

NANAIMO CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

EARLY CARE AND LEARNING

PARENT HANDBOOK

FOR PRESCHOOL AND JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

2022-2023

Nanaimo Christian School
www.ncsnanaimo.com



Nanaimo Christian School

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHO WE ARE AT NCS EARLY CARE AND LEARNING

About Us

NCS ECL is a non-profit, Christian-based, licensed child care program. NCS ECL is a part of Nanaimo Christian School. We are committed to providing quality childcare and learning opportunities.

Philosophy

NCS ECL believes that children learn best through play and exploration. We believe that each child is a unique individual created by God and it is our pleasure to help them discover all that God has called them to be. We believe in doing this by providing the children with an age appropriate environment, indoors and outdoors, that is designed to foster creativity, curiosity and social interaction, all in a loving Christian atmosphere.

Staff

The staff are dedicated to providing care and educational experiences for your child. The staff are fully qualified educators who are regularly upgrading by attending workshops, seminars, conferences and monthly staff meetings. The staff also have valid First Aid and clear criminal record checks. The motivation of our work is rooted in our individual and corporate commitment to and love for Jesus Christ.

WHAT WE OFFER AT NCS EARLY CARE AND LEARNING

Pre-School

Who can enroll

All children ages 3 & 4 are eligible to enroll for preschool.

What does our preschool program offer

Our preschool is rooted in emergent curriculum philosophy. What this means is that our educators are constantly observing and documenting the children's explorations to see where and how we can build on their interests. This allows our educators to interweave the development of literacy, mathematics, creative exploration, motor skills and social skills, all while the children are simply enjoying something they are already curious about. In emergent curriculum we also focus on the process, not the product. We believe that this allows young children to develop a love of learning and a desire to explore more of the world around them. Our preschool embraces a love of nature and all the benefits that exist for children who spend regular amounts of time outdoors. We will experience daily time outdoors, rain or shine.

Junior Kindergarten

Who can enroll

Junior kindergarten is for children 4 year olds who will be enrolling in Kindergarten in the fall or 5 year olds that are not quite ready for Kindergarten.

What does our Junior Kindergarten program offer

Like our preschool our Jr. Kindergarten program is rooted in emergent curriculum philosophy. What this means is that our educators are constantly observing the children's explorations to see where and how we can build on their interests. This allows our educators to interweave the development of literacy, mathematics, creative exploration, motor skills and social skills, all while the children are simply enjoying

something they are already curious about. This is in keeping with the NCS K-12 philosophy of letting children's interests guide their learning.

So what is different about Junior Kindergarten? Our Junior Kindergarten educators work closely with our NCS Kindergarten teachers to develop a program that will best prepare our students for their transition to kindergarten. Junior Kindergarten has smaller class sizes allowing for more direct time spent per student. The main focus is on fostering children's social emotional development so that they are ready to enter a larger classroom setting. Just like preschool, Junior Kindergarten also embraces a love of nature and spends daily time outdoors, rain or shine. This provides yet another important preparation for NCS kindergarten where the outdoor classroom is an integral part of their experience.

POLICIES

Guidance Policy

We believe and understand that each child is an individual with different needs and abilities. Therefore we feel it is necessary to use a variety of guidance techniques in order to assist children in developing respect, self-control, self confidence and sensitivity in their interactions with others. Staff will strive to be positive role models, showing respect for children, parents, co-workers and their environment. Guiding children's behavior is an ongoing process and it is our hope that together we can assist your child by using these positive strategies.

