

École Notre Dame Elementary School

Kindergarten Parent Information Handbook



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Catholic Separate
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St. Albert, Alberta
T8N 1K2
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Faith in Our Students!

Welcome to École Notre Dame Elementary School Kindergarten!

Our school offers English and French Immersion programs for students in Kindergarten to Grade 4. We also have a pre-Kindergarten program in English. If you require any information about our pre-Kindergarten program, please contact the school office (780-939-4020) and/or the Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools District Office (780-459-7711).

Students who reside in the Town of Morinville, including South Glens, and Cardiff and are Catholic are considered resident students. We will accept non-resident students who may live inside/outside our boundary area and/or are not Catholic. Please contact École Notre Dame Administration for more information if your child is a non-resident student.

A child must be 5 years of age before March 1, of the school year to be eligible for Kindergarten. The government of Alberta requires a copy of your child's birth certificate at the time of registration to provide proof of age. Copies of the birth certificate can be made through our office. We look forward to sharing new experiences with your children and working together as partners in education.

Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 734

École Notre Dame is one of 17 schools in the Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School District.

District Values and Core Commitments

District Mission Statement

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools is a welcoming learning community that awakens the hearts and minds of students while educating and nurturing each to learn, live fully and serve others.

District MOTTO

Faith in Our Students

Vision: Excellence in learning through faith, relationships and engagement.

Our Core Commitments:

<i>Passion</i>	We celebrate all students as gifts from God, so we further our dedication to their needs;
<i>Relationships</i>	We seek to meaningfully see Christ in others through relationships with our students and other stakeholders;
<i>Commitment</i>	Our pursuit of continuous life-long learning enables students to be their best in achieving their goals;
<i>Hope</i>	We constantly communicate a belief of what is possible for the student;
<i>Innovation</i>	We are committed to innovation, best practice and lifelong learning;
<i>Excellence</i>	We establish standards for success for learning, devote our personal best to achieving them, and celebrate our results.

École Notre Dame School

School Mission Statement

Together, students, families, staff and community are responsible for educating each individual and nurturing their growth within a Catholic/Christian atmosphere.

This positive partnership fosters the development of lifelong learners and responsible, caring citizens.

Kindergarten Program

Early childhood is a significant period in human development. The Kindergarten program helps prepare children for entry into Grade One and also provides a foundation for later success. The Kindergarten learner expectations are appropriate for young children and are part of a continuum of learning. Young children benefit from programs that help them explore the world around them and guide them through the transition from home to school.

Program Beliefs

As parents, you are your child's first and most important teacher and you play a central role in the life of your child. The Kindergarten program supports and respects the dignity and worth of the family and encourages parents to participate in the Education of your child. When necessary, the Kindergarten program plays a role in the coordination of community services for young children and their families.

Children develop through similar stages, but at individual rates. The Kindergarten program provides learning experiences that meet individual and group needs, interests and developmental levels. Additional support is provided to children with diverse needs to help them increase their potential for learning.

Young children are naturally curious and eager to learn. They benefit from developing positive relationships with others, including children of their own age. The Kindergarten program provides opportunities for children to learn about their environment through organized activities, purposeful play and cooperation with others.

Parents as Partners in Learning

Parents are primary educators. It is therefore extremely important for parents and staff to work together and to communicate openly for your child's benefit. The program encourages the involvement of parents in their children's school program in many different ways.

Daily reading is recommended to support your child's learning. Old favorites may be read many times. Encourage your child to re-tell main ideas, using story sequence and picture clues. This is a way for children to learn to enjoy literature and internalize the structure of our language. Board games, Lego and puzzles also provide valuable learning experiences that can include the entire family. Parents may be involved in supporting the school program at home by encouraging the development of the whole child.

As parents, you may volunteer your services as a resource person or provide assistance in the school under the direction and supervision of a teacher. All volunteers in the school must complete and provide a copy of a child welfare check and a criminal record check.

Please visit the school office to obtain a letter from the school so there is no charge to have the checks completed. Parents may also volunteer to take part in the decision-making and advisory roles through the School Council or serve on the Parent Fundraising Association. Throughout the school year, École Notre Dame School, in partnership with other agencies, will offer parenting information sessions. This is a wonderful opportunity to learn new skills and connect with other parents in our school.

Program Options

Alberta Education funds a 475-hour Kindergarten program. We currently provide a half-day program for English and French Immersion students. If interest and numbers warrant a full-day progressive program, this will be provided at an additional cost to parents. Students will attend half-days until spring break, then attend full days for April, May & June. Please see administration if you are interested in this program.

