



Thornhill Nursery School  
& Kindergarten



# Parent Information Handbook

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# WELCOME TO THORNHILL NURSERY SCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

## Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten is a non-denominational, non-profit preschool, licensed under the Ministry of Education and incorporated since 1956.

Our centre is a non-profit organization owned and operated by the parents of the children in the school. Parents are involved in policy setting, financial accountability and some administrative decision-making. The school's program operates under the guidance of fully qualified registered Early Childhood Educators (R.ECEs).

### Our Program Statement

Our mission is to provide a stimulating, challenging and progressive educational experience in a safe, nurturing and inclusive environment.

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten provides children with a strong foundation of social and academic skills that aim at developing a sense of belonging and well-being through expression and engagement in their learning environment. Growth is fostered through a challenging curriculum, balancing enriched programming with opportunities that promote creativity and social interaction through child initiated and adult supported experiences. Since 1956, our warm and nurturing environment has focused on building self-esteem and self-confidence, enabling each child to reach their unique potential, while encouraging a lifelong love for learning. Children learn best through play and hands-on experiences, incorporating indoor and outdoor play, as well as active play, rest and quiet time and consideration is given to the individual needs of the children receiving our care.

“How Does Learning Happen?” is the foundation of our program.

Foundations	Goals for Children	Expectations for Programs
<b>Belonging</b>	Every child has a sense of belonging when they are connected to others and contributes to their world.	To cultivate respectful relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults and the world around them.
<b>Well-Being</b>	Every child is developing a sense of self and health and well-being.	To nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.
<b>Engagement</b>	Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with their senses, bodies and minds.	To provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative and meaningful exploration and learning.
<b>Expression</b>	Every child is a capable communicator who is able to express themselves in many ways.	To foster communication and expression in all forms.

To this end our teachers will:

#### a) Promote the health, safety and well-being of the children, families and educators.

- All children will be signed in and out of the program each day on the attendance record.
- All children will be observed for ill health on arrival and observations documented.
- If a child is observed as unwell, the family will be asked to take the child home until well enough to return (Ill Health Policy).
- The School Director will greet all staff in the morning, to ascertain whether they are well enough to work.

- An allergy/food restriction list will be posted in each classroom, staff binders, the kitchen and the office to ensure that all staff is aware of all allergies, food restrictions and health issues.
- All staff members will be instructed on the use of an epi-pen and sign off on the individual anaphylactic forms for any child with an anaphylactic allergy (Anaphylactic Policy).
- The daily snack and lunch menus for the nursery students will be posted on the parent bulletin board, kitchen and nursery classrooms, and will be sent home monthly to families via email. Consideration is given to allergies and diet restrictions when compiling the monthly menus.
- Children will be encouraged to feed themselves to promote the development of self- help skills. They will also be encouraged but not forced to try new foods.
- The toys and equipment will be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidelines of York Region Public Health (Cleaning & Disinfecting Schedule in our Public Health Policies and Procedures Manual).
- Guidelines for hand-washing, diapering and toileting will be followed according to the instructions from York Region Public Health posted in the washroom and in the Public Health Policies & Procedures Manual.
- If there is an outbreak of infection in the centre, i.e. more than three children in any classroom away due to the same illness, York Region Public Health will be informed and the “Outbreak Policy” guidelines followed (Public Health Policies & Procedures Manual).
- It is a requirement of the Ministry of Education that an immunization record be completed and filed with the school prior to the start of the school year. A doctor’s visit is not required for your child.
- Upon employment, all staff members must provide proof of a tuberculosis test or chest x-ray, as well as provide the date of an annual health assessment, a 10-year booster for DPTP and immunization against MMR.
- Children will engage in daily outdoor play (weather permitting) as gross motor activities promote good physical development and play opportunities.
- Our school is a smoke free centre and all persons (staff, parents, students, volunteers, or visitors) are prohibited from smoking tobacco, cannabis or electronic cigarettes in the building or the playground area of the school (Smoke Free Policy).
- To protect the health of individuals in our centre, the plumbing is flushed on the first day that the school is open each week. A record of this flushing is kept on file outlining the date and time of each flushing and the name of the person that performed the flushing. This record is kept on file for at least five years (Safe Drinking Water Policy).
- The teachers and staff of Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten are bound by law and ethics to safeguard your child and family’s privacy and the confidentiality of all personal information (Privacy Policy).
- Monthly fire drills are conducted where the children learn to evacuate the building promptly with teacher guidance. Each classroom learns where to evacuate and wait until the “all clear” is given.

**b) Support positive and responsive interactions between educators, children and families.**

- The School Director or alternate will provide tours to interested parties. Staff members will be introduced to prospective families and an outline of the school’s program and focus will be explained.
- Every parent and every child will be greeted by a staff member on arriving at the school.
- Every parent and every child will be acknowledged when they leave the centre.
- The focus will be on positive behaviour for the children, building on their strengths.
- Children will be made aware of the rules and expectations in the classroom and these limits must be realistic, age-appropriate and meet the individual needs of each child.

