



## Perth Children's House Inc. - Montessori School

### CASA 2026-2027 PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK & POLICY STATEMENT

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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 believe that learning can be so much more fun and fulfilling than what most parents/guardians experienced in school. 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 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. 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.

Perth Children's House Casa program is proud to be a member of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) system, a funding initiative that provides fixed, reduced rates for child care. Our daily rate is \$22, which includes a nutritious hot lunch for all enrolled students.

All of 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. Perth Children's House is also an affiliated member of Montessori Canada, an organization with over 40 years of leadership and a commitment to excellence, who empower a community of Montessori-trained educators, schools and parents to create nurturing and empowering learning environments for every child. <https://www.montessori-canada.ca/>

### 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 included as part of the CWELCC program. Students who have dietary restrictions or are unable to participate in the hot lunch program can bring their own healthy lunch provided the educators have been made aware. 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. 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.

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. 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.



### **Communication:**

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, Instagram and through attendance of the First-Year Orientation (mandatory), and the Second-Year and Third-Year Information evenings that are organized for the parents/guardians each year. A monthly newsletter is distributed by email. 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, skates at the local arena during winter months, and participates in community events. We also have a variety of field trips throughout the year. There

are also several events throughout the school year (Welcome Social, an opportunity to meet other families, fundraisers, a wine and cheese evening, 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 2026-2027 school year, students will attend full day (5 days a week) with drop off between 8:30 and 8:45am and pick up between 4:00 and 4:15pm. Changes to these drop off and pick up times must be communicated to teachers ahead of time where possible.

Educators use electronic documentation (such as Brightwheel) to document (pictures and introductions of new works once a week) and to communicate with families. Educators often host a private and closed Instagram account, where they regularly post photos of works, observations, 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.

When possible, PCH staff attend planned reflective practice meetings, staff meetings and professional development on PD days. Discussions follow the "How Does Learning Happen" Pedagogy. This will involve 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. Educators are supported to attend professional learning conferences (this includes Lanark County meetings) 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 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). The maximum educator child ratio is 1:8. Because the Montessori program is a multi-year program, children will not be accepted into the first year of the program in the year of their 4th birthday, unless they are transferring from another Montessori school.

### ***Inclusion at PCH***

At PCH 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.

Lanark County Children's Services supports early learning programs to create inclusive environments that support all children. PCH works alongside consultants in order to support students whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs or whose needs relating to overall development are such that they require additional support. Consultations are offered to ensure students with special needs fully participate alongside their peers. This is accomplished through: program consultation, student success teams, individual support plan consultation, training, workshops, seminars, assisting transitions to school consultation, and enhanced support funding.

In order to develop the most appropriate and effective programming for the child, teachers may request formalized assessments (i.e. psychoeducational assessment) identification by a health care provider and/or a specialist. PCH staff will follow our Inclusion Education Policy [PCH Inclusion Education Policy](#).

## 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.

### Working committees:

Working Committees operate year after year and play an important role in supporting the ongoing work of the school along with Event Action Teams to meet annual objectives. Each committee determines when, how, and where they meet. Sharing regular updates to the Head Of School. The Parent and Community Engagement Committee (PCEC) functions as a standing working committee and supports community-building initiatives and school events throughout the year. Committees may be subject to change.\* **Committees may be subject to change**

In an effort to educate families about the way the school is run and allow all families a vote on the members who represent the board, **all families are required to attend the Annual General Meeting** which to comply with ONCA regulations, usually occurs towards the end of February. 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!



## 2. 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 governance of the school, and to lead strategic planning and organizational performance in conjunction with the head of school, 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 7 current members: chair, vice-chair, treasurer, secretary, liaison and a 2 general directors. The role of the general director is used to fill identified talent gaps depending on the year. The volunteer board meets once per month on a mutually convenient day and time that is scheduled at the beginning of the year. The majority of members are parents/guardians of children who attend or who have attended the school. Meetings typically are 3 hours in length. 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 contact the board secretary [secretary@perthchildrenshouse.ca](mailto:secretary@perthchildrenshouse.ca) to find out more.

