

Welcome to Kindergarten!

August 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians

Welcome to Kindergarten! My name is Martine Balderston and I will be the Kindergarten Teacher at Cilaire Elementary School this fall. Kindergarten is a big step and I wish to assist your child in making this transition as comfortable as possible.

This first week of school, kindergarten students do not attend for the full day. I will be conducting individual intake interviews with each family. I have arranged the following students/parents/teacher intake interview for you and your child during the first week of school. I look forward to meeting you and _____ on _____ at _____. If this time is inconvenient please contact me at the school (250-444-8888).

During the conference, we can get to know each other and you will have a chance to further familiarize yourselves with the classroom. Any concerns you may have about the program or your child can be discussed at this time.

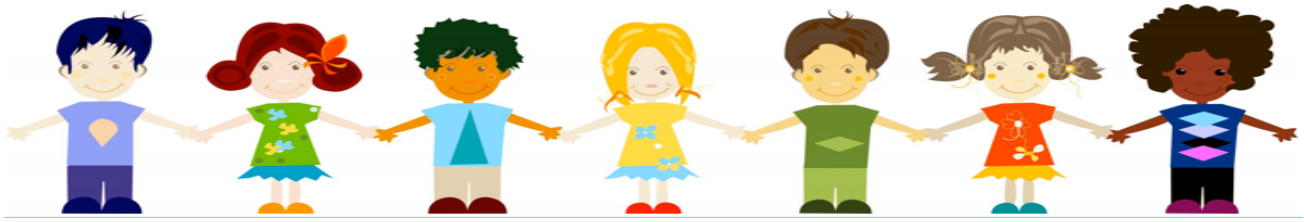
Please bring the following with you to the interview:

- \$30.00 for school supplies-cash, or cheque made out to School District 68. This payment is to assist you in the purchase of school supplies that will be used by your child during the school year. During the course of the year, fees for seasonal projects and field trips may be charged.
- Inside gym shoes (non-marking, soft soles) that can be left at school-please make sure that they are labelled with your child's name and that your child can put them on independently (velcro is wonderful!)
- A spare set of clothing that can be stored in his/her cubby for any accidents that may happen (please label these clothes as well)
- Pilates mat (label on both sides at both ends so that I can identify who's mat it is quickly without rolling it out)
- The completed Summer Memories sheet that is included with this letter
- Your child's comfort kit
- For these rainy days it is recommended to purchase Muddy Buddies, as one piece rain suit

Your child will be participating in **gradual entry Kindergarten**. This means that the student and teacher will have the opportunity to become acquainted and familiar with one another in a smaller group. Gradual entry is beneficial in helping children feel comfortable and connected with their classmates, classroom and the school without being overwhelmed by the larger class group. It also allows me to spend one on one time introducing students to routine.



Time	Activity	Notes/Supplies
12:15	Meet in library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Welcome by principal -Introduction -Welcome by Martine Balderston -students should sign-in (name tags) take pictures of each student with name tag on for reference
12:25	Older students come to library to get Kindergarten students for tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -parents stay to go over information with M. Balderston Things to work on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -recognize own name -independence in putting on shoes and coats -opening containers -gradual entry (first 2 weeks) Tour: show classroom, office, gym, where we meet in the morning, playground, field, washrooms There will ideally be 1-2 k's with 1 older student
12:45	Games on field	Parachute, lawn bowling , bean bag toss
1:00	Shared snacks	<p>Watermelon precut and served by parents (bring: napkins, handsanitizer, garbage bag)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -opportunity for parents to talk to other parents about experiences
1:15	End	<p>Say Goodbye</p> <p>Tidy up equipment</p>



Kindergarten 2014!

Cilaire Elementary School, Mrs. Martine Balderston

school year! I am excited to get to know your child and your family in September.

Snacks/Lunch

There will be one designated snack period and one lunch period per day. Please send healthy snacks that will help to fuel your child's body through the day. We will be using eating periods to talk about nutrition.

To help prepare your child for eating periods, have them practice opening snack packaging and containers.

Remember to include utensils with your child, there is no microwave for students to use and teach your child what to eat first (foods that need refrigeration/healthy food), eat for a snack (foods that can be eaten in a 10 minute period. If your child has an allergy, make sure your child knows not to share food and knows that do to if they experience an allergic reaction

I encourage students to drink water throughout the day. Sealed waterbottles are allowed on student' tables. Other drinks must be saved for lunch.

Toys

Please leave all toys at home. Often at this age students misplace toys and it results in disappointment and tears. The classroom contains new and exciting toys.

Clothing

Remember that we are in active play throughout the day. Please make sure your child is coming to school in clothing that will allow them to fully participate in the day, both during instructional time and during their recess breaks. We will be doing some activities that include 'getting messy' so don't send your child to school in clothing that you do not want to get 'wrecked through play'.

Your child will also need a spare set of clothes left at school. Items should include 1 pair of pants, 1 pair of underwear, 1 t-shirt, 1 pair of socks. All items should be labeled with your child's name and placed in a labeled ziplock bag. When these items are brought home, please replace immediately. Also, please send your child to school with a shammy for Art. This shammy could be an apron or an oversized shirt and should be labelled.



