



KINDERGARTEN

HANDBOOK



NORTHUMBERLAND
CHRISTIAN
SCHOOL

8861 Danforth Rd. E. Cobourg
tel: 905.372.8766
email: office@northumberlandchristian.ca

Core Values

Christ-centered Excellence

Empowering Self-worth & Self-esteem

Responsible & Responsive Leadership

Community of Grace & Integrity

Critical Thinkers & Active Participants

Our Mission

Northumberland Christian School empowers the development of character and conviction with formative experience and Biblical Worldview instruction in a safe, supportive community. Students are equipped to influence and transform their world on a personal, local, and global level.

Our Vision

At Northumberland Christian School, students are actively *engaged* in learning, *hopeful* of their future, and *flourishing* socially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.



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WELCOME

Dear Parents,

Welcome, and thank you for choosing Northumberland Christian School's Kindergarten program for your child. Enrolling your child in Kindergarten is a momentous occasion, and I understand your mixed feelings as you prepare for this new and exciting journey. This information package is designed to help address some of the questions you may have about the Kindergarten program offered here at NCS.

My name is Keri Pratt, and I am the Kindergarten teacher at Northumberland Christian School. I am deeply touched that you feel NCS Kindergarten is the perfect place to send your child for their first foray into school. I am thrilled to have the opportunity to get to know you and your child, and for you to become a member of our community. I look forward to providing your child with endless hours of love and guidance as they continue to grow and develop. In Kindergarten at Northumberland Christian School, we strive to achieve the school's motto of creating engaged, hopeful, and flourishing learners.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any further questions or concerns. I am always happy to speak over the phone or set up a time for a classroom visit. We at NCS are here to connect with and build up our community members beyond the hours and the walls of our physical school building. We are a team whose goal is to see your child succeed. I look forward to celebrating all the milestones of the coming school year with you. Please reach out if you require help in the guidance and development of your ever-curious child.

Sincerely,

Miss Keri Pratt



REGISTRATION OVERVIEW

REGISTRATION OVERVIEW

If you are interested in the NCS Kindergarten program, please schedule a school visit through the office via telephone (905-372-8766) or email (office@northumberlandchristian.ca). This will allow you an opportunity to familiarize your child with the classroom and Kindergarten teacher. At this time, you may schedule a formal admissions conference with the principal. The registration process is outlined in the NCS Enrollment Handbook

If you would like your child to experience a full day in Kindergarten, please consider signing them up for our K-Day program which occurs near the end of the school year. For more information on K-Days, turn to page 10.

Registration Requirements:

- Attended an Admissions Conference with the principal
- Completed Enrollment forms package
- Submission of registration fee and supply fees
- Your child must be independent in the bathroom
- Copy of child's birth certificate and immunization record
- Copy of any court order pertaining to your child

The NCS Kindergarten program is a full day, full week program for both JK and SK students. Students arrive at school between 8:15-8:30am and the school day ends at 3:00pm. We encourage parents to enroll their children in our program full time but, if you are concerned that your child is not yet ready the full-time program, you can enroll them for a minimum of 3 days a week.

At Northumberland Christian School, families have the option of enrolling their children in the Kindergarten program on a part time or full-time basis. Full time enrollment and part time enrollment are structured as follows:

- Full time: child attends the Kindergarten program each day of the academic year from 8:30-3:00
- Part time: child attends the Kindergarten program for a minimum of 3 days a week, on select days/times of the academic year

Northumberland Christian School provides programming based upon the academic calendar. This includes closures based around school holidays and vacations. Occasionally families wishing to enroll on a part time basis, may need to be flexible with their schedules, to reflect the availability of the program. Scheduled days may not be rescheduled or moved to alternate days. Children may only attend on the days that they are scheduled.

When scheduling your child for part time enrollment, please refer to the academic calendar to ensure your childcare and schooling needs are covered. School closures most typically occur on Mondays and Fridays. Families are required to provide their finalized attendance schedule to the office upon enrollment.