## 3. Head Of School:

The **Head of School** is the chief administrative and educational leader of Perth Children's House. This role is responsible for upholding the school's mission, vision, and values while ensuring the smooth operation of daily activities across all programs and locations.

The Head of School provides operational leadership in the areas of educational and curriculum oversight, staff support and human resources, student well-being, community engagement, and financial oversight. They work closely with the Board of Directors, faculty, and families to maintain a high-quality Montessori learning environment that meets the needs of each child.

Serving as the primary liaison between the Board of Directors and the school community, the Head Of School brings forward important matters and updates to the Board Of Directors.

The Head of School's primary focus is to ensure that students, staff, and families feel supported, valued, and connected, creating a nurturing environment where children can grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Questions or concerns can be sent to the [headofschool@perthchildrenshouse.ca](mailto:headofschool@perthchildrenshouse.ca)

## 4. Enrollment and Service Terminations

Perth Children's House is part of **Lanark OneList**, a new centralized waitlist system for early learning and child care programs in Lanark County. This system helps streamline applications and ensures families have a single point of access when applying to multiple programs. By joining OneList, families can submit their application and be placed on waitlists efficiently, while staying informed about available spaces. For more information or to apply, visit [Lanark OneList](#).

Perth Children's House follows a Priority of Enrollment which is applied to our waitlist.

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

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 Head Of School 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, Head Of School 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 Head Of School, and educators, parents/guardians should also email the Office Secretary as well 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.

At the discretion of the Head Of School, 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 going to [Lanark OneList](#) to complete their centralized waitlist process. You are also welcome to pre-register your child for our elementary program at any point. **\*Please note to register for the Elementary program and to be placed on the waitlist please reach out to [office@perthchildrenshouse.ca](mailto:office@perthchildrenshouse.ca) this is outside of the Lanark Onelist platform.**

### *Registration Periods*

During the registration process each year, the Office 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.

### ***Annual Intake Procedures for New Students***

For new, first-year students, an Entrance Orientation will take place, with the educators and the incoming student and their parents/guardians, this 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. In addition, parents will also be offered a family tour to meet other families and allow students to become familiar with their new school. Once enrolled and attending the student and parents/guardians are required to attend an Orientation Night to better understand the Montessori Pedagogy.

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. A refund will be issued to reimburse the family for days the child doesn't attend prior to their start date.

## **6. Illness in Child and Degree of Illness**

### ***Illness In a Child***

Please 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.

### ***Communication of Illness***

When a child is ill and cannot attend school, it is up to the parents to report the illness to staff via Brightwheel or, if necessary by phone 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 [Reportable Diseases Tool kit](#). 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.** 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.

### *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. Teachers will work alongside parents to create an individualized medical plan for your child.

### *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. (Injury is defined as a cut or mark on the child) A copy of this report will be given to the parents/guardians at pick up. Staff will assess if notifying parents during the day for non threatening situations is required based on the severity of the situation and their best judgement.

### *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 with instructions if pick up is necessary and where, 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 labelled 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 will be participating in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement (CWELCC) system.

Tuition for all students as of January 1st, 2025 will be \$22/day. Our online platform Brightwheel will automatically send you invoices and billing statements to your email inbox each month in advance of the date due.

Payment of tuition fees may be made in three possible ways:

### 1) **Brightwheel App. (preferred)**

Go to the payment section of brightwheel

1. click "Make a payment"

2. View your balance and click "Pay now"

3. Enter the amount you wish to pay at this time and select which payment method to use.

*\*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

- 2) **Email Money Transfers** are to be sent to [deposits@perthchildrenshouse.ca](mailto:deposits@perthchildrenshouse.ca) with a comment indicating "tuition for [child's name]" as it is not always clear based on the email address.
- 3) **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](mailto:deposits@perthchildrenshouse.ca) to let our bookkeeper know who the payment is for.