The techniques used are as follows:

1. Establishing clear, consistent, and simple limits in a positive way. Ex. "Chairs are for sitting on."
2. Straightforward explanations for limits. Stating what is expected, rather than posing a question. Ex. "We sit on chairs so that we don't fall off and get hurt."
3. Allowing time for response to expectations. Ex. "In five minutes, it will be time to clean up."
4. Focus on behavior, rather than the child. This will preserve the child's integrity and offer positive guidance for learning. Ex – "When you grab the truck, Sam feels angry."
5. Reinforcing appropriate behavior. Ex. "That was kind of you to share with Kathy."
6. Gain a child's attention in a respectful way by approaching individually, stating their name, using eye contact, getting down to their level and using a calm, controlled voice.
7. Reminding. Ex. "Remember, the bikes need to stay on the path."
8. Redirect to an alternate activity when necessary.
9. Model problem-solving skills:
 - a. provide coping skills (acknowledge problem)
 - b. pose helpful questions
 - c. if necessary, state a solution
 - d. summarize
10. Provide a choice. Ex. "You can sit quietly at the circle or you can choose a puzzle. You decide."
11. Natural / Logical consequences. Ex. "Yes, I can see the paint spilled. Here's a sponge, let's wipe it up."
12. Setting up the program space in a way that encourages appropriate play .
13. Provide an opportunity for the child to have some "time away" if they need to gain self-control. Time away is a method used to show children that being redirected from an unfavorable situation to a more calming

area allows them to manage their own behaviours. When a child displays the same inappropriate behavior repeatedly, even after verbal intervention by staff, the child is given the choice to either change the inappropriate behaviour or leave the activity they are involved in and go to a quiet space in another area of the room. The staff will go, when the child is calmer, and discuss better ways to solve his/ her problem in the future, and/or engage the child in a dialogue on this subject. When the child has regained control of his/her emotional and physical state, the staff person will invite the child to participate in the activity with the group. At no time will the child be unsupervised.

In addition, staff will:

- Strive to recognize and identify the child's feelings in situations that may cause difficulties for her/him. Holding or physically restraining a child is only used if she/he presents a physical danger, either to self or peers, this technique will only be used as a last resort and be implemented by staff that have had the appropriate training. Such restraint will protect the child until she/he is once again in control of her/himself. Parents will be notified if used.
- Supervise the child at all times and will not remove the child to an unsupervised area as a means of discipline.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to ask questions of staff if they are unclear about the handling of any incident within the Centre. As partners, guiding your child through these key developmental years, it is desirable that staff and parents work closely and honestly together. We will do our best to keep parents informed of activities, interests, and progressions.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to speak to any of our educators, or the Director by email terri.vanek-veenstra@ncsnanaimo.com or at 250-754-4512 ext. 109 or NCS Admin at 250-754-4512.

Food and Drink Policy

Snacks

All of our programs are active programs and it is important to us, as it is to you, that your child has the energy they need to get through the day successfully. Please send your children with -

- Healthy choices
- Plenty of fruits and vegetables
- A water bottle
- Containers that your child can open and close on their own really promotes their self help skills which is a big part of preschool
- Items sent in prepackaged containers that cannot be resealed, such as yogurt, will be thrown out if not completely eaten at snack time
- Our school is a nut safe zone for students, please do not send nuts of any kind
- If allergies are a concern, the staff will address it on an individual and as needed basis with a care plan
- Please do not send "treats" such as chocolate bars, bags of chips or candy of any kind

Birthdays

We enjoy the celebration of birthdays with the children at Preschool and Junior Kindergarten. The way that we celebrate is by having a Popcorn Party! Once a month we celebrate all the birthdays that month by air popping some popcorn together and enjoying it at circle time. This allows us to celebrate with the children while respecting everyone's dietary concerns.

Financial Policies

Registration Fees

There is a \$25.00 Registration fee for the application to the **Preschool and Junior Kindergarten** Programs. These fees are non-refundable.

Repayment Agreement

NCS ECL will provide refunds or reimbursements only in the case of client overpayments or if we are unable to provide care due to extenuating circumstances.

Professional Days, Vacation Periods and Statutory Holidays

In all our programs no credit on tuition is given for scheduled days we are closed as our fees have been amortized over 10 months (Sept – June). The Preschool and Junior Kindergarten will be closed for all statutory holidays, NCS School breaks and professional days.

Our program also does not give refunds for unforeseen short term closures due to things such as snow or covid exposure.