The attendance schedule provided will be used to calculate the monthly fees for each family. Families wishing to make changes to their schedule, must first speak with the Kindergarten Teacher to ensure these changes can be accommodated within the confines of the program. If approved by the Kindergarten Teacher, scheduling changes will need to be communicated with our financial administrator, as billing changes will then be required.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

DAILY SCHEDULE

8:15 – 8:30	Arrival
8:30 – 10:05	Learning Block 1
10:05 – 11:00	Snack and Recess
11:00 – 12:15	Learning Block 2
12:15 – 1:20	Lunch and Recess
1:20 – 1:35	Quiet Time
1:35 – 3:00	Learning Block 3
3:00	Home Time

KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

LITERACY:

Show-and-Tell

Show-and-tell is a favourite part of the Kindergarten student's day. The designated leader of the day chooses an item from home to share with their classmates. Sometimes the classroom teacher might request that show- and-tell items are related to a specific topic while other times students will have free choice

Sharing their show-and-tell item with the class allows students the chance to speak at the front of the classroom. They learn to speak clearly and loudly while giving information about their topic. This student, as well as the students listening, develop their interpersonal and social skills through listening, asking, and answering questions. Show-and-tell is done in the morning each day. It is exciting to see the children develop their oral communication and listening skills as the year progresses.

Jolly Phonics

Jolly Phonics is a fun, child centered approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. This is a method of teaching where words are broken up into the smallest unit of sound (phonemes). With a song and actions for each of the 42 letter sounds, this multi-sensory method is very motivating for children. The letter sounds are split into seven groups and taught in a specific order (not alphabetically). This enables children to begin building words as early as possible. Children are taught these sounds, how to blend them together to make words, and how to segment words into sounds.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Take Home Reading Program

Beginning within the first few months of school, each student will be involved in their own “Take-home Reading Program”. Jr. Kindergarten students begin reviewing flashcards. Once mastered, they are ready to begin reading small books. Sr. Kindergarten students begin with small books and reviewing the tricky letter flashcards. Parents are encouraged to read with their child at home often, to promote healthy reading habits and review content presented in class.

Literacy Centers

As Kindergarten students learn new Literacy skills, the classroom teacher will create an activity or a game for the children to play with during literacy centers. Initially, this activity will be done together as a class, to familiarize the students with it. Once they understand the concept, it will be put into a plastic container for students to select during literacy time. Students have the freedom to choose the activity that appeals most to them, and switch activities whenever they desire. While the students are engaged with learning, the classroom teacher can move around the classroom to observe, assess, and join the students in play.

Handwriting Without Tears

The “Handwriting Without Tears” curriculum teaches the easiest printing skills first, then builds on prior knowledge to learn new skills. Letters are taught in a sequence that makes sense developmentally: in groups of similar formation. After children master the easier letters, they are ready for more difficult letters. Children develop their writing skills through multisensory play-based instruction. Activities with hands-on materials – Wood Pieces Set, Capital Letter Cards, CDs, Slate Chalkboard, and Play Dough – address different senses to teach correct formation, spacing, sequencing, and other writing skills. This curriculum is continued into grades 1-5, developing a solid foundation for cursive writing and written expression.

MATHEMATICS: Jump Math

The Canadian “Jump Math” curriculum is used across all grades at NCS. In Kindergarten, we use “Jump Math” as a foundation for our math program. Our program includes hands-on activities from the “Jump Math” program, along with other math games, stories, songs, and centers. Student become familiar with numeracy through free exploration and math centers that include a variety of manipulatives (graphing, patterning, rote counting, counting forward, and counting backward, recognition of numerals and patterns, sorting and classifying, recognition of size, shape and colour) As students ask questions, compare, measure, and explore, math becomes part of each child’s expression of play and the world around them.

SCIENCE: Wings of Discovery

The “Wings of Discovery” curriculum is used to supplement some of the theme units that our Kindergarten students study throughout the year. This curriculum fosters a child’s innate desire to explore, question and wonder by providing a science-based approach to learning skills and knowledge. Children grasp ideas more easily and maintain interest if they can connect their learning to their own lives. Students at NCS explore Science from a Christ-centered perspective while learning to develop a basis for a global outlook.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SOCIAL STUDIES:

When possible, Kindergarten students also have the opportunity (always accompanied by a permission form) to participate in school-wide events which support their social learning and development. This includes, but is not limited to, field trips, guest speakers, community events, as well as cultural and traditional experiences.

Kindergarten teacher works to integrate diversity and inclusion into the classroom experience. Understanding and acceptance of others happens at the kindergarten level through honouring national months of recognition, such as Black History Month, and Women's History Month, as well as through daily exposure to First Peoples of Canada studies, and the use of diverse social and cultural stories during lessons. Through this daily exposure and practice, kindergarten students are able to learn from these diverse experiences and scenarios and grow in an environment that encourages and supports their development and differences.