- Staff members will focus on helping the children understand their feelings and emotions by providing support to help children regulate their own behaviour.
- Children will be encouraged to be independent in problem solving by role modelling the skills necessary to be successful in handling conflict situations with their peers.
- Staff members will focus on the deed not the doer and let the children know that aggressive behaviour is unacceptable. The children will be guided and supported in finding alternative ways to self regulate their feelings and understand their emotions.
- Natural and logical consequences will be implemented as an effective way to help the children be responsible for their own behaviour and self-regulate.
- Staff members will use positive wording when redirecting a child's behaviour by telling the child what is acceptable rather than what is unacceptable.
- Staff members will let children know that mistakes are okay. This way children learn that mistakes are a natural part of their learning.
- Directions to children will be given clearly and simply. Staff members will get down to the child's level, establishing eye contact.
- Staff members must remain calm and be consistent.
- Educators will model appropriate behaviour and act as they want the child to act.
- Staff members will give reasonable and acceptable choices to children to allow children to be involved in the decision making process.

The following are unacceptable behaviour management strategies (**Prohibited Practices**) and are **not** permitted at any time, under any circumstances.

- corporal punishment of a child;
- physical restraint of a child, such as confining a child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent;
- locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining a child or confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures;
- the use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten a child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth;
- depriving a child of basic needs including food, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or
- inflicting any bodily harm on a child including making a child eat or drink against his or her will;

If a staff member violates any of these expectations, they will be subject to disciplinary action at the discretion of the Board of Executives.

**c) Encourage and enable children to interact and communicate in a myriad of ways with each other, with educators and with their communities.**

- Staff members will role model positive communication and provide opportunities for the children to problem solve and make independent choices.

- The children will be provided opportunities for self-regulation by providing areas for quiet play and solitary activities if desired.
- The children's feelings will be acknowledged and validated.
- The environment in the school will be set up to facilitate and support positive social interactions.
- Opportunities will be provided for the children to engage in large group situations to promote self-confidence and high self-esteem, e.g. show and tell, classroom helper, etc.
- The children will be encouraged to participate in our end of year graduation show.
- The children will be viewed as being competent, capable and curious and allowed to reach their potential through exploration and inquiry.

**d) Foster exploration and inquiry that is play based. Evidence from diverse fields of study tells us that when children are playing, they are learning.**

You will see:

- A variety of different activity centres set up to provide adequate play choices.
- At a minimum, toys changed and rotated weekly to keep the children interested and curious.
- Sensory exploration activities available daily.
- Open shelving for creative and free play choices.
- Group activities that are interactive and involve a lot of hands-on components.

**Supporting Healthy Development and Learning**

- Individual goals will be set for each child, recognizing their strengths and areas for growth.
- Assessment will be ongoing through observation and one on one time with the teacher each day.
- Activities will be modified based on each child's needs and level of development.

**e) Provide both child-initiated and adult supported experiences to foster development.**

- Children will be given opportunities to make free activity choices throughout the course of the day.
- Through observation and communication, educators will vary the materials and activities based on the children's interests and cues.
- The children will rotate through teacher directed activities at the tables where one on one and/or small group learning can be facilitated.
- The focus will be on the process versus the product to encourage good self-esteem and confidence.
- The number of transitions in the program will be kept to a minimum to reduce the down time for the children.
- Children will be encouraged to take on leadership roles in the classroom such as daily helper, classroom helper, etc.

**f) Provide many opportunities for a range of experiences that support each child's learning and development.**

- Each classroom will have a variety of centres open for the children that encourage exploration and learning.
- Our program is a multi-cultural, non-denominational curriculum that promotes the learning and celebration

of all families enrolled in our school while exploring and recognizing other cultures.

- Assessment of each child will take place at the beginning of the school year and goals established for each individual student.
- Educators will engage with a student to facilitate development of individual goals for that child.
- Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten will work closely with Early Intervention Services of York to assist in the development of an Individual Program Plan (IPP).

**g) Incorporate a range of different experience modalities including indoor and outdoor play, quiet play, rest and quiet time considering the individual needs of the children.**

- Our program encompasses indoor and outdoor play experiences daily.
- Indoor play experiences include free play, sensory activities, creative art, dramatic centre, math and science activities, carpet toys, manipulatives and building toys, puzzles, book centre, music activities, blocks and imaginative play activities.
- Teacher directed activities that involve a creative or cognitive component are provided daily where the teacher works either one on one or with a small group of children at the tables.
- French is introduced daily through songs, group activities, snack time, etc.
- Outdoor play will consist of a minimum of 2 hours per day for those students in attendance for the extended program longer than 6 hours.
- Outdoor play activities include riding toys, climber, balls, hoops, balancing toys as well as imaginative play on our fire truck climber.
- When inclement weather prevents outdoor play activities, indoor gross motor activities are provided using beanbags, parachute play, scarves and other music and movement activities.
- A nutritious snack is provided for the nursery children mid-morning, as well as a balanced lunch for those children staying for the afternoon session. The JK and SK children bring in their own snacks and lunches, which are monitored to ensure healthy, balanced meals are being provided from home.
- The children bring in their own labeled water bottles which are available to them at any time throughout the day and refilled as needed.
- Children enrolled in the program for six hours or more per day are provided the opportunity to sleep/rest or engage in quiet time activities based on instructions provided by parents.
- Age appropriate field trips are part of the curriculum for the JK and SK groups.
- Special community guests are invited in to enrich all programs throughout the year.
- Guided reading program at the JK and SK level, as well as for nursery children who demonstrate reading readiness.