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, a reminder email will be sent. Continued failure to pay will result in a written notice sent at the end of 30 days informing this family that they are not in good standing with 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.

Tuition receipts will be provided for all first year Casa families for tax purposes.

## 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**

### ***Hours of Operation***

Perth Children's House (PCH) operates Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:15p.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 and staff prepare for the next day from 4:15-4:30.

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). [PCH Late Fee Policy](#)

### ***School Year Calendar***

PCH generally follows the Upper Canada District School Board (UCDSB) calendar. However, the Casa program ends a week earlier than the UCDSB. The first day of school (for returning students) will be September 8th, 2026 and the last day of school will be June 18th, 2027. 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; this can be found on our website [perthchildrenshouse.ca](http://perthchildrenshouse.ca) under calendar. Please check it and refer to it often.

### ***Late Fees***

Staff will note the date(s) and time(s) of late pick-up(s) and advise the Office Administrator and Head of School of the infraction(s). The Office Administrator will issue an invoice for accumulated late fees directly to the parents/guardians.

If you know you will be late to pick up, please inform the educators via brightwheel. This does not eliminate late fee charges. 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). Head Of School 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 **contact teachers via Brightwheel** 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 Head Of School 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 Head Of School agrees 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.

### ***Integration of New Students***

In order to ensure that the classroom is not overwhelmed with children who are new to the school, PCH integrates new students one at a time, also known as staggered starts. This ensures that returning children can assume their leadership roles and helps new children adapt quickly as the school focuses on your child during the first few days to ensure they have a successful beginning. Once you have formally registered at PCH, the classroom educator will contact you to begin the integration process, including an Entrance interview. During the Orientation session you will receive further information, including your child's specific start date; for new students this will NOT be on the first day of classes for returning students. Please plan accordingly.

### ***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 present to build relationships and make connections with your child. They are happy to give hugs and emotionally support your child in any way needed.

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. The door will be locked at 9:00 a.m sharp. 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 at 613-267-5199 and let the staff know so that we can anticipate your arrival and help create the least disruptive entry possible.

### ***Nap and Rest Period***

As per Ontario Child Care Licensing guidelines, any preschool or kindergarten aged child in care more than 6 hours a day needs the opportunity to nap/rest daily. A child's need for rest varies greatly by age but also may change day to day and week by week. Casa staff take family preferences into consideration along with the needs of the child. In keeping with Montessori philosophy which encourages self-advocacy, staff also take into consideration the *desires* of the child. In general, Casa leaders (3rd years) spend extra time outside when rest period is occurring while leaders in training (2nd years) alternate between joining older peers outside, or resting with mat time and quiet indoor activities at the discretion of the child and staff. Most first years spend quiet time on their cots while those who do not wish to or are unable to sleep will get back up after a short rest and join their peers.

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.

### ***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 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 Head Of School 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 or staff 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.

### ***Safe Schools Act***

Perth Children's House adheres to the principles outlined in [Ontario's Safe Schools Act \(S.O. 2000, c. 12\)](#), which promotes respectful, responsible behaviour and supports safe, inclusive learning environments. The Act outlines provincial expectations regarding student conduct, bullying prevention, and procedures related to suspension and expulsion. Our school policies and Code of Conduct align with this legislation to ensure a safe and caring community for all students, staff, and families along with honoring our Montessori approach of respecting the child.

### **PCH Student Discipline Policy & Procedure**

Perth Children's House is committed to maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive Montessori learning environment. Our [PCH Student Discipline Policy & Procedure](#) outlines how behaviour concerns are addressed through progressive discipline and restorative practices that prioritize growth, accountability, and the dignity of each child. In alignment with Montessori principles and Ontario legislation, the policy emphasizes guidance over punishment, safety for all members of our community, and clear communication with families.

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.

