

W.O. Mitchell E.S. Kindergarten Handbook



Welcome to Kindergarten at W.O. Mitchell Elementary School! This is a very exciting time for you and your child and we are very honoured to be your child's first introduction to formal schooling. To help answer some questions you might have, we have prepared this information book. We hope that you will find it helpful.

Names to Remember

Principal	Heather Graham
Vice Principals	Brad Sokalski
Office Administrator	Pauline Billington
Office Assistant	Jane Foster
School Custodian	Elio Lisi

Communication

Communication between the school and parents is essential. In order to ensure that we are communicating effectively, we ask that parents try their best to check their child's school bag **DAILY** for "mail". We will try to do the same.

To help communicate effectively, we use a communication message bag. This system involves using a Ziploc bag to carry "mail" such as newsletters, permission forms, or personal notes from school to home. Your child will receive a Ziploc bag with his/her name on it in September. Please put any of your messages in the message bag and have your child return it to school each day.

If you are returning permission forms, tear-off slips or money for field trips or performances, put the money and forms into an envelope or small Ziploc and tuck it into the bag. Please ensure that all forms and envelopes are labeled with your child's name. Encourage your child to hold the bag right side up.



Communication

- ◆ Parents are encouraged to use their child's "message bag" for communication between home and school.
- ◆ **If you have a message that is urgent or time sensitive, please call the school office (613-271-1806) and speak with one of the office staff. Be sure to explain that this is an urgent message that must be given to the teacher as soon as possible.**

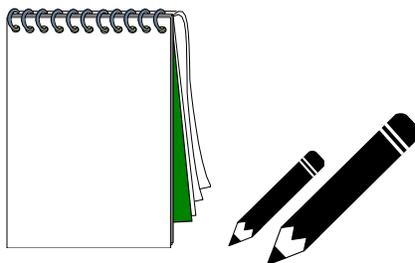
- ◆ Absences should be reported to the school by calling the Absence Line (613-271-1809). This will save the "Safe Arrival Team" from having to call you to determine the reason for your child's absence.



Personal and Caregiving Information

It is of vital importance that the school be kept informed of any changes made to the personal information provided to us when you registered your child for kindergarten. **This information includes home and work telephone numbers, street and mailing addresses, emergency contact name and telephone number, custody arrangements as well as caregiving information and phone numbers.** If the information we have on record is not up to date, it can result in delays reaching you in the case of an emergency, creating a very difficult and stressful situation for your child and the office staff.

If there are any changes in your personal information, please inform the school office as soon as possible. Your co-operation is appreciated.



Staggered Entry and Intake Interviews

For those of you with a child entering JK or for SK students who are new to our school, you will first have an **intake interview** with your child's teacher during the first few days of school.

Your child should attend the interview with you. During the interview a number of things will occur. Your child's teacher will collect your child's **Kindergarten Intake Form** and will discuss any concerns or questions you may have. The teacher will also want to spend a bit of time getting to know your child, so there will be activities set up to promote that interaction. This is a time for you and your child to have one-on-one contact with your child's teacher.

Once all interviews are complete, there will be a **staggered entry** process. The children will come to school with a portion of the class. This helps to make the first day less overwhelming for all. **Your child only comes ONE of these days, not both of them.**

For returning SK students, the interview process will be in groups for 30 minute blocks which will be assigned.

Report Cards and Interviews

An interview will be scheduled for each child during the November parent/teacher interview time.

A report card will be issued for SK students in February and in June. JK students only receive one official report card in June.

Open communication is very important during the year. If at any time, you feel ill-informed about what or how your child is doing at school, please call the school and leave a message and it will be returned as soon as possible.

Summer Shopping List

There are certain supplies that your child will need for September. Here is a shopping list to help you buy the necessities.

- ◆ One large permanent marker...for you to use at home to label shoes, backpacks, clothes, lunch and snack containers, etc. It is important to remember that the cubbies are close together, so there is great potential for mix ups.
- ◆ One backpack. Please be sure to buy a **LARGE**, simple, sturdy backpack.
- ◆ Running shoes (sturdy, labeled, no-laces, preferably with velcro). These shoes will be kept at school. You may bring these to the intake interview.
- ◆ A lunch bag and perhaps a separate snack bag with the family name on them (use permanent marker please).
- ◆ Emergency set of clothes kept in a labeled ziploc bag to be kept at school. Please be sure to label all of the clothes and include underwear, socks, pants, and a top in case of an accident. You may bring these to the intake interview or send them with your child on the first day.