French Immersion Program

In a French Immersion program, students receive the majority of their instruction in French from a teacher fluent in the French Language. The Immersion program is specifically for children whose first language is not French. Language learning typically poses little difficulties for young children and they easily embrace the challenge of learning a new language. At École Notre Dame School, a French Immersion Program is available beginning in Kindergarten or grade one.

After their Kindergarten year, students begin grade one where they receive Language Arts instruction in both English and French. Religion and Social Skills classes are taught in English. Physical Education and Music may also be taught in English depending on available staff.

Since the program was designed primarily for non-French speaking families, English is the language of communication between the home and the school. Parents are frequently amazed at the ease in which their children learn the French language. The French Immersion program offers an excellent and enriching opportunity for your child to experience a second language.

Transportation

Those children riding the bus to school in the morning and from school in the afternoon will be on the same bus as students in grades one to four. Please note that transportation is not available from all residences; some residences are within established walk boundaries to the school. Please call GSACRD's Transportation Department at 780-459-7711 (extension 139) to determine if your child will be eligible for transportation. For those students who will be in childcare, transportation will be determined from this location instead of your home. When calling for eligibility of transportation, please indicate where your child will be picked up and dropped off.

Bus Fees

Busing fees fluctuate yearly and information is available through GSACRD's website. Please visit <http://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/> for more information or call (780-459-7711) the transportation department.

First Riders Bus Program

Please watch for information at the beginning of the school year about our First Riders program. The Transportation Department will invite students and parents in the evening to learn more about bus safety and take a bus ride. This is especially helpful for students who are new to riding the bus.

Personal Bus Safety

For the safety of our young riders, someone must meet your child at the bus stop. If no one is present, **drivers will return the child to the school**. Parents will be called and will have to arrange to pick up the child at school.

Typically, at the beginning of the year, when children are learning new procedures, there will be delays in the bus arrival time. After the first few weeks, the drop off/pick up times should be more regular. Please do not hesitate call the school or the transportation department if your child's bus does not arrive on schedule.

Personal Safety

If your child's pick up routine changes (for example: someone else picks up, child is not going on the bus, etc.), **please send a note to inform the teacher**. Also, any bus route changes **MUST** be arranged through the transportation department. Please ensure that your child's bus pass is visible to both the bus driver and teacher.

Kindergarten School Supplies

We ask that the parents provide the following basic items:

- indoor Velcro runners
- **BIG** backpack (to carry shoes, notes, and snack)
- box of Kleenex
- lunch kit and a reusable water bottle
- 1 container of baby wipes

Please label all items including jackets, mitts, boots, etc.

Kindergarten Daily Snacks

Each child brings his/her own daily small snack. Suggestions for snacks:

- fresh fruit
- one slice whole grain bread or bagel
- vegetable sticks
- cheese and crackers
- ham and pickles
- popcorn, raisins, and sausage

We encourage students to bring water or juice in a plastic container. We strongly discourage juice boxes as they are often unfinished and are wasted.

Class Times: (Tentative)

Morning Classes: 8:30 - 11:20 a.m.

Afternoon Classes: 12:20 - 3:10 p.m.

Beginning the Year - Staggered Small Group Entry

Typically, the first two days of school in the fall are staggered entry, where half of the class attends each day. This allows the teacher to meet the students in a smaller group

setting and to introduce them to class routines. The children are exposed to some of their classmates and to the regular length of the class day. Information on your child's staggered entry date will come to you in late August.

Small Group June Kindergarten Orientation

We will be hosting a **45- minute Kindergarten orientation** for Kindergarten students in June. During this time, children will be in a small group with one of our Kindergarten teachers. The students will have a modified circle, do a small craft, and have some free play centre time. This day helps to prepare the children for what to expect come September. Parents must provide transportation to and from the school for the small group orientation. **We encourage parents not to stay with their children during this orientation.** We will call you prior to June to arrange your child's orientation session.

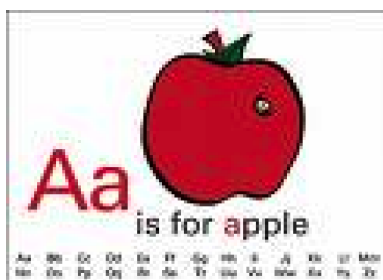
Volunteers

Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 734 values and encourages services of volunteers in the division's schools. In our ECS program, parents are a very important component of a successful program. In order to ensure and maintain a Christ-centered atmosphere that is safe, secure and caring, we require all volunteers to complete a **Criminal Record Check and a Child Welfare Check.** Please check with our office for the necessary forms. Our Volunteers are insured under the Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 734 liability insurance when acting within the scope of the duties as assigned by the principal or teacher of the school. Normal volunteer duties in our Kindergarten would include, but would not be limited to: some preparation and assistance with materials and crafts, helping with to do tasks at centers, playing of games with children, help on special days and field trips.