### ***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 brief chat at drop-off/pick-up, etc.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to communicate important information that may affect a child's day directly with educators during designated pick-up and drop-off times. A journal may also be used for this purpose. Please note that these times can be busy, and the primary focus should be on transitioning the child. If a more in-depth conversation is needed, we kindly ask that you arrange a separate meeting with the lead teacher at another time. To do so, please contact the lead teacher via Brightwheel or email to schedule a more detailed discussion. Our educators are happy to engage in conversations that will best support everyone involved. If concerns are raised during pick-up or drop-off, we ask parents to consider this as a notification and understand that such matters may be reflected in the student's progress report.

***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 emailed.

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

The PCH Head Of School is happy to address and support you with any concerns you might have. 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 person concerned. If they are uncomfortable doing so, the Head Of School can be asked to intervene to help resolve the issue(s). If the concern should involve the Head Of School, the Chair of The Board of Directors would be included.

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 Head Of School which can be supported and handled appropriately. All matters will be dealt with in strict confidence.

## 15. Field Trips and Off-site Activities

Field trips may be 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 these walking activities with their classmates. Please see the [PCH Field Trip Policy & Procedure](#) for more information.

Parents/guardians will be notified in advance of the details of any excursion that requires transportation, usually via brightwheel or 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 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. Belts and suspenders are not appropriate independent clothing.

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](#).

### ***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.

### ***Risky Play***

Risky play is an important part of healthy child development. It refers to exciting and challenging forms of play where children test their limits, navigate uncertainty, and learn to assess risk for themselves. When supported by attentive adults and a thoughtfully prepared environment, risky play builds confidence, resilience, problem-solving skills, independence, and sound judgment. At PCH, we carefully balance safety with opportunity, minimizing hazards while allowing children the freedom to grow through experience.

Families who wish to explore this topic further may find the following resources helpful:

- [Why Risky Play – Westwood Montessori](#)
- [The Benefits of Risky Play in Early Childhood \(Tandfonline Research Article\)](#)
- [Risk-Taking in Nature – Montessori Nature](#)

## 17. Food and Snacks

### Lunch

A catered hot lunch is included in the daily fee for all PCH students. Please review our [Anaphylaxis And Allergy Policy](#) so that all families are aware of sensitivities and allergies and how to prevent an anaphylaxis reaction. 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. If indicated in the registration form that your child will not be participating in the hot lunch program, a teacher will contact you prior to the start of school. For all families providing a bagged lunch, the following policy must be followed:

1. A letter of exemption 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.

1. PCH is a nut-safe zone. NO nut products, or products which may contain nuts, are allowed in children's lunches or snacks.
2. Children attending PCH may suffer from mild to severe food allergies during which the child may experience anaphylactic shock and even death. PCH staff along with the Parents/Guardians of each child share the responsibility to ensure that we support the needs of a child with a severe allergy. As such Parents/Guardians must ensure that all food sent with the child reads and follows the [PCH Anaphylaxis and Allergy Policy](#)
3. The Child Care and Early Years Act requires that lunch containers and water bottles be labeled with the child's name.
4. 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.
5. 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](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html)

### 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 has a smoke-free environment with a [PCH Smoke-Free Policy And Procedure](#) in place for staff, volunteers, and students. There is no smoking on school property.

## 19. School Events and Family Engagement

Perth Children's House offers a variety of events throughout the school year to welcome families, celebrate milestones, and support community connections. The year begins with Orientation Visits and a Welcome Social in September, giving families a chance to meet teachers and connect with other families. Check the [perthchildrenshouse.ca](http://perthchildrenshouse.ca) website calendar for details.

Throughout the year, families are invited to participate in special events such as our Parade, Winter Solstice Celebration, Chili Fest, Spring Fling, Mother's Day Tea, and Graduation Ceremonies, including the Graduation Campout for older students.

In addition to these community events, parents are encouraged to engage in ongoing classroom observations, providing opportunities to see children's learning in action and to connect with educators.

These events and activities foster a strong sense of community while celebrating the growth and accomplishments of every child at Perth Children's House.