**h) Foster engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the program and their children.**

- Each month, a newsletter and calendar are sent out to parents outlining upcoming events and items of interest as well as classroom highlights from the previous month. Monthly food menus are also provided to the Nursery families.
- In September, a parent orientation meeting and curriculum evening is held to provide a forum for the sharing of information and an introduction of the teaching staff. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend this meeting, which provides relevant information to families and an opportunity to collaborate with the teaching staff on goal setting strategies for their child.

- In January, parent/teacher interviews are held to provide an opportunity to review the progress of the children and re-establish goals for future learning.
- An open-door policy facilitates the daily sharing of information regarding the status of each child in the program.
- Families with special skill sets such as music, community helper, etc. are encouraged to share their talents with our educators and children to enrich our program.
- Parents may volunteer to serve on our Executive Board, which meets approximately every month and helps with the administrative functions of our program.
- Parent bulletin boards are located in the school's entrance area where items of interest to parents and local community events are posted.
- Throughout the school year, teachers may take photographs of daily routines, special events and ongoing classroom activities. These photographs may be used for classroom documentation as well as, a year-end presentation at our graduation concerts.
- A copy of the school's handbook, which includes the program statement, is located in the school office, on the parent bulletin board and on our website [www.tnsk.ca](http://www.tnsk.ca) and is available to all families and members of the community.

**\*\*Studies show that a child's school experience is enriched through a triad: school – parents – the community. Not only does this enrich the experience for the children, it is very rewarding for parents. Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten's mandate is to encourage parents to take an active role in their child's educational experience and to collaborate with the staff to provide the best experience possible for all.\*\***

**i) Actively engage with community partners and provide opportunities for the children and families to develop close connections with a range of community supports.**

You will see:

- Educators using local community libraries to access resources for the classroom.
- Items of interest from our families and members of the community posted on our Parent Board in an effort
- The support of local community events such as the "Mom to Mom" sale held each Fall and Spring.
- TNSK utilizes the local parks in the area for nature walks.
- The sharing of our space for church events as well as local community events held after school hours.

**j) Strengthen the capacity of educators to collaborate effectively with children, families and their colleagues through the provision of ongoing opportunities for continuous professional learning.**

You will see:

- Monthly meetings where the staff members have an opportunity to share and collaborate. In harnessing and embracing the collaborative power of our diverse team, we will achieve results together that are greater than any individual effort.
- Professional development opportunities emailed to staff and posted on the staff bulletin board located at the entrance of the school, in an effort to promote ongoing continuous learning for our educators.
- Staff members who attend an outside professional development workshop will have an opportunity to share new-found knowledge with the entire teaching staff at the next scheduled staff meeting.
- By working closely and communicating openly with parents, fosters a greater understanding of parents' expectations, therefore creating a more harmonious relationship.



- Thornhill Nursery School and Kindergarten is a centre that both educates and learns. The children are learning to be successful in a world that is on the cusp of new technologies and enhanced information flow. The educators are continuously striving for new information to thereby provide the latest knowledge to the children in their care.
- Our Early Childhood Educators are registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators and participate in the Continuous Professional Learning programs (CPL) offered by the College.

**k) Use many languages to document and review the experience of the children and the educators in order to:**

- Provide an ongoing record of development.
- Provide tools to enable educators to reflect on the impact of their activities and strategies; and
- Provide a record that enables parents to review and explore the developmental trajectory of their child.

You will see:

- Portfolios of the children's work that clearly demonstrates the learning curve for each child. Work accumulated throughout the year is collated into a special bound book given to the parents at the end of the school year.
- Daily logs for each classroom with observations and notes for the day recorded for easy reference.
- Children's work displayed on bulletin boards in the classrooms and hallways to show parents the developmental trajectory of their child.
- A year-end report card that provides a detailed description of each child's development in the areas of social/emotional, language, cognitive, creative and physical growth.
- Parent/teacher conferences in January each year as a means to confer with families on the progress status of their child. If there are concerns that need to be addressed, team meetings may be set up where the parents, teachers and school director meet to establish an action plan with specific goals for the child.
- A slideshow and/or a link with photos taken throughout the year offered to parents at our year-end graduation. This slide show documents many of the activities that the children engaged in throughout the course of the year.
- Please check out our Facebook and Instagram for ongoing activities.

**Our Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

We will create an environment that embraces change and is open to new ideas. Ongoing professional development will be an integral part of our mandate. Through this program statement and the monitoring of it, we will continue to be committed to delivering an inclusive program that promotes high quality care and education in a positive, healthy learning environment where children, families and educators are co-learners.

## SCHOOL PROGRAM

### Program Options

The Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten program has been designed by Registered Early Childhood Educators. It includes the following program options:

- A hands-on **Pre-Nursery** full day (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) **or** half day (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) program for children aged 18 months to 2 ½ years of age.
  - Monday to Friday
  - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
  - Tuesdays and Thursdays
- An extensive **Nursery** full day (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) **or** half day (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) program for children aged 2 ½ to 3 ½ years of age.
  - Monday to Friday
  - Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays
  - Tuesdays and Thursdays
- An enriched **JK and SK** full day (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.) **or** half day (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.) program for children 4 to 5 years of age.
  - Monday to Friday
- An extended program for both **Nursery and JK /SK** offering care from 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. and/or 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. is available for an additional fee.