Experiencing the Kindergarten Program

Early Literacy



Early Numeracy



Personal & Social Responsibility



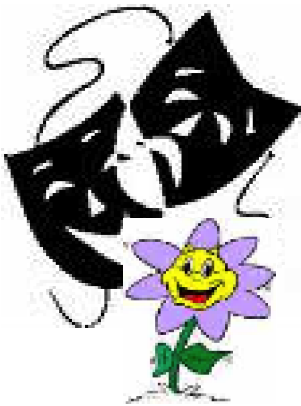
CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Creative and Cultural Expression

Community and Environmental Awareness

Citizenship and Identity

Physical Skills and Well Being



HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD?

Parents of five-year-old children, frequently ask us:

"How can I help my child be successful in Kindergarten?"

In this section, you will find ways to support your child in preparing for Kindergarten. The information is based on research and experience of our Kindergarten team.

Appreciation of Stories and Books

Children need a great deal of experience with literature, as active listeners and as active participants. Research indicates that one common factor present in the home environment of children who respond to classroom instruction, is frequent routine reading aloud. It should include non-fiction as well as fiction selections. Be sure to:

- read stories to your children every day
- stop to let them discuss how the characters feel and make predictions about how the story will end
- help children explore the meaning of new words and concepts
- after hearing the story give them opportunities to retell the events in sequence
- encourage them to use the story's new words and language

Phonemic Awareness

One of the most important foundations of reading success is phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness is demonstrated by the ability to identify and manipulate the sounds within spoken words. Have your child:

- play with words by giving children experiences with rhyming words
- play with sounds by helping your child notice that words are composed of sounds e.g.: say /K/ /A/ /T/ and ask your child to guess the word you've made
- singing and memorizing songs, nursery rhymes, poems
- listen to hear the differences between sounds

Language Skills

Children need a wide variety of language experiences to understand the world around them. Help your child to be able to use language to describe his or her experiences, to predict what will happen in the future, and to talk about events that happened in the past. Children also need instruction in key language concepts. Have your child:

- learn the colors
- identify various shapes
- learn prepositions (can they show you they understand under, over, between, before, after)
- practice sequencing (can they place objects in order from small to large or retell the events in a short story?)
- use classification (sorting socks, sort candies by colors, shapes)

Alphabet and Letter Sounds

Exposure to letters of the alphabet in both upper and lowercase is important. You may:

- help your child learn the alphabet song
- teach them to recognize the letters in their name
- play games with letters and sounds
- teach them to recognize letters and letter sounds
- teach your child to print his/her name beginning with an upper case letter, followed by lower case letters (ei: Jackie)
- label familiar objects at home
- help your child match picture or objects with initial letters
- play with and make up rhyming words
- encourage your child to begin writing simple words as they gain command of letters and sounds

Concepts of Print

Children need to understand that letters make words and words make stories.

- use your finger to follow the words as you read stories to your children
- help children become aware that spaces between words matter
- develop awareness of one-to-one correspondence between the words on a page and the words the reader says. You can ask as you read a story, *"Let's see how many times we can find the word 'cat' in this book."*

Math

Recognition of numbers and experience with basic problem solving lays a good foundation for success in mathematics. Try to:

- count daily (count the steps as you go up and down, count all the blue cars). Pay special attention to 13 and 15, which are frequently skipped
- play card games with your children
- have your child match the number to objects (use playing cards and ask your child to park two cards next to two cars, use a number four and place four red Smarties beside it)
- talk about mathematical concepts at home. Use words like - heavy and light, less than, fewer than, more than, bigger, biggest, yesterday, today, long short (not long and small)
- have a group of objects for your child to sort, talk about sorting rules such as size, color, shape, etc.
- have objects to make simple patterns and ask your child to name the pattern (ei: blue, blue, blue, yellow, blue, blue, yellow)

Socialization

The social dynamics of a classroom is very different than that of a family. Typically, 22 or so children share the attention of one teacher. Kindergarten is where students learn to take turns, share, follow directions, and be patient. You can help your child leave the familiar settings of home by exposing your child to activities such as library story hours, organized classes such as swimming and ballet lessons, and/or parent/child enrichment groups. All of these experiences can help to prepare a child for the first day of school.

Most of all, have fun with your child. Learning should be a rewarding experience. Be creative and teach through games.

We are looking forward to providing your family with a rich, rewarding, and successful Kindergarten experience at École Notre Dame School!