Withdrawal from the Program or reduction in schedule

Each child is enrolled for the entire school year or for the balance of the school year. **Four weeks written notice must be given to the director or one month's tuition in lieu of services is payable upon your child's withdrawal.** The same applies to any reduction in schedule (such as going from 5 mornings a week to 3 mornings a week).

Payment of Fees

In September, the school's Business Office will contact you regarding the setup of payment for your monthly fees. Income Tax Receipts are issued once a year. Families no longer attending can expect to have their receipt mailed to them mid-February. Please keep in mind that if you move during the year you will need to provide us with an up to date address.

Overtime Charges / Late pick up fee

There will be a late pick up fee charged for children not picked up at the regular dismissal time. The late fee is \$10.00 for every ½ hour or portion of. Please phone the site if you are going to be late.

Returned Cheques:

There is a \$25.00 service charge for NSF cheques.

Government Subsidy (Affordable Child Care Benefit)

NCS ECL accepts ACCB. If you are interested in obtaining more information about this program you can look up the Affordable Child Care Benefit on the internet or call 1-888-338-6622. We are happy to help you fill out the necessary forms.

NCS ECL requires you to cover the monthly fees while you are awaiting confirmation from ACCB. When we have received confirmation of payment from ACCB, you will be reimbursed or credited the appropriate amount.

Except for certain circumstances, the majority of families receiving ACCB (in part or full) will have a parent portion left to pay. The parent portion is the total cost of care (monthly fee) minus the amount ACCB has informed you they will pay. All families receiving ACCB still need to have a payment method on file for the parent portion. NCS ECL is not responsible for any ACCB related matters such as renewal, or amounts issued. If you are late renewing your ACCB, you will be asked to cover the cost until it is received and then you will be reimbursed or credited the appropriate amount.

Health and Safety Policies

License

NCE ECL is licensed by the Vancouver Island Health Authority, and regularly inspected by their licencing officers.

Is your child healthy enough for school today?

The best guide to whether or not your child is healthy enough for Early Care and Learning today is to ask yourself if they can fully participate in all the activities it includes.

Keep your child home if he or she has:

- Has had a fever or diarrhea during the last 24 hours
- Heavy, green nasal discharge
- A constant cough
- A fussy, cranky, out of sorts disposition (an illness may be brewing)
- Symptoms of a possible communicable disease (reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, fever or spots). Please notify the Preschool immediately if symptoms of a communicable disease occur.

Your child may be sent home if any symptoms of illness appear during the class. In such cases, your child will be placed in a cozy place to rest and you will be contacted.

Covid 19

No child, parent or staff member may enter the premises if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days or have been identified by public health as a close contact person with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

At drop off each day you will be asked to give a “yes/no” verbal confirmation that your child does not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other respiratory disease. You must do a daily assessment at home before bringing your child and be able to answer this question when asked.

If your child has any of these symptoms you must keep your child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases AND their symptoms have resolved.

If you are unsure if you or your child should self-isolate, please use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool or contact one of the following: 8-1-1, the local public health unit, your family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.

If your child develops symptoms while at the center they will be moved to a separate supervised space and you will be contacted for immediate pick up.

First Aid & Medications

First aid treatment does not include any form of orally ingested medications. Medication will only be administered on the written request of the parent/guardian or upon permission given via telephone to the Preschool for an emergency situation. If your child contracts a communicable disease, he or she may not return until your doctor or public health nurse gives written permission.

A note concerning Epipens: This applies to any child in NCS ECL programs who has severe allergies and is in need of a medication administered in an Epipen.

In case of Anaphylactic Shock & the child is conscious:

1. Staff will call an ambulance for assistance (911)

2. Guide/help the child administer their own medication
3. Call the parent and advise them of the situation

In case of Anaphylactic Shock & the child is unconscious:

1. Staff will call an ambulance for assistance (911)
2. Administer First Aid
3. Medication only administered by staff if the parent/guardian has given written approval

It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure the staff know how to administer the EpiPen. The staff will carry the EpiPen with them at all times, including out-trips and playground activities.