### Summer Camp

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten also offers a fun-filled summer camp program for children ages 18 months - 5 years old encompassing arts and crafts, music, indoor/outdoor play, cooking, nature walks and special themed days. A team of dedicated staff heads up this exciting program and as we offer your children an unforgettable summer. More information on dates and hours of operation are released each February based on the needs of the community.

### Multicultural Events

The Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten program includes the celebration of a variety of multicultural events throughout the school year. The purpose of celebrating multicultural events is to enable the children to share knowledge and experiences, while nurturing an awareness and respect for a variety of traditions and behaviours that shape our world. It is not the intent of this program to instill the beliefs of any group or culture to children attending Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten.

### Our Staff

Our staff members are fully qualified and experienced. Our registered ECE teachers and assistants have been chosen for their warm and caring attitude towards young children. Child/teacher ratios are based on Ministry standards, i.e. Toddler 10:2, Preschool 16:2, and Kindergarten 13:1.

### Facilities

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten is located within the Holy Trinity Church on Brooke Street in Thornhill. Facilities include:

Indoor: four well-equipped separate classrooms.

Outdoor: a playground and adjacent park area.

### Fee Schedule

Our current base fee schedule is available on our website at [www.tnsk.ca](http://www.tnsk.ca).

**\*\*We are not currently participating in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCCS) for 2023/2024. We have chosen to opt out at this time.**

## SCHOOL POLICIES

### Anaphylactic Policy

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten recognizes the potentially serious consequences of children with allergies. These allergies may include a condition known as anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction brought about by exposure to certain foods or other substances. Tree nuts, peanuts and peanut by-products, such as peanut oil and peanut butter, are the most common allergens to trigger an anaphylactic reaction. Other foods such as sesame seeds, strawberries, fish, shellfish, wheat and soy, as well as non-food items such as latex and bee stings can also bring about a life-threatening reaction.

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten will make every reasonable effort to reduce the risk to children with severe allergies or anaphylaxis. **A policy of no peanuts/tree nuts or any other nut is strictly enforced within the centre and every food item is carefully examined before serving it to the children.** We request that all families support this policy and help to reinforce the safety of all the children. Creating an environment that reduces the risk to severely allergic or anaphylactic children requires the co-operation and understanding of all members of the school, including staff, children and parents.

Any child with an anaphylactic allergy, must provide **two** Epi-pens labeled and in their original pharmacy containers, to be kept on site.

### Bagged Lunch & Healthy Eating Policy

Children over 44 months of age may bring a packed lunch to school provided that the following criteria are observed:

- **No peanut or tree nut products as per our “Anaphylactic Policy”.**
- Food is not permitted to be shared among the students.
- All snack/lunch bags and containers must be labelled with your child’s name and bags must contain an ice pack unless the lunch box is independently insulated to protect perishable food items.
- This information will be forwarded to all parents in the program to ensure compliance and understanding of this policy.
- Staff members will check the contents of the snack/lunch bags to ensure that they meet the criteria.
- We are promoting **healthy** food choices at Thornhill Nursery School. Please refrain from sending cookies, chips, and sugary treats to school.

Children under 44 months of age will be provided with snacks and a lunch by Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten. These menus are posted on the parent bulletin board located at the school entrance and are e-mailed monthly.

#### Snacks

All snacks must adhere to the Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA) which states: snacks are to consist of foods from two different food groups (based on the Canada Food Guide) that will promote good dental health and not interfere with a child’s appetite for lunch time. Please note that small items such as grapes are considered a choking hazard for children under 4 years of age and must be cut lengthwise in half.

#### Bagged Lunch

Children bringing a packed lunch to school must adhere to the following criteria:

- Lunches need to be part of a daily regime that meets the nutritional requirements based on the Canada Food Guide.
- Food requiring heating will only be done in a microwavable safe container.
- If a child forgets lunch, TNS&K will supply a lunch based on the Nursery Lunch Menu for that particular day which meets Canada Food Guide criteria. A small fee may be levied for providing lunch.

### Emergency Management Policy and Procedures

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten has a policy outlining Emergency Management protocol for situations such as: internal or external environmental disasters, natural disasters or emergency situations due to external threats. In the event of an emergency, all parents will be advised via email or telephone regarding the current status of the emergency. If parents wish to review the full policy, a copy will be made available for review.

## **Field Trip Policy**

Age appropriate field trips are part of the curriculum for the JK and SK groups only. A school bus will be used for all off-site field trips. There is usually one field trip in the fall and one in the spring. Parents are welcome to attend after reviewing our field trip protocol.

## **Late Pick Up Policy**

Additional late fees will be incurred when your child remains at Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten after closing time (5:00 p.m.). Late fees are payable at \$ 5.00 per 5 minutes (every 5 minutes or part thereof) directly to the attending staff member.

Please note if after a reasonable effort has been made by staff members to reach the parents and emergency contacts after 5:15 p.m. with no success, the School Director will be notified to assist with further action. This measure will only take effect if no prior communication from parents has been established.

