's House, tuition fees, fundraising activities, and donations must cover our annual operating expenses. 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 normally attends. Your tuition reserves your child's spot at PCH.

A non-refundable registration/administration fee of \$250 per family for the first student plus \$50 per additional student is due upon registration. In addition, 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.

The balance of fees can be paid on one of the following schedules:

- Annually, paid in full on or before September 1st, 2024,
- Semi-annually on or before September 1st, 2024 and January 1st, 2025,
- Monthly, in 9 monthly installments (\$907 or \$957*), due the 1st of the month from September 2024 to May 2025 inclusive.

Payment schedule deadlines for installment payments:

Date due	One annual payment	Semi-annual payments	Monthly
DEPOSIT: June 1st of current year for returning students, or within 2 weeks of acceptance of offer for new students.	\$1157 \$1207* \$907(\$957*) for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee	\$1157 \$1207* \$907(\$957*) for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee	\$1157 \$1207* \$907 (\$957*)for June 2025 + \$250 admin fee
Sept 1, 2024	\$8163 \$8613*	\$4081.50 \$4306.50*	\$907 month (Sept to May) \$957*
January 1, 2025		\$4081.50 \$4306.50*	

*Erdkinder program for students who have completed Upper Elementary and were offered the extended 7-8 program.

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.

Post-Dated Cheques may be provided at registration and made payable to “Perth Children’s House”.

Late payments for any reason (and for any payment method) will result in an administrative fee of \$20 being charged. In addition, interest of 1.5% per month will be charged on all late payments. Interest will be charged on the monthly tuition amount regardless of payment schedule and lateness of payment.

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 (who is a parent just like you!).

If a parent fails to make the appropriate payments, the Treasurer will prepare a notice letter which will be sent to them after 30 days informing them that they are not in good standing with the PCH. If after 60 days the payment has not been made, 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

Sibling discounts will be assessed as follows:

1. When 2 children of the same family attend at the same time, there is a 5% discount on the oldest child’s tuition fees;
2. When 3 children of the same family attend at the same time, there is a 40% discount on

the oldest child's tuition fees;

3. 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 summary 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.

9. 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, Elementary program are only released to the student'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.
- A parent/guardian may request that a child be released from the care of Perth Children's House without supervision. Parents/Guardians must provide prior written and signed authorization and instructions for the release of the child including the time of dismissal.
- Where a parent/guardian provides written instructions for the release of their child from care without supervision, the parent/guardian is aware that Perth Children's House is no longer responsible for that child upon their dismissal.

- 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:**
 - o Greet each student with eye contact and by shaking hands each morning as they arrive.
 - o Greet the parents verbally and ask how the students morning has been.
 - o 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.
- 2. Where a child has not arrived in care as expected**
 - o 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:
 - o 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.
 - o 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.
 - o 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),**
 - o Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
 - o 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 or for a child to walk home or to another location. (also requires written permission)

- 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 Brightwheel 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 emails or Brightwheel messages have been sent to teachers 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.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures

5. Where a parent/guardian has provided written authorization for their child to be released from care without supervision, one staff member in the program must be responsible for dismissing the child from care. Prior to dismissing the child from care, the staff shall review the written instructions for release provided by the parent/guardian and release the child at the time set out in the instructions. The staff shall document the time of departure from care and as well as their initials on the attendance record.

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

For the 2024-2025 school year, PCH Elementary will operate Monday to Friday 8 a.m.- 4:15 p.m from Wednesday, September 4th, 2024 until Friday, June 20th , 2025.

Arrival and Departures

Morning drop-off occurs between 8:00 AM - 8:15 AM Educators will send out an email prior to the start of the school year outlining details with regards to Drop-Off and Pick-Up. Children present at the end of the school day are to be picked up between 4:00 PM - 4:15 PM. See below for the late pick-up procedure.

- Drop off for families will be between 8:00-8:15 a.m. Details to follow.
- If indoor recess/drop off is necessary, staff will communicate via email or via Brightwheel message.
- Pick up will be between 4:00-4:15 p.m. Please ensure that your child says goodbye to the staff member on duty before leaving. The pick up procedure for the new location will be shared by staff as soon as they have been finalized.

Children in this program must be released to a parent or designate, unless written permission is on file. **Students who wish to walk or ride a bike to or from school must have written permission to do so from their parents or guardians. Please contact the educators directly to provide this written consent and the particular details that you permit, if applicable.** Students who ride their bikes are reminded that it is a legal requirement for them to wear bike helmets, and that safe biking practices must be followed. Bikers are to walk their bikes while on school property.

Before Care Programming

Depending on educator availability and family interest, some years, we offer an Early Drop Off program for an additional cost. Payment for this program would need to be made in advance and a commitment of the days that your child will require early drop off.

Please note that this option is not available every year.

When the Early Drop Off program is running it would not begin until at least the 2nd week of September and there would 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.**

School Year Calendar

PCH observes a two-week Holiday break in December, a one-week March break, four PD days, as well as all public holidays, generally following the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) calendar. PCH produces a school calendar which details all PA days, Public Holidays, School Breaks, and special events which gets distributed in early September; 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.

Punctuality

A sense of order and punctuality is consistent with Montessori learning. We strongly encourage students to arrive on time. Morning drop-off occurs between 8:00 AM - 8:15 AM for social time and conversations. The doors will be locked at 9:00 AM, at the beginning of the morning work period. If you arrive after this time, you may knock on the door and the Classroom Educator will welcome your child in. Late arrivals may miss out on the invaluable introduction of new topics and materials by the Educator. If for any reason you may be running late dropping off your child, please call the school and let the staff know. We will anticipate your arrival and help create the least disruptive entry possible.