Program Condition regarding Head lice or nits:

If lice are found at home we request that out of consideration for other children in the program your child not return to the program until the lice have been treated, the nits combed out, and the problem is concluded.

Emergency Closure due to snow or other extreme conditions

NCS ECL follows the same plan as Nanaimo Christian School which is that generally if the public schools are closed due to snow, then NCS will also be closed. Sometimes we may be closed when other schools are not due to our location. Please confirm by checking the NCS facebook page or listening to The Wave at 102.3FM or The Wolf at 106.9FM to find out whether the schools are open or closed.

Fire drills and Emergency drills

In accordance with Child Care licensing regulations each one of our classes will practice a fire drill each month and once a year we will practice a full emergency drill.

Safe Release of child Policy

Persons Authorized to Pick Up your Child

The parent / guardian is required to notify the caregiver in writing if someone else will be picking up the child. If the caregiver does not know the person picking up the child, the person will be asked to show photo identification.

Release of a child:

If a person authorized to pick up a child is incapable of safe care the staff of NCS ECL will:

- Assess the situation
- Contact the other parent as an alternative
- Contact an emergency contact person as an alternative.

If a person authorized to pick up a child is incapable of safe care and insists on taking the child, the Staff of NCS ECL will:

- Contact the RCMP

If no one comes to pick up the child, the staff of NCS ECL will:

- Contact the parent or emergency contact, if no answer
- Contact the Ministry of Children and Families

If an unauthorized person requests the release of a child, the staff of NCS ECL will:

- Not release the child, the child will remain under the supervision of the caregiver
- Contact the parent or legal guardian
- An email confirmation must be received from the parent/guardian confirming that the child can be released to that individual
- Speak to the unauthorized individual and explain the policy that no child will be released without written authorization by the parent or guardian
- Make all reasonable efforts to ensure the safety of the child and other children.
- If necessary, the police will be called for assistance.

Signing in and Out

Children must be signed in and out each day by a legal adult, specifying the time they were dropped off and picked up.

General Policies

Active Play Policy

Our Preschool and Junior Kindergarten children will have a minimum of 40 minutes of outdoor active play. This play time will be both facilitated by the staff and spontaneously, child lead. As our outdoor area has a variety of surfaces we require children to have a “muddy buddy” and boots so they fully enjoy their time spent outside. In the case of extreme inclement weather, the staff will provide the opportunity for active play in the classroom area through dance, games and movement activities.

Screen Time Policy

The use of screen time is very limited within our programs. Short videos and apps are limited to those which enhance the educational experience of topics being explored (i.e. how do astronauts brush their teeth in space). Any screen time utilized in preschool or junior kindergarten will last no longer than 15 minutes and take place no more than once per week per class.

Probationary Period

Each new child is accepted on a four-week probationary period. During that time if it becomes apparent that there are extra needs that were not disclosed during the registration process will meet with your family to discuss next steps. We will make every effort to find/hire the necessary resources for your child but in the event that we cannot provide what is needed, we reserve the right to terminate our agreement for care.

Late Drop Off or Absent

Please let us know if your child will be late or absent by emailing preschool@ncsnanaimo.com or calling 250-754-4512 ext.109

Late Pick Up

A late pick up fee of \$10.00 for every ½ hour, or portion of, is charged to the parent when the child is not picked up at the specified closing time. Please phone your child’s program as soon as possible when you are going to be later than your usual pick up time. If a guardian has not picked up a child or called within 30 minutes of the classes scheduled end time, the caregiver will try to contact the family and then the alternative person/s from the authorized pick up list. If the caregiver is still unable to reach someone to care for the child, the caregiver is required to notify the Ministry of Children and Families. If late pick up becomes a problem, you will receive a warning letter. If late pick up is an ongoing problem and reasonable effort has been made to solve it, NCS ECL may choose to terminate care for your child.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should my child wear?

Comfort is the key. Think of messy art materials and provide clothing that is washable. Think of outdoor play and provide clothing that is sturdy. Think of the weather and provide layered clothing that can adapt to weather changes.

What does my child need to bring?