## **Medication Policy**

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten may only administer medications such as Epi-Pens/puffers/Benadryl/Tylenol, etc. after a parent completes a *Medical Consent Form* or an "Individual Plan for a Child with Anaphylactic Allergy" form. All medication must be in its original packaging. Any medication administered will be done so by the Director, or in their absence, a designate.

## **NSF Cheque Policy**

Any direct deposits declined or cheques returned from the bank will be subject to a \$10 NSF service fee. Payments should be re-issued promptly with the \$10 service charge added. Repeat offenders may be asked to provide cash payment only.

## **Parent Issues and Concerns Policy and Procedures**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 1 business day. The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

## **Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

## **Conduct**

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party. If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the School Director and/or Assistant School Director.

## Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit <http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidthereportingabuse/index.aspx>

## Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and the School Director and/or Assistant School Director in responding to issue/concern:
<b>Program Room-Related</b>  E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to -the classroom staff directly <i>or</i> -the School Director and/or Assistant School Director.	-Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised <i>or</i> -arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 2 business days.  Document the issues/concerns in detail. <i>Documentation should include:</i> - the date and time the issue/concern was received; - the name of the person who received the issue/concern; -the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; -the details of the issue/concern; and -any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
<b>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</b>  E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to -the School Director and/or Assistant School Director.	Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 1 business day or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.
<b>Staff, Student / Volunteer Related, School Director, and/or Assistant School Director</b>	Raise the issue or concern to -the individual directly or the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student <i>or</i> -the School Director and/or Assistant School Director.  All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the School Director and/or Assistant School Director as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.	Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.

**Escalation of Issues or Concerns:** Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to The Board of Executives. Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

## Privacy Policy

All staff members and Board members of Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten are bound by law and ethics to safeguard your child and family's privacy and the confidentiality of all personal information see Program Statement, Sec. a). This includes:

- obtaining only the information necessary and related to his/her education and safety
- keeping accurate and up-to-date records
- safeguarding the records in our possession
- sharing information with other educators and organizations on a "need to know" basis, where required, for his/her safety
- disclosing information to third parties only with the express consent of the child's legal guardian, or when required to do so by law
- retaining/destroying records in accordance with the law

The registration of your child as a student at our school implies consent for the collection, use and disclosure of your personal information for purposes related to the education and safety of your child. As noted above, other purposes require the express consent of the child's legal guardian.

## Refund Policy

All families are required to provide a deposit cheque in the amount of one month's tuition fee upon registration. ***This deposit is applied to June's tuition only and is non-refundable.*** A child may be withdrawn from the program by providing written notice, **with the forfeiture of the deposit and registration fee (if applicable).** Throughout the year, any deposited tuition is **non-refundable**.

***Fees will not be refunded*** for temporary illness, leave of absence or extended vacation as the school's expenses continue at the same level even when some children are absent.

## Registration Policy

Priority status for registration is as follows:

1. Currently enrolled children.
2. Siblings of currently enrolled children.
3. Siblings of alumni.
4. Outside registrants.

Registration is accepted on a first come, first served basis. For outside registrants, families will be notified of availability based on the date of their inquiry.

Subject to space availability, a child is considered enrolled when the application forms are complete and submitted with the deposit, the registration fee (if applicable), and signed Rotessa agreement. Children must be immunized against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, and haemophilus b. ***A child may only attend school when all medical forms are submitted and proof of immunization is on file.*** Parents choosing to opt out of immunization must submit a "Statement of Conscience or Religious Belief Affidavit" to put on file and attendance at school will be prohibited should any outbreak occur.

## Safe Arrival and Dismissal Policy and Procedures

### Purpose

This policy and the procedures within help support the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care, including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the child care centre as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children.

This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in care.

Note: definitions for terms used throughout this policy are provided in a Glossary at the end of the document.

## Policy

### General

- Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten will ensure that any child receiving child care at the child care centre is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent/guardian has provided written authorization the child care centre may release the child to.
- Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten only dismiss children into the care of their parent/guardian or another authorized individual. The centre will not release any children from care without supervision.
- Where a child does not arrive in care as expected or is not picked up as expected, staff must follow the safe arrival and dismissal procedures set out below.

### Procedures

#### Accepting a child into care

1. When accepting a child into care at the time of drop-off, program staff in the room must:
  - greet the parent/guardian and child.
  - ask the parent/guardian how the child's evening/morning has been and if there are any changes to the child's pick-up procedure (i.e., someone other than the parent/guardian picking up). Where the parent/guardian has indicated that someone other than the child's parent/guardians will be picking up, the staff must confirm that the person is listed on the child's registration package/ emergency contact list or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note or email).
  - document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record.
  - sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.

#### **Where a child has not arrived in care as expected**

1. Where a child does not arrive at the child care centre and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:
  - inform the School Director and/or Assistant School Director and they must commence contacting the child's parent/guardian no later than 10:00 am. The classroom staff, School Director and/or Assistant School Director shall contact the child's parent/guardian (either by, calling parent/guardian or sending emails). The classroom staff, School Director and/or Assistant School Director must contact at least once and leave message or must make contact with an adult to confirm absence etc.
  - if no response is received, it is up to the discretion of the School Director and/or Assistant School Director to take alternative steps to contact emergency contacts and/or authorities if needed.
2. Once the child's absence has been confirmed, program staff shall document the child's absence on the attendance record and any additional information about the child's absence in the daily written record.