Kindergarten students engage in learning about social and prosocial situations every day through interactions with their peers. Through their play, students are learning numerous concepts including sharing, problem solving, point of view, emotions, communication, teamwork, listening, and patience. Additionally, stories present students with the opportunity to learn about the larger concepts of equality, empathy, kindness, understanding, cultural awareness, respect, and most importantly love.

BIBLE: The Jesus Storybook Bible

Bible story time is often a favourite part of the school day in Kindergarten. Over the course of your child's two years in Kindergarten, they will explore the Bible from Old Testament to New using the Jesus Storybook Bible and curriculum. The Jesus Storybook Bible "tells the Story beneath all the Stores in the Bible. It takes the whole Bible to tell this Story. And, at the center of the Story, there is a baby, the Child upon whom everything would depend. From Noah to Moses to King David, every story whispers his name. Jesus is like the missing piece in a puzzle – the piece that makes all the other pieces fit together." In Kindergarten, students focus on one story each week and are encouraged to visualize the stories, sequence the events, and retell the stories orally, visually, and kinesthetically.

MUSIC: The Musicplay Kindergarten Program

Children love music and games. "The Musicplay Kindergarten Program" is a play-based music program. The curriculum is designed using games and instruments to discover musical concepts. The curriculum includes action songs, sing-along songs, folk songs, multi-cultural songs, game songs, theme songs and holiday songs. Music is also used to support other areas of curriculum including, Science, Literacy, Bible, Jolly Phonics, Physical Education and Handwriting Without Tears.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

CREATIVE ACTIVITY:

Each child is designed to be a creator, to explore and express themselves in a variety of ways. Every day, students engage in creative activities, either formally or informally. Painting, drawing, colouring, cutting and pasting, card making, pattern blocks, play dough, dramatization, journals, dress-up, Lego, puppets, and Papier Maché are all part of creative discovery. Children internalize concepts learned while developing hand-eye coordination, self-expression, and strengthening fine motor skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION:

Physical Education in Kindergarten helps students develop auditory and gross motor skills by participating in healthy activities and learning to work as part of a team. This is practiced through a variety of activities that include circle games, action songs, experimenting with movement, ball activities, ropes, scooter boards and tricycles. Students enjoy PE without realizing that their locomotor skills such as walking, leaping, sliding, galloping, hopping, skipping, rolling, dodging, and falling are developing. They discover how their bodies move when bending, stretching, turning, twisting, pushing, pulling, lifting, swinging, and circling. Students also receive instruction in health and social-emotional skills from the Student Support Teacher0.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Outdoor Play/Recess: Kindergarten students are scheduled to have two 20-minute recess breaks during the school day. This, however, can vary depending on a variety of factors such as weather, seasonal disruptions, teacher support, safety. When the weather is nice, recess may be extended at the discretion of the yard-duty teacher. During warmer months, Kindergarten students often have additional time outside in the form of picnic lunches, and outdoor learning.

Outdoor play time will occur in the back yard of the school. There are a variety of activities for students to engage in. They may choose to play on the swings or play structures, ride bikes, or draw with chalk on the pavement, or perhaps they might prefer to engage with nature and hunt bugs, build a fort with sticks, or even play in the mud. There is lots of space for the Kindergarten students to explore.

When outdoors, children are expected to always be wearing weather appropriate clothing. **Please ensure your child is always dressed for the weather and the season.** In the winter months and early spring, Kindergarten children usually go through 2 pairs of mittens and socks each day. If you would like to leave any spare outerwear items at school in your child's cubby to ensure their availability for unexpected turns in the weather, you may do so.

At the end of the school day, Kindergarten students are picked up outside at the far end of the fence, near the barn next door. At this time, students will not be dressed in their snow pants/splash pants or wet/muddy hats and mittens. This is for parental convenience, due to car seat regulations, and comfort for the students, as wet and muddy items are not pleasant to wear.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Outdoor play is different every day. It can be cold, hot, wet, or messy. For your child to fully enjoy their outdoor experience, please ensure your child has the following items for the appropriate season:

- sweater
- scarf/neck warmer
- rain boots/snow boots/running shoes
- socks (multiple pairs)
- sun/snow hat
- mittens
- jacket/coat
- splash pants/snow pants

In addition, your child will need multiple changes of clothing. These can be put into a large Ziploc bag and left at school. The Kindergarten teacher will store them in the bench near the cubbies. Please include at least two of each item: shirt, pants/shorts, underwear, socks, and spare mittens.