School Supplies

A list of school supplies will be given to you in the spring and will also be posted on our school website. The school will supply these items to all children at no charge. Should you purchase these items, you will free up resources for other children at the school. Thank you in advance for these voluntary donations.

Toys from Home

We ask that your child not bring any toys from home to school. There are plenty of toys in the classroom and this rule helps to prevent a child from having his or her toy lost, broken or misplaced.

We also ask that children not wear jewelry to school. Bringing special barrettes or rings, etc. often results in large searches for very tiny items.

Please do not allow your child to bring an umbrella to school. A hooded raincoat is a much better option for a child this age. Children often use an umbrella as a toy, and they often do not know how to collapse or open an umbrella independently.

Dress Code

OCDSB Student Dress Policy is based on the expectations that schools shall be safe and respectful learning environments. Further to this expectation is our concern for each child's safety, health, comfort, cleanliness and sense of modesty.

In support of appropriate conduct with schools, the following principles shall govern standards of student dress in all schools in the Ottawa Carleton District School Board.

- Respect for learning
- Decency
- Cleanliness
- Respect for the rights and dignity of others
- Safety of persons and property
- Promotion of a drug and alcohol-free environment

All students should dress neatly and in a style that promotes learning and concentration in class. Dressing appropriately, in a manner that reflects self-pride and respect for others, helps students to develop social values and good judgement.

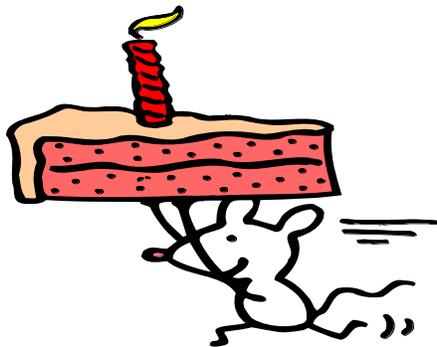
Lunch and Snacks

Please send a nutritious lunch and snack with your child each day. Be careful not to send too much for your child. A simple snack such as carrot sticks and dip or a cut up apple and a granola bar are great! Perhaps a sandwich, yogurt and juice for lunch. We encourage you to make these garbageless by using reusable containers. Please be aware that **W.O. Mitchell is a nut restricted school.**

There are no water fountains in the classrooms, therefore we ask you to please send a Rubbermaid style juice container, filled with water and re-filled daily. Be sure to label the container with your family name. Please do not send cardboard drinking boxes, cans of pop or glass bottles to school with your child.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special events for kindergarten students. We present each child with a birthday crown and sing Happy Birthday to them. For children whose birthdays fall during the summer holidays, we will assign each child a special day in June on which we celebrate his/her birthday. If your child's birthday falls on a weekend we celebrate it on the Friday or Monday. With the ever increasing number of children with food allergies and sensitivities, we would prefer that you do not send in food items for the class to celebrate your child's birthday.



Kindergarten Playground/School Entrance Procedures

School Entrance:

A teacher will meet all children who arrive at school by bus as they are getting off the bus.

If your child is walked to school, they can be delivered to the kindergarten yard between 7:45 and 8:00 when a teacher is on duty. If you drive your child to school, you must drop him/her off in the "Kiss and Ride" lane. A duty teacher will walk your child to the yard. Please do not park in the Kiss & Ride lane. Your child's teacher can explain this option to you in more detail if required.

School dismissal:

Parents who walk their children home, are asked to meet their child at the gate at the front of the school. If it is a rainy day, please feel free to wait under the overhang outside the Kindergarten area.

All children who take the bus, will be put on the bus by their kindergarten teacher at the end of the day.

We respectfully request that parents and caregivers not enter the kindergarten play area unless invited to do so. This ensures your child's security and enables us to supervise appropriately. It is important to make your caregiver aware of these entry and dismissal procedures.

For security reasons, all visitors who enter the school are asked to enter via the front door. Please sign in and obtain a visitor badge from the office.





Kindergarten Hours

Please do not leave your child unattended in the school or outside the school. Make sure that a teacher is present and your child is with that teacher before you leave the school property. Please encourage your child's growing independence by letting him/her enter the school independently under the teacher's care.