#### Releasing a child from care

1. The staff that is supervising the child at the time of pick-up shall only release the child to the child's parent/guardian or individual that the parent/guardian has **provided written authorization** that the child care may release the child to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual), they must:
  - confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian/authorized individual.
  - where the above is not possible, ask the parent/guardian/authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian/authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.
  - If a child is hesitant to go with a pick up person (as they were expecting a parent) or person does not have photo identification then staff, the School Director and/or Assistant School Director will call parent to confirm pick up.

### **Where a child has not been picked up as expected (before centre closes)**

1. Where a parent/guardian has previously communicated with the staff a specific time or timeframe that their child is to be picked up from care and the child has not been picked up 15 minutes after the specific time indicated to staff, the School Director and/or Assistant School Director shall contact the parent/guardian and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up. The parent/guardian will be charged for the aftercare hours.
  - Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian, staff must contact School Director and/or Assistant School Director who will call again and leave another message for the parent/guardian. Where the individual picking up the child is an authorized individual and their contact information is available, the staff shall proceed with contacting the individual to confirm pick-up as per the parent/guardian's instructions or leave a voice message to contact the centre.
  - Where the staff has not heard back from the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child the staff shall contact emergency contact, wait until program closes and then refer to procedures under "where a child has not been picked up and program is closed").

### **Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed**

1. Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by the indicated program, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
2. One staff shall stay with the child, while a second staff proceeds with calling the parent/guardian to advise that the child is still in care and inquire their pick-up time. In the case where the person picking up the child is an authorized individual, the staff shall contact the parent/guardian first and then proceed to contact the authorized individual responsible for pick-up if unable to reach the parent/guardian].
3. If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contacting authorized individuals listed on the child's file, etc.
4. Where the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or any other authorized individual listed on the child's file (e.g., the emergency contacts) by the indicated program, the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS). Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

### **Glossary**

*Individual authorized to pick-up/authorized individual:* a person that the parent/guardian has advised the child care program staff in writing can pick-up their child from care.

*Licensee:* The individual or corporation named on the licence issued by the Ministry of Education responsible for the operation and management of the child care centre and home child agency.

*Parent/guardian:* A person having lawful custody of a child or a person who has demonstrated a settled intention to treat a child as a child of his or her family.

### **Regulatory Requirements: Ontario Regulation 137/15**

#### **Safe arrival and dismissal policy**

**50. Every licensee shall ensure that each child care centre it operates and each premises where it oversees the provision of home child care has a policy respecting the safe arrival and dismissal of children that,**

**(a) provides that a child may only be released from the child care centre or home child care premises,**

**(i) to individuals indicated by a child's parent, or**

**(ii) in accordance with written permission from a child's parent to release the child from the program at a specified time without supervision; and**

**(b) sets out the steps that must be taken if,**

**(i) a child does not arrive as expected at the centre or home child care premises, or**



## School Closing Policy

In the event that the children need to be evacuated from the school premises, our emergency location for pick up is Thornhill Public School on Arnold Avenue, (905) 889-1566.

There may be rare occasions when weather events, such as winter storms, occur and we will need to close Thornhill Nursery School and Kindergarten. While we endeavour to keep the school open, closures may be necessary when facilities or roadways are not safe for students and staff members.

In the event that a school closure is necessary, a message will be left on the school answering machine by 7:00a.m. at 905-889-4543, an email will be sent to families, and a notice will be posted to social media. Should inclement weather approach during the course of the school day, it may be necessary to close our facilities early. In such an event families will be called and asked to pick up their children early.

## School Closing – Holidays - Policy

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten operates from September to June. The school observes the same Winter and March breaks as the York Region Public School Board. In addition, we take two P.A. days per year, in January and in June.

In addition, we observe the following Statutory Holidays: Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Victoria Day. Remembrance Day will be added if/when it becomes law in Ontario. A full calendar of the year's events is distributed to parents in September or upon registration.

## Serious Occurrence Policy

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten is required by our licensing agency to post information about serious occurrences that happen at our school to keep families well informed. This serious occurrence notification form must be posted at the centre in a visible area for a period of ten days. A serious occurrence could include a serious injury to a child, fire or other disaster on site or a complaint about a service standard.

## Settling in Period Policy

All children are on a two (2) month probation period. Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten welcomes all children provided that their needs can be met in our school. If a child is not managing well in the classroom (e.g. problems with toileting, difficulty settling down, disruptive behaviour, etc.), the School Director may suggest that the parents either keep their child at school for a shorter period of time for a day or two or, alternatively, ask the child to attend school on a more consistent basis. Ongoing discussion between the School Director and the family will help determine what strategy would best suit the situation and help the child to cope better in the program.

If after two months the School Director feels the child is not benefiting from the program, other measures may be taken, such as professional assessment and intervention. In extreme cases, the family may be asked to provide an aide worker at their expense or, as a last result, withdrawal from the school.