In the months when the sun's rays are most damaging (May through September), you may wish for your child to wear sunscreen. Teachers will not be applying any sunscreen to students (aerosol spray or otherwise). If this is of concern to you, please ensure that you thoroughly apply a liberal amount of sunscreen to your child's exposed skin prior to arriving at school in the morning. If your child needs a reapplication during the day, a medical form can be filled out in the office and an adult will apply it according to your written instructions.

Quiet Time: Each day after second recess, Kindergarten students have at least 10 minutes of quiet time. From the first day of school, Kindergarten students begin to build their stamina for sitting or lying quietly. All day, Kindergarten students are learning, moving, and interacting with people. Quiet time is a moment where they can rest their bodies and minds, and recharge for the remainder of the day. During this time students can choose if they would like to look at books, draw in their doodle books, or just rest.

Field Trips: Each year the Kindergarten class goes on a couple field trips, often accompanied by the Preschool or Primary classes. Some favourite field trips are to an apple orchard, pumpkin patch, and to the Sugar Bush.

Field trips are connected to the curriculum or related to the current season, or sometimes just for fun! Field trips are not possible without the help of parent volunteers. A permission form will be sent to all parents the week before the trip. Parents are encouraged to sign up as a driver for the trip. Students love having their parents along on the trip and it is fun for parents to watch their child interact with their peers.

As we rely on cars and parent drivers, this means, if a parent is not driving, they are to provide a car seat and place it in the front hall with a name tag. Your child **must** have the appropriate car seat for their age and weight. If your child does not have a seat or their car seat, they will be left at school in the care of another staff.

K-Days:

K-Days is an NCS initiative which targets school readiness skills by focusing on providing positive and engaging school experiences and transition opportunities. Children enrolled in preschool, along with other early learners from the community, have the opportunity to participate in a kindergarten experience at NCS.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Typically, this program is offered one day a week during the month of May, in which the Senior Kindergarten children at NCS get to experience what school will be like for them the next year as Grade 1 students. This leaves space in the Kindergarten program for preschool aged friends to experience being in Kindergarten.

Transitioning from preschool to kindergarten can come with many changes. To ease this transition, preschool friends who are the correct age to begin Kindergarten in the fall, are able to participate in K-days and receive a firsthand experience as a Junior Kindergarten student, while interacting with students who will be a part of their peer group in the fall. This program allows for preschool students to feel confident and successful as Kindergarten students before September rolls around. This helps to combat a lot of the 'first day jitters' that children often experience when they begin school in the fall. This program does not require enrollment at NCS for the fall.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Teachers and parents are members of a collaborative team, each having valuable resources, information, and unique roles in the learning journeys of children. Children learn better when parents and teachers work together, discuss learning experiences, and assess growth.

Contact with parents is essential and heart-warming. A well-balanced Kindergarten program will have both informal and formal contact with parents. Informal contact with parents should occur frequently. Short chats with the teacher when the child arrives or leaves school are helpful to the teacher, parents, and the child (especially if the Kindergarten child is the first one in the family to attend school). Formal contact with the teacher takes the form of report cards (2 times a year) and parent conferences are available upon request after report cards go home.

You are welcome to get involved in any of the opportunities listed below.

- Being involved in your child's "Take Home Reading Program"
- Being up to date with classroom activities through our weekly newsletter, the "Reminder" which is emailed on Tuesdays
- Maintaining dialogue with the classroom teacher
- Collecting household items for our classroom
- Helping with a school event
- Accompanying our class on school outings
- Making costumes for school plays or musicals
- Taking one bin of toys home each week to wash
- Volunteering to help in the classroom

You will need to bring a copy of a police check to the school if you would like to chaperone for class trips.

Feel free to stop by to chat or drop in if you have any concerns or questions before or after school. You can also leave a note in your child's folder or email me at: kpratt@northumberlandchristian.ca



ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE EXPECTATIONS

ARRIVALS:

To drop your child off at school, you arrive through the front doors where your child will remove their outdoor shoes and carry them downstairs to their designated cubby. Once there, they will remove their outerwear, put on their indoor shoes, and say goodbye to their grown up. Parents are more than welcome to accompany their child indoors, especially for the first few weeks of school. Once your child feels comfortable and they are eager to show some independence, you can walk them to the front door, and they can do the rest on their own. Kindergarten students always find it amusing to “sneak” downstairs and “surprise” the Kindergarten teacher.

