



Kindergarten Handbook

This booklet has been written to introduce you to the Kindergarten program at Muir Lake School. We hope it will answer many of the questions you might have regarding this important first year in school. It is indeed a privilege to spend days watching children grow, learn and develop.

Children bring with them a unique curiosity, energy, and zest for life. We believe that it is our role to provide an environment that facilitates the best possible place to grow and learn. An environment that is trusting, caring and encouraging will enable each child to feel comfortable enough to take risks in their learning, allowing each one to reach their potential. Each child is unique with their own set of experiences, interests, and abilities. We, as teachers, will strive to foster an appreciation of one another as unique and valuable individuals in the class.

We want your child's first year in school to be filled with happy days and positive experiences.

Ms. Kate LeDressay

Kindergarten Teacher



I am excited to be teaching Kindergarten this year. I have been teaching since 2015 and have been with Muir Lake School since 2018. Previously, I taught for Sturgeon School Division at Camilla School and Morinville Colony School.

I graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Alberta in 2002, and I completed my After-Degree in Education from Concordia University in 2011.

My favourite subject in school was always art and I love to see the imagination and creativity of my kindergarten students! My philosophy for teaching is to follow the interests and wonders of my students and to facilitate and fuel a life-long love of learning! Kindergarten is a crucial year and I feel fortunate to meet students at the beginning of their adventures at school.

I have recently moved to the area with my husband and my twins. We are enjoying the wide-open spaces and the beautiful landscape. I like to play outside and hike with my family, read, bake and garden. I am looking forward to this coming year and getting to meet more amazing students.

Mrs. Christine Ellert

Mrs. Annina Clemens

Educational Assistants



My name is Christine Ellert and I love working in kindergarten. I have been an Educational Assistance since 2014 and graduated from Grant MacEwan's Special Needs Educational Assistant Program in 2016.

I grew up in the community and actually attended Muir Lake School. I have 3 children, 2 dogs, 4 cats, and too many chickens!

Some of my favourite things include reading, gardening, hanging out with my family and friends, and even playing video games.

My favourite subject in school was always language arts. I have loved to read my whole life, and I hope to share my love of reading with all the children I work with.

I am so excited to get to know all our new kinders this year. I know that we are going to have a lot of fun.



My name is Annina Clemens and I am an Education Assistant. I have been with the Parkland School Division since 2016. I have worked in Nature Kindergarten in 2019-2020 and began working in the Kindergarten classroom in 2020-2021. I love working with children and everyday I am

learning something new. I have 3 kids of my own. I love to go camping and fishing.

Welcome to Kindergarten!



Absences - If your child is away please email me at <mailto:kate.ledressay@psd.ca> as well as the office at <mailto:muirlake@psd.ca>

Bathrooms - We don't have a bathroom in our classroom and we will be using the bathroom down the hall. At the beginning of the year we will have a teacher supervise small groups of children to the bathroom and as the year continues we will allow one child at a time to use the washroom with permission and a bathroom pass.



Belongings - Please label all clothing and footwear your child wears or brings to school.

Birthdays - Birthdays are special days! We celebrate birthdays by having each student create a special work of art for the classroom on their birthday. If you are sending birthday invites, please send them in a labeled ziploc bag and we will help your child distribute them into the mail envelopes. A class list of first names will be distributed in September.

Curriculum - In Alberta, we follow the Alberta Program of Studies. This informs our planning and pacing for the year. Clear expectations in seven learning areas are described in the Kindergarten Program Statement. They meet the social, physical, intellectual, cultural, creative, and emotional needs of young children to provide a foundation for elementary schooling:

◆ Early Literacy ◆ Early Numeracy ◆ Community and Environmental Awareness ◆ Personal and Social Responsibility ◆ Physical Skills and Well-being ◆ Creative Expression ◆ Citizenship and Identity

The expectations of the seven learning areas are interrelated. Young children learn in an integrated way during instructional activities, and many of these will be achieved at the same time. Children accomplish learning not only in the kindergarten program but also in their homes and communities. To read the complete kindergarten curriculum find the link below

<https://education.alberta.ca/media/563583/kindprogstate2008.pdf>



Communication - We want to hear about how your child is enjoying school and also share with you their learning each week. We will be using Google Classroom; you will also be able to message me directly and privately through email, or call the school and leave a message. I am delighted to chat during pick up and drop off and if you need to schedule a meeting for any questions you may have, I would be glad to set one up when I am available.