Gym

We will be engaging in physical activity on a daily basis. Sent shoes that will not fall off during physical activity. In the past students have worn shoes that are too large for their feet and the shoes fly off during activity. Also, when doing outside activities, we will be using outside shoes, so please keep this in mind in the morning when you and your child are heading out the door.

If you have any experience in one particular sport and would like to lead instruction or volunteer please let me know.

Library

Your child will have an opportunity to borrow books from the school library on a weekly basis. Your child will be encouraged to choose books that are best suited to their reading level. It is important that you encourage your child to take good care of the books and to return them back to the library when they are done with the book.

Children will not be able to borrow a new book if the book that they have already borrowed is returned. They are excited to make their choices and bring these home to read so make time to read these books at home during family reading time.

Field Trip and Special Events

You will be informed in advance when we are planning a field trip or special event. Volunteers are always needed for such events and we would love for you to join us. These events can't happen without volunteers and activities will be modified according to how many volunteers are available.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is essential for your child to obtain maximum benefits from the Kindergarten program. If your child is not able to attend please contact the office.

If someone new is picking up your child after school, please call the school or provide a note in your child's planner. Children are not released to adults that I am not familiar with. Children stay with me until his/her pickup person collects them. If they are not picked up within 10 minutes, we go to the office to try to make a contact phone call.

If possible try to plan appointments (dentist/doctor) for non-school times and try to plan vacations around school holidays.

Please do keep your child away if they are unwell. Children who are not well are physically/mentally unable to fully participate and it is best for them to rest at home. Your child should be fever-free/symptom free for a FULL 24 hours before he/she returns to school after an illness. It is very hard to concentrate on learning when you don't feel well, and not fair to the others to be exposed to illness unnecessarily.



Communication

Each month I will be sending out a newsletter outlining what to expect in the month to come, information about our sharing themes and special events.

I will also be sending out a weekly summary of activities that we did,. In these notices, I will often provide suggestions about how you can further extend your child's learning at home as it relates to our classroom learning.

All items that will be sent home will be included in your child's back and forth bag. This bag will be given to your child at the start of the year. It will go home on a daily basis. If there are things that need to be returned like permission slips, please send them back in the bag as well. It is less likely items will go missing if they are not loose in a backpack.

I would like to stress that I strongly encourage open and honest communication between teacher and parents/guardians. Please feel free to come talk to me personally-please call me at school, make an appointment or email me so that there are less distractions. It is very difficult to speak to a parent during instructional time. I would appreciate any feedback that you have regarding what you have noticed about your child's learning as the year progresses or about the program.



Things to note for the upcoming year:

- Your child might be extra tired during the first couple months of school. They are adjusting to a structured program that has lots of parts to learn and understand. Try to limit extra-curricular items in the first couple months and help them get at least 10 hours of sleep if possible.
- Make sure that all items sent to school are labelled, even things like spoons and lunch containers.
- Allow your child some down time before you ask them what they did at school. They need time to process what they did during the day.
- Juice boxes are a waste of money to send to school. Most juice is not drunk and is literally squirted down the drain before the container is recycled. Send a reusable water bottle.
- Higher quality indoor shoes will last the school year. Staps break and velcro falls off "cheaper shoes" causing parents to buy multiple pairs in one year.
- Students are learning to share, what personal space is and how to function within a group. Be careful about using terms like "bullying". Sometimes problems occur because a child just hasn't learned how to communicate or how to compromise in play. These are all developmental points for a child to learn.
- Friendships change and evolve quickly. A child your child doesn't like to play with one day, will be his best friend the next day.
- Muddy Buddies are a great thing to send to school. We have a lot of wet days during the year and kids still go outside. Kids still love to go on slides and swings when they are wet. Kids do not like to be wet when they come inside.
- Kindergarten students are developing their personalities and will begin to try new ones as they begin to further explore their world.
- Children may have difficulties separating from home/parents. Create a morning routine that will help them with this process.
- When dropping off your child at school, it is easier if the parent does not come in the classroom. Students need to do things independently, there is no room for another person in the cubby room and it tends to be a big distraction. Say goodbye to your child before they go to school.
- Do not bring your dog into the classroom. This also is a big distraction that deviates from routine.
- Students are trying to be on their best behaviour all day. They may act up more at home but this will not last.
- Every child is different. They are coming to school with a different set of skills, experiences and personalities. Try not to compare your child too much with another child.
- Try to get to know some of the other parents' guardians.
- If you are not sure about something, please ask.



Self-regulation is an important skill that your child will learn in Kindergarten. Self-Regulation in About:

- Getting along with others
- Paying attention even when it is hard
- Waiting for a turn
- Planning ahead and planning with others
- Managing powerful emotions
- Sharing ideas and solving problems together
- Being interested and curious
- Using a number of strategies to reach a goal
- Remembering on purpose
- Having language to solve conflict
- Struggling through the hard parts to learn something new
- Taking safe physical risks

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