Late Pick-up Fees

A late pick-up fee of \$15 for any part of the first 15 minutes, \$20 for every 15-minute increment thereafter after 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).

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

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 you know you will be late to pick up, please inform the Educator ahead of time as accommodations may be able to be arranged in rare occurrences. If your schedule prevents timely pick-up, please make alternate arrangements for child care or pick-up. Speak to the Educator about the options available to you.

If you do not pick your child up by 4:45 PM, the Educator will contact you and wait outside or in the classroom until you arrive. The Educator will stay with your child until you pick them up.

Parking

Parking is still being worked out for 2024 at this time. Once we have relocated we will be able to provide further details. Educators will communicate specifics each year prior to the school year starting. *Perth Children's House requests that you turn off your vehicle while picking up and dropping off your child.*

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). The Lower Elementary Lead Teacher Amy Neron, will send an email to Parents/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** so that all staff will be fully informed of student attendance. .

When the UCDSB schools close due to inclement weather, PCH will close too. The Lower Elementary 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 of Directors agree that the school should be closed down. In the event that the school closes midday, the educators will call the Parents/Guardians to come and pick up their child(ren) as soon as possible.

10. Guiding Children's Behaviour/Code of Conduct

Appropriate Behaviour Through Modelling

PCH encourages children to communicate in positive ways through modelling. The Educators in this program are continuously modelling the behaviours they would like to see in the children. When speaking with the children they use kind language delivered in a gentle, calm manner. Children are redirected positively 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 and age.

Behaviour that interferes with the proper procedure and conduct of the class is discouraged and corrected. We encourage respect for the learning environment 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 Educator 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 Educator will call 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 parents/guardians or the Educator a further meeting will take place. This meeting will be attended by the parents/guardians, Lead Educator, and/or Chair or alternate 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. If staff believe a child's behavior is jeopardizing the safety of others, they have the authority to ask the parents/guardians to take the child from the school for the rest of the day. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled to discuss the incident and to draft an action plan to prevent further incidents.

Prohibited Practices

PCH strictly prohibits physical restraint, except when necessary to prevent a child from harm. Yelling, demeaning language, corporal punishment, and any form of verbal, physical, or psychological abuse are not allowed. Locking exits to confine a child, using degrading measures or threats, or employing language that could humiliate or undermine a child's self-respect, self-worth, or dignity are also forbidden. Children will never be denied access to basic needs such as shelter, toilet facilities, food, drink, or clothing. PCH will not tolerate any infliction of bodily harm or use of force on a child.

Students will not be left unsupervised at any time. Only volunteers who are approved by the board and have a current Vulnerable Sector Check will be permitted to be with students without supervision by the Educator.

Communication and Observations

Educators will communicate information to parents/guardians using the Transparent Classroom app, e-mail and Brightwheel Messaging App. Occasional phone calls may occur and all cell phone numbers should be up to date and current. Observations will take place once a month from October until May. A sign up sheet will be posted online in late September. We encourage each family to observe at least once per year. Parents/Guardians are also encouraged to communicate directly with the Educators during designated pick-up and drop-off times or using the Brightwheel App; important information for that day can be delivered during these transitions. However, 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. If parents/guardians require a conversation to share sensitive details and/or significant content, this should take place at a different time.

Code of Conduct and Standards of Behaviour

Promoting a positive, safe, and welcoming school environment is 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 and respected, 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 Practice Policy](#), which outlines expectations for students, staff, volunteers, and family members, will be strictly adhered to. By signing the handbook, you are confirming your understanding of, and commitment to uphold, these expectations.

11. 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. Going out activities gain extra importance for students in the elementary program, as a way to enhance the development of learning their place in the world, to gain practical experience with concepts learned in school, and to further develop their connection to their community.

Parents/Guardians will be notified in advance 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, other than one with a parent/guardian**. 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 their insurance policy includes a minimum of 2 million dollars in automobile coverage prior to the transportation of any students.

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

- Based on the birth date, age, height, or weight of the child
- Installed following 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 complies with the Act if one is required.

12. 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.

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. For easy labeling, we have an account with Mabel's Labels, please visit [our campaign page](#).

Personal Items

When necessary for communication with families, students in the Upper Elementary Classroom may bring a mobile phone to school to use to communicate with their parents/guardians at lunchtime or at the end of the day. All phone use must be supervised by a teacher and parents are requested to inform teachers if your child has permission to have access to a phone, for what purpose and when it will be used.

Toys are not permitted into the school, please leave them at home or in the car. Along with pencils, and any office supplies. PCH supplies all required materials for students.

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

Our classroom materials are unique and costly to replace. The students are expected to respect and care for classroom materials. One small piece that becomes broken 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.

13. Process for Expressing Concerns

If a parent/guardian, educator, or board member is unhappy or concerned about a situation at the school, they should first try to raise the issue with the person concerned/the lead teacher in charge of the relevant program. 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 staff member, a board member, or a parent/guardian, concerns should be brought to the Chair of the Board at

chair@perthchildrenshouse.ca or the Board of Directors.

Any staff or parent/guardian may approach the Board of Directors to notify them of possible contravention of policy. All matters will be dealt with in strict confidence.

14. Food and Snacks

A bagged lunch including snacks and a filled water bottle must accompany your child each day. If sufficient interest exists, a hot lunch program may be offered for an additional fee.

PCH Elementary **does not** restrict the presence of nuts or other allergens in snacks or lunches and cannot guarantee a nut-free space. If your child has a nut or other serious food allergies, please discuss your options with the Educator before September.