## Sickness Policy

**If you are unsure whether your child is healthy enough to attend school, please follow these recommendations and guidelines in accordance with York Region Public Health before making your decision:**

- **Colds** – A child who has a cold should be kept home for the first few days. This is when the virus is most contagious, and this helps to keep all our students and staff healthy.
- **Contagious Disease** – If your child has a contagious disease such as Chicken Pox, please advise the school **immediately**. Your physician will give you a timeline for return to school.
- **Discharge from the Eyes** – Any child with white or yellow eye discharge, eye pain, or redness in the eye, eyelid or skin surrounding the eye should remain at home and be checked by a physician. This could be **pink eye**, an extremely contagious virus. Your child may return to school after 24 hours of treatment.

- **Fever** – Usually a fever is a sign the body is fighting an infection. Fever is defined as an elevation above the normal temperature:

Method	Normal temperature range
Rectum	36.6°C to 37.9°C (97.9°F to 100.2°F)
Mouth	35.5°C to 37.5°C (95.9°F to 99.5°F)
Armpit	36.5°C to 37.5°C (97.8°F to 99.5°F)
Ear	35.8°C to 37.9°C (96.4°F to 100.2°F)

**A child should be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school without any over the counter medication**

- **Influenza** – A child who displays more than one of the following symptoms should stay at home and be checked by his/her physician; fever, persistent coughing, congestion, chills or muscle aches.
- **Rashes** – A child with an unidentified rash that is spreading and/or getting worse should remain at home and be checked by a physician.
- **Swollen Throat** – A child should remain home and be checked by a physician for strep throat. This is extremely contagious, and the child should not return to school until 24 hours after the start of medication.
- **Vomiting and Diarrhea** – The child should **stay at home for 48 hours** after the symptoms have ceased.

Parents/Guardians will be notified immediately if the child is not well during school hours. Parents/Guardians will be asked to come and pick up the child and will be notified as to when the child may return to school.

Our program includes outdoor play each day, weather permitting. Therefore, if your child is not well enough to go outside, they probably should remain at home. Children may demonstrate through behaviour and symptoms that they are not well. If a staff member feels that your child is not well enough to be at school, you will be contacted to pick up your child. The child may be separated from the class until a parents or alternate is available for pick up.

## **Sleep/Rest Policy**

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten will provide an opportunity for rest or sleep to any child that requires it. The following outlines the protocol for sleeping or resting.

- Parents will be consulted at the time of enrolment to determine whether their child will require sleep or rest time and how long they wish their child to sleep. Throughout the year, ongoing consultation with parents will determine if the child still requires a sleep/rest time.
- Each child that requires or requests a rest/sleep time will be allocated their own sleeping cot or mat with their name on it.
- The sheets & blankets will be washed and changed weekly or more often if required.
- There will be sufficient light in the sleeping area to conduct visual checks.
- A sleep log will be kept recording the time the child lies down on the cot, the time they fall asleep and the time they get up.
- One staff member will be assigned to the sleep area and will perform visual checks on each child, looking for indicators of distress or unusual behaviours. Approximately 45 minutes into the sleep room routine, the supervising teacher will document that a visual check was performed on each child in the sleep log.
- Any signs of distress or unusual behaviours during sleep time will be documented on a separate comment page in our sleep log.
- Parents of children that sleep or rest at the school will be advised of our sleep policy and procedures regarding sleep.
- Parents will be advised if there are any significant changes in a child's sleeping pattern or behaviour during sleep and adjustments made in consultation with parents.

## Smoke Free Policy

Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten is a smoke free centre. All persons (staff, parents, students, volunteers, or visitors) are prohibited from smoking in the building or playground area of the school. This includes smoking tobacco or cannabis as well as the use of electronic cigarettes. Any individual found in non-compliance of this policy will be asked to leave the premises.

## Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy

This policy is designed to ensure the safety and well-being of the children in our care. Volunteers and students will always be supervised by a staff member and never permitted to be left alone with a child or group of children. Students and volunteers will not be counted in staff: child ratios. No person under the age of 18 will be permitted to supervise a child alone and all volunteers and students must review the school's policies and procedures and submit the required documentation before access is allowed to the program. This policy will be reviewed with all volunteers and students at the outset and reviewed annually thereafter.

## Wait List Policy

In the event that a wait list is required, the School Director will keep a Registration Inquiry Log with all relevant information (date, contact information and program of interest). Families will be contacted once registration has been opened up to outside families for the following school year based on date of original inquiry and program of interest availability. No fees are required to place your name on our Registration Inquiry Log. All information on our Wait List will remain private and confidential.

## SCHOOL ROUTINES

### Arrivals

The morning program starts at 9:00 a.m. Children may be dropped off at any time after 8:45 a.m. Drop off earlier than 8:45 a.m. will be subject to an extended program fee.

The **Pre Nursery and Nursery** children should be dropped off inside the school. Children will be greeted at the door by their teacher(s) who will help them put their belongings away and enter the classroom.

The **JK/SK** children should be dropped off in the enclosed outdoor playground (weather permitting), and the staff member on duty should be advised of your child's arrival. Should the weather be inclement at the beginning of the day, please bring your child inside for drop off.

For the **Before and After Care** Program, arrival and departure location will be dependent upon the time and season.