- **7:45 - 8:00 Bus Arrival Time**

- A teacher will meet the bus at the bus drop off area and take the bus children into the kindergarten yard. A teacher will be in the kindergarten yard to supervise.
- On inclement weather days, the teacher will take the children directly into the school.

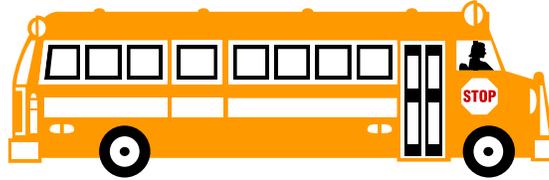
- **8:00 Morning Bell**

- At 8:00 am, Kindergarten students enter the school using the Kindergarten doors.

- **2:30 Afternoon Dismissal**

- Kindergarten classes dismiss at this time.
- Parents are asked to meet their children at the front of the school.
- Bus students will be walked to their bus and the bus will leave the school at 2:40.





Busing Information

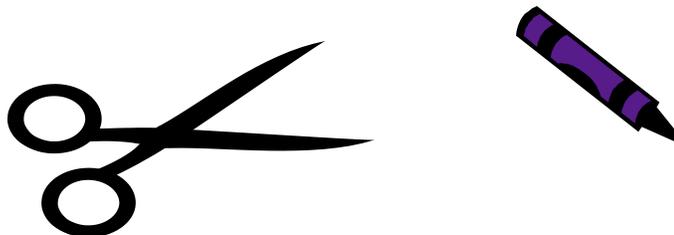
Towards the end the summer, please check the www.ocdsb.ca web site for information regarding your child's bus route. If your child will be riding the school bus, take the opportunity to visit the "School Bus Safety Awareness Day." Watch for the date of this day in the newspapers in August.

When waiting for the bus, please be sure that your child waits well away from the curb. Please instruct your child to wait until the bus has come to a complete stop before moving towards the door. Also, please encourage your child to fill the seats at the front of the bus first as this helps the bus driver keep track of his/her small passengers. Parents/caregivers are asked to wait until the bus leaves the pick up point.

Parents/caregivers are requested to meet the child at the drop off point at the end of the school day. If the parents/caregivers are not at the drop off point the child will remain on the bus and the driver will return them to the school. Once the child is back at the school, it is the parent/caregiver's responsibility to pick their child up at the school.

Volunteering

Your child's teaching team will be in touch regarding volunteering.



Some Suggestions to Help Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten

- Be sure to talk about “September” before coming to the intake interview.
- Drive or walk by W.O. Mitchell Elementary School several times. Come and play frequently in the kindergarten yard over the summer. Be sure to peek in the windows.
- Time your walk to the school to ensure an accurate arrival time when school begins.
- Late in August, encourage your child to look for things in daily life that are related to school. This will help to reduce any fears or anxiety about coming to school. For example, point out the school, the buses on the streets, backpacks and school supplies in the stores etc.
- If your child will be riding the school bus, take the opportunity to visit the “School Bus Safety Awareness Day.” Watch for the date of this day in the newspapers in August.
- Help your child to learn his/her teacher’s name.
- Encourage your child to practise using their new backpack as well as his/her snack containers. Encourage independent dressing when getting ready to go outside for play (putting on shoes, coats etc.) before September. They must be able to manage the shoes they wear to school as well as the ones they leave in their cubby! Encouraging your child to be independent when dressing themselves is very important for two reasons. First, the more independent your child is, the greater his or her self-esteem will be. Secondly, if your child is able to quickly dress independently, it is a huge help to their teachers!
- Establish your child’s “school” bedtime routine in late August as they will find the first few days of school exciting yet tiring.
- Encourage your child to tidy up after play, listen to and follow instructions, share, colour, and use scissors and glue appropriately.

Getting A Head Start - What Can I do Over the Summer?

- Let your child use quality “kid” scissors often. Be sure that the hand holding the scissors has the thumb on the top and that they turn the paper rather than the scissors when cutting.
- Practice bathroom skills such as toileting, flushing, putting the seat up or down, washing hands and fastening clothing correctly and independently.
- Teach your child their last name, street address and telephone number.
- Teach your child their teacher’s name.
- Be sure your child’s immunization is up to date.
- If you are concerned about your child’s vision or hearing be sure to have it checked before school starts.



Thanks for your support!
We are looking forward to meeting you soon!

W.O. Mitchell Kindergarten Staff