- **EXTRA CLOTHES** - A complete set of extra clothing to keep on site. (Please put them in a Large ziplock bag with their name on it and label the items of clothing inside)
- **INSIDE SHOES** - An extra pair of Velcro or slip on rubber soled runners to stay at the center. (Please clearly label these with your child's name) No Slippers.
- **ALL WEATHER GEAR** - A Rain Suit (such as a MEC Newt Suit) or rain jacket & rain pants and rain boots (Please label all belongings brought to school)

How do you incorporate the Bible into your teaching?

We love sharing our faith with the children and will often take the opportunity to pray with them or share something about God. In all our programs you will find representations of our faith through books, toys, and other materials. We also intentionally include a Christian worldview when teaching on a wide variety of subjects.

How do you celebrate holidays?

During the year we will celebrate most holidays as part of our learning. On some occasions we may choose to do a small in class party. We do not celebrate Halloween at all, as we believe it is each individual family's choice whether or not they introduce this to their children.

Do you have activities that would work for children with Additional Support Needs?

NCS ECL is an environment inclusive of all abilities. For students requiring additional support we work closely with the parents and the Child Development Centre to arrange a trained support staff and the necessary funding. Please contact the director for more information.

TO OUR PARENTS...

How can we be of help to you?

When you enroll your child we enter into a partnership with you. We do this by:

- Encouraging communication between parents and educators. You know your child best and we welcome any insight that you may want to give.
- Valuing your child as a unique individual and providing them with developmentally appropriate opportunities.
- Providing you with information about NCS events & activities, local parenting workshops, articles on child development and other resources may be valuable
- Welcoming you to look into our busy, happy, noisy, creative class and see your child at play.
- Believing that parents and educators working together can help your child develop to his or her fullest potential.

First Day Fears

The first day(s) of your child's educational experience can be a scary time for some children (and some moms and dads too). Starting preschool is something that children have probably been thinking about all summer. Now, they walk into a new room with all these new children, and new grownups, and new "stuff" and it's no wonder some children suddenly cling to their parents and cry. Here are a few tips for getting through those first few days.

- Make every effort to attend the orientation day for your class, as this will give you and your child a chance to come and experience the classroom together

- Be Positive! If you seem anxious and unsure about leaving your child at school, children pick up on that and start wondering if there really is something to worry about.
- If your child is really nervous, plan on staying for 5 or 10 minutes the first few days to help get your child settled. Any longer than that often just makes separation harder.
- When it is time for you to leave, make sure you say goodbye. Trying to “sneak out” when the child is busy and not looking, sometimes makes children panic a few minutes later, and may make separation even more difficult the next day.
- Separation fears sometimes show up on the second or third drop off. Don’t worry this is normal.
- Please remember that we really care and are not frustrated at all by your child needing some extra support in this area. We really do understand how hard this can be. We know that you are entrusting us with a very precious gift, and feel honored that we will be one of your child’s first teachers.
- If your child is having an especially hard time, we will give you a call at home or work.

Preschool Daily Sample Schedule

8:20 to 8:30	Outdoor drop off in our outdoor classroom
8:30 - 9:30	Outdoor time including our morning Welcome Circle: welcome each child to Preschool, sing songs, read a story, review our inquiry and discuss our day.
9:30 – 10:15	Come inside. Washrooms and snack time.
10:15 – 11:15	Learning through play: free choice of activities in the classroom.
11:15 – 11:30	Dismissal Circle
11:30am	Dismissal from our indoor space. Parents need to sign your child out. Feel free to connect with Educators about the day.

Junior Kindergarten Sample Schedule

11:45 am	Indoor drop off. Welcome Circle: welcome each child, sing songs, read a story, review our inquiry and discuss our day
12:10 - 12:30	Table time where we work on our pre-k skills
12:30 - 1:30	Learning through play: free choice of activities in the classroom
1:30 - 2:00	Washroom, snack time and transition to outside.
2:00 - 3:00	Outdoor time
3:00	Dismissal from outdoor classroom. Parents need to sign your child out. Feel free to connect with Educators about the day.