Donate - We love to build and create with found materials. We will always accept materials for our collection. Some of the items we collect:

- Caps (from water bottles, detergent, markers, jam)
- Small basket
- Small boxes (e.g., cracker, tea boxes)
- Natural materials (pine cones, sea shells, stones, twigs, seeds)
- Flyers, envelopes, calendars, magazines
- Paint samples (eg. paint chips)
- Beads, pearls, buttons
- Anything wooden (spoons, blocks, wooden picture frames, wood pieces)
- Unused paper (computer, scrapbooking, construction, etc.)
- Pieces of material, felt, fabric, yarn, string, net, ribbon
- Trays, corks, toothpicks, egg cartons
- Clean plastic grocery bags
- Soup cans/cylinders (paper off and no sharp edges, paper towel rolls)



Eating at School - We will have a snack at 10 a.m. and lunch at 12:00 p.m. everyday. We do not have a microwave in our classroom; please send warm foods in a Thermos, do not send any glass containers to school. Please ensure your child can manage all lunch items and practice before school starts when you get a chance. Fruit cups, Ritz Cracker Snack packs and yogurt tubes can be tricky for kindergarten students, please ensure your child can manage them independently. As a teacher, I will be monitoring social interactions, safety and cleanliness during your child's snack and lunch time. I will not be monitoring what your child eats each day, send food your child likes and which will give them energy for the day. Please talk with your child about what you expect them to eat each day at school.



Field Trips - We will be going on two trips this year. More information regarding field trips and volunteering on trips will be sent home.

Gym - Each class will have one block of gym per week. We will work on building physical skills, playing cooperative learning games and learning to use gym equipment.



Google Classroom - We will be using Google Classroom to communicate with families and post photos of our days at school. If we are required to move to online learning anytime during the year, assignments will be posted there. Sign up information will be sent in August.

Health and Handwashing - We always encourage proper handwashing techniques while at school and we will have to be even more diligent about our health this year. Practice proper and frequent handwashing at home with your child.



Home Reading - We encourage daily reading with your child. Listening to stories and reading books with you will build their language and early literacy skills. We will begin a Home Reading Program in May for all students.



Illness - Although regular attendance is vital to your child's learning; please do not send your child to school if they have a severe cough, fever or are vomiting. We work hard to ensure hand washing is completed and that our classroom is kept hygienic. It helps everyone stay healthy if your child stays home and rests when he or she is ill.

Independence - Kindergarten is a year of building independence. This year more than ever it is so vital that your child is able to manage their own items and basic care. This includes shoes they can fasten themselves, clothing they can zip themselves, and lunch items they can open and close independently. This helps us as a teaching team and also allows us to maintain physical distance when possible.



Jolly Phonics - We will be using the Jolly Phonics literacy program for learning letter sounds. We will begin learning letter sounds at the end of September. More details to follow. If you would like more information about the program go to this site: <https://www.jollylearning.co.uk/jolly-phonics>



Kindergarten Daily Schedule - Most days in kindergarten will have the following components:

- Free play
- Morning Meeting
- Poems, songs, stories
- Science/health/social studies activities
- Physical activity in the gym, the classroom or outside
- Teacher/student directed learning
- Whole group and small group activities
- Snack time and Lunchtime
- Centre time
- Dismissal
- Library (once a week) Recess (every day weather permitting)



Library - We will visit the library once per week and each student can borrow two books. Our librarian is Mrs. Schram and she is an excellent resource for us. The books are due the next week on their designated library day. Each student will receive a library bag to transport their books to and from school. Please ensure it comes back with the books each time. Library days will be marked in the monthly calendar as well as in the weekly reminder message.



Morning Meeting - Each morning we will gather as a class for a morning meeting; during which time we will share our ideas, read a morning message together, and have a show and share time.



Newsletters - I will post a monthly newsletter on google classroom the last week of the month.

Office - If you are picking up your child early from school please sign them out at the office and wait there. If your child is late please sign them in at the office and get a late slip.



Outdoor Play - Playing and learning outside is an essential part of mental and physical development. Kindergarten students will have 1.5 hours of recess each day as well as an additional 2 hours of outdoor learning per week. Please send appropriate clothing for the day; we will often be exploring in the outdoor spaces behind the school and having proper footwear is essential for the safety of little feet. Please ensure your child is able to run in their shoes.