### Departures

**Pre Nursery and Nursery** children being picked up at 12:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m. will be playing outside the school in the playground (weather permitting), and the **JK/SK** children will be dismissed inside the school.

### Birthdays

At Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten we love to celebrate birthdays. You are welcome to bring in a special snack on that day to share with your child's class. ***The Health Department has advised the school that homemade food may not be served to the children. All food must be peanut/tree-nut free, store bought and in the original packaging (unopened). There must be a label stating that the product is peanut free.*** We ask that you keep it simple, e.g. mini cupcakes, muffins, cookies or ice-cream sandwiches and be mindful of food allergies within your child's classroom. Please let your child's teacher know in advance if you plan on bringing in a birthday treat.

### Pick Up Authorization

No child will be discharged to another adult/parent unless prior authorization from the parent is received. Formal identification with picture will be required before the child is released to a person unknown to staff. This may include: a valid drivers license, photo card or passport.

## Communication Media

### Multi-Media Images

Throughout the school year, teachers may take photographs of daily routines and special events in order to compile a year-end presentation for our graduation concerts and monthly documentation on Facebook and Instagram. A release form authorizing the use of your child's image in any of these multi-media presentations, including Facebook, Instagram and marketing/promoting Thornhill Nursery School and Kindergarten in advertising, must be signed by parents at the beginning of the school year. No photographs will be used for any other purpose without the written consent of parents.

### Monthly Newsletter, Calendar and Nursery Menus

Each month you will receive an electronic newsletter and calendar outlining the upcoming events at the school. Please read these carefully and post the calendar at home to help you remember the special activities throughout the month. If you do not receive these documents by the beginning of each month, please inform the school office.

### Parent/Teacher Interviews

Parent/teacher interviews are held annually, in January, to discuss your child's progress in the school. Communication between parents and teachers is an on- going process, and if there are any major concerns regarding your child, you will be advised prior to this time. At the end of the school year, a progress report from your child's teacher will be sent home.

### Dress

Children should be dressed in suitable play clothes and should have their legs covered in the winter months as they sit and play on the floor. Try and dress your child in clothes that can be managed to promote independence at washroom time.

Make sure you provide suitable outerwear for your child, as outdoor play is part of our daily program (weather permitting). Outdoor play will consist of a minimum of 2 hours per day for those students in attendance for the extended program longer than 6 hours.

### First Day of School

While we acknowledge that in the beginning, separation from parents is challenging, we encourage parents to separate quickly to help facilitate the adjustment to school. We anticipate the JK/SK students to stay independently on the first day of school with limited parental accompaniment.

### Name Tags/Extra Clothes

All removable clothing, such as hats, neck warmers, waterproof mittens, jackets, sweaters, leggings, snowsuits, boots and shoes should be well marked with your child's name.

Parents should provide indoor shoes and a change of clothes (seasonally appropriate) for their child to be left at school in case of accidents or wetting of clothes during water-play. These clothes should also be clearly labelled with your child's name and put in a Ziploc bag with your child's name written on the outside.

We have partnered with Mabel's Labels as a fundraising event for Thornhill Nursery School and Kindergarten. Please visit [campaigns.mabelslabels.com](https://campaigns.mabelslabels.com) and search for: Thornhill Nursery School.

### Parking

In order to ensure the safety of all the children, parents should park in the south parking lot of the church. No parking is permitted on the east side of Brooke Street. The **north** parking lot adjacent to the playground is for **staff parking only** and access must be kept clear. Please hold your child's hand while escorting them through the Staff Only Parking Lot adjacent the playground.

### Portfolio Bags

Children's artwork is sent home in a Thornhill Nursery School & Kindergarten take-home bag at the end of each week. This bag is yours to keep. We only ask that you return the bag at the beginning of each week to facilitate the filing of artwork. If you return to the school for subsequent years, we ask that the bag be returned for the duration of your child's stay with us. Please look through the bag with your child as your child has worked hard and takes pride in sharing this work with you. Important information for parents is often sent home in these take-home bags as well. The replacement cost for lost or misplaced bags is **\$10.00**.

### Treasures/Show and Tell

Children in attendance on designated Treasure days are encouraged to bring **one** treasure to school to show their friends, e.g. a toy, book, nature item, etc. These treasures should not be valuable items and should be clearly marked with your child's name. **NO WEAPONS PLEASE**. Further details will be provided by your child's teacher(s) at the beginning of the school year.

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Parent Participation**

Parent participation is encouraged and families have the option to serve on the school's Executive Committee. In addition, attendance at the Annual General meeting and Parent Orientation Information meeting is highly recommended.

### **The Executive and Its Responsibilities**

Members of the Executive are parents in the school, or interested members of the community, who serve on a voluntary basis. They reflect the goals of TNS&K and have the following specific duties and responsibilities:

- Determining and supporting the philosophy of the school, its objectives and goals;
- Establishing and/or approving all administrative policies;
- Defining the duties and responsibilities of the members;
- Attending monthly meetings;
- Adhering to the Articles and By-laws of the Corporation;
- Ensuring all legal requirements are met;
- Meeting all financial obligations;
- Adopting and supporting the annual budget;
- Maintaining the history, archives, and business files of the school.