Parent Teacher Conferences - Parent Teacher conferences will take place in October to review the EYE (Early Year Evaluation Results) and a Student-Led Conference with a meeting with parents will take place in March.



Play - Play-based and Inquiry-based Learning: Our Kindergarten program follows a Play-based and an inquiry-based learning approach where the children's interests and curiosities guide the teaching and learning. Children will experience instruction in both large and small group work and engage in a variety of learning centers. Learning centers provide students with the opportunity to develop social skills, make decisions, use individual learning styles, work at their own pace, promote creativity and expression, communicate ideas, and foster personal interests. Play will be valued as an essential learning tool as well as paper to pencil tasks and technology. Children learn best in a relaxed, non-threatening environment and they learn best when they are self-motivated and interested in the activity. They will learn best in a natural way through play, discovery and experimentation. Play is a child's work. http://www.ncca.biz/Aistear/pdfs/Guidelines_ENG/Play_ENG.pdf



Questions - If you have any questions you can contact me via email at kate.ledressay@psd70.ab.ca and set up a time to meet or for a phone call.

Report Cards - There is no report card for the first term. I will meet with you in October at a Student-Led Conference which will give your child an opportunity to share their classroom routines and what they are learning and give you a chance to ask any questions. A second student-led conference will take place in March to celebrate your child's learning and answer any questions about preparing for Grade One.



Recess - Kindergarten students can be brought to their classrooms as early as 7:45 a.m. We will have recess time for an hour each day.

Show and Share - Your child will get the opportunity to bring an item from home to share with their peers. Please place the item in a bag and help your child to print three clues about the object in the bag. Show and Share is an excellent opportunity to build language and list attributes of the object. We will guess as a class and ask questions about the item. A Show and Share Calendar will go home.



Sensory Play - Sensory play is very important for a young child's learning and fine-motor development. Examples of sensory play are water, play-dough, salt, sand, shaving cream, and much more. This year we will individualize sensory play and enable each child to have their own set of sensory materials in order to keep our classroom healthy and safe while also ensuring this necessary play.



Transportation - Kindergarten students are taken to the bus a few minutes before the bell rings and we will work with students to remember which bus they are on. We work to build independence for the last months of school. If there are any changes to transportation (such as you are picking them up or they are taking the bus when you usually pick them up), please send me an email or message so I can ensure that our end of day runs smoothly. They must have a bus pass if they are riding the bus and there is a charge for lost bus passes. If you have any questions about transportation please contact transportation at 780-963-8452.

Toys from Home - If your child uses an object (stuffy, particular car) to help make the transition from home to school more comfortable they may bring it to school. We do ask that all other toys stay at home. If toys are brought to school they will be held in their cubby until the end of the day. We appreciate your help with this matter as children become very upset if their belongings go missing.



Unique - We love that each child is unique and brings their own unique experiences and ideas to our classroom. We work hard to foster their unique gifts and talents and they grow and learn with us. Please complete the child information sheet at the beginning of the year to help us get to know your child better!



Volunteers - We enjoy and genuinely need parents and caregivers to help in the kindergarten classroom. We guarantee that if you come in you will be put to work and will be rewarded with many chuckles and opportunities to see how we spend each day. We need the month of September and most of October to ourselves, as the children and the teachers need the time to get to know each other, learn the expectations, and learn routines. By the end of October we would be very grateful to have you assist in the classroom. More information regarding how volunteering will look in our classroom will be determined in September.



Weather - Please send appropriate clothing for each day. We spend at least 2 hours a day outside and students will have more fun if they are warm, dry, and comfortable.

Week at a Glance - Each Friday I will post our week at a glance with reminders for the week and what will we be working on that week.





eXtra Clothes - Please ensure that your child has a complete extra set of clothes socks, underwear, pants, and a shirt. We will send home a note if any items need to be replenished during the year.



Younger Siblings - It is in your child's and the program's best interest to have our parent volunteers available without younger children. This not only allows your full attention to be focused on the class, but also allows for some special time between you and your kindergarten student. Thank you for making childcare arrangements for younger siblings.



Zippers - We work on building independence in kindergarten; work with your child on learning to zip their coat zipper if they cannot. Please send shoes your child can manage independently. They are always happy to be able to do things on their own and it makes getting ready more manageable, so we have more time outside.