The allotted time for morning drop-off is between 8:15-8:30am. Programming will not be available prior to this time frame, as teachers require time in the morning to set up the program for the day. The classroom doors will be closed and locked until 8:15am, so children dropped off before this time are the responsibility of their guardian and are to wait together in the hallway.

We hope that the beginning days of school will be a positive and pleasant experience for both child and parent. Separation can be difficult for some children. If your child is having a difficult time saying goodbye, please let the Kindergarten teacher know that you would like them to take over. Occasionally a child may need to be held by the teacher until they are calm. The Kindergarten teacher is prepared to assist your child but will not remove a child from their parent without the parent’s consent or request. This can be difficult for both parent and child, as for some families this may be their child’s first experience away from home.

Be patient, know it will get easier, and that your child is entering into a loving environment. Also, remember that your child will be having fun and participating in activities in no time. The Kindergarten teacher is happy to send reassuring pictures throughout the day during the initial transition phase, at their earliest convenience. Please remember that if a teacher is not responding to texts or emails right away, it is because they are tending to the needs of your preschooler and managing the daily program.

To help encourage positive goodbyes:

- Say goodbye in a kind but firm manner
- Reassure the child of the parent’s intention to return when school is finished
- Be consistent and loving

Rarely, a child experiences an extended difficult transition time. This can be based on age, familiarity, personality, comfort, etc. If your child continues to express fear and anxiety, you can meet with the teacher and create a plan specifically for you and your child until they become comfortable coming to school.



ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE EXPECTATIONS

DEPARTURES:

Students are picked up outside at the end of the school day (3:00pm) from their designated pick-up location, which is removed from the flow of foot traffic. This allows teachers to keep a close eye on student safety, and to speak with parents in a quieter environment. Kindergarten students, along with Preschool students, can be picked up behind the fence at the far end of the parking lot (near neighbouring barn). An adult must pick up each child in person at the end of the school day. Due to the young age of Kindergarten children, they are not permitted to walk across the parking lot to a waiting vehicle without being accompanied by an adult or older sibling. Teachers are unable to walk each child to their vehicle, as that would require leaving other preschool students unsupervised. If the Kindergarten teacher is talking with another parent when you pickup your child, please ensure she sees your child leaving.

Our school day ends at 3:00, and Kindergarten students are ready for pick up at that time. All students are expected to be picked up by a guardian before 3:15. The school will begin to contact guardians, and if necessary, emergency contacts, for children not picked up by 3:15. Kindergarten children wait outside at the gate and are dressed to reflect the safety guidelines for getting into their car seat, which means they will not be dressed for extensive outside waits, outside play time, or in outerwear that has been soaked/soiled during the course of the day. Please ensure a prompt pick up, for the comfort of your child. It can be upsetting for a child to be left past the end of the school day, when all the other students are dismissed.



BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

Children require and seek guidance and discipline as they grow and mature. It is the goal of Northumberland Christian School to help children develop the confidence and self regulation necessary to move toward self-discipline and to learn appropriate and acceptable school behaviour patterns. This is achieved by directing respect and understanding toward each individual child while addressing their individual needs and abilities. At NCS we strive to create a safe environment for all children.

Children are encouraged to explore, ask questions, and problem solve as they play. The Kindergarten program provides a safe place for children to be themselves, and to foster an active imagination and an insatiable desire to learn. Children are provided with many play-based learning opportunities to make positive, good choices, which fit within the behaviour expectations of our school. Reasonable limits and choices are established and clearly communicated to the children, in order for them to enjoy the program to its fullest extent while respecting others and being conscious of safety.

Children are encouraged to solve problems, as this increases their independence and their ability to cooperate and be considerate toward others. Here children can learn to advocate for themselves, developing a strong voice in the crowd. A teacher is always present and focused on the children, ready to provide assistance, direction, encouragement and, when needed, to model an appropriate interaction given the situation. Children who are more reserved or are not developmentally ready for this sort of self-advocacy and independence will receive more guidance as required to help them navigate these tricky social situations. All interactions between children are keenly observed to ensure the utmost respect and safety of all children.

RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT:

When behaviours become challenging and conflict arises in the classroom, Kindergarten teachers will refer to the following 3–tiered progression of procedures:

1. Prevention Strategies:

- Establishing clear, consistent, and simple limits.
- Helping children know and understand those limits.
- Reinforcing those limits in a positive way
- Providing choices for the child to avoid a power struggle
- Allowing children time to respond
- Offering cues and signs of upcoming transitions (ringing bell, musical interlude, etc.)
- Positively reinforcing appropriate behaviour
- Prioritizing incidents or preferences and responding appropriately (noise, clutter, attention seeking behaviour)
- Encouraging children to view the teacher as a safe and support person they can turn to for assistance.



BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT POLICY

2. Intervention Strategies:

- Getting a child's attention using their name, meeting them at eye level, talking with a calm, controlled voice
- Moving close, touching their arm to get their attention, and/or moving between the two children
- Reminding and reinforcing limits
- Acknowledging and accepting a child's feelings
- Redirecting or diverting unwanted behaviour
- Model and help children in problem solving skills
- Offer simple choices to clarify expectations or limits
- Allowing natural or logical consequences (within reason)
- Help children to make amends

3. Addressing Challenging Behaviour Strategies:

- Removal from an unsafe situation
- "Time Away" – removing the child from an over stimulating environment to a calming area to provide the opportunity to regain control over their emotional or physical state.
- Use a reward incentive, developed with the support of parents

If aggressive or destructive behaviour is a recurrent problem parents will be asked to meet with the Kindergarten teacher to discuss new strategies to support the child. If aggressive or destructive behaviour continues after a parent meeting and new strategies have been implemented to the best of the teacher's ability, parents may be asked to withdraw the child until a plan acceptable to both parents and instructor can be put in place. This will ensure a safe and non-threatening environment for all concerned.

Responsive Parental Concern Management:

Teachers are pleased to meet with parents at a mutually agreed time but are not free to discuss issues with parents during class, drop off or pick up time. Parents who have concerns about their child's experience at school can contact the teacher via email (kpratt@northumberlandchristian.ca) to set up a time to meet.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What supplies does my child need for school?

A. Each school year, NCS staff put together an August Mailout, which contains all the important information and dates your family will require for the school year. In this document there is also a greeting from classroom teachers, and a student supply list. This list may change from year to year, at the discretion of the teacher and their plans for the program that year. Typically, you can anticipate that your child will require the following:

- 2 boxes of tissues
- 1 backpack big enough to fit a lunch bag, water bottle and any work, notices, or soiled clothing the school may need to send home.
- Numerous spare outfits: While at school children’s clothing can become quickly soiled due to weather, or the learning occurring that day. Children will also require spare clothing in the event of a bathroom accident or illness. At least two pairs of all seasonally appropriate clothing items allow teachers the greatest ease during the day. Parents are responsible for replenishing spare clothes, and ensuring their child has a suitable selection and amount of spare clothes available at school each day.
- 1 pair of non-marking shoes – to be left at school – that can be put on independently (no laces please)
- 1 pair of outdoor shoes to wear to and from school that are great for climbing and running (winter boots/rain boots when weather permits). These are carried down to their cubbies in the morning to avoid unnecessary mess through the school.
- An extra pair of waterproof mittens to stay at school in the event their regular pair becomes wet, or the weather unexpectedly changes.

Please label all your child’s belongings, so we can ensure that they are returned. Mable’s Labels can be purchased online and are a great way to label almost anything. Purchasing Mable’s Labels supports NCS, as a percentage of your purchase is returned to the school through our fundraising efforts. Ask the office for more information.

Q. Are parents required to provide meals?

A. Yes. All children are expected to have eaten breakfast prior to drop off as breakfast provides them with the energy they require to have a pleasant day and fully participate in the planned activities. It is the responsibility of the family to provide each child with enough healthy food to get them through the course of their school day. Kindergarten students have a morning and afternoon nutrition break. Multiple healthy snacks and a larger “main course” should be provided, as well as a water bottle. Kindergarten students are often ravenous at first break and will eat many snacks or choose to eat their main course instead. So long as they have enough food left for lunch, this is fine. Snacks and treats are welcome, but teachers will encourage students to first eat their healthy items. Please limit the amount of ‘treats’ in your child’s lunch bag, as they become quite tempted to eat them first. Please let us know in writing if your child has any food allergies.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Am I restricted by what I can send in my child's lunch?

A. This varies year to year based on enrollment and individual allergies within the classroom and the school. Please discuss with the teacher each year.

Q. Can I pick my child up early?

A. Yes. Please notify the office of early pick up days with as accurate a time as can be reasonably provided. Since the teacher cannot leave class to ready a single child for early pickup, parents are to come to the classroom to get their child, pack their bag, and sign them out at the office.

Q. How do I inform the teacher of any special after-school arrangements? (daycare, going home with someone else, etc.)

A. Please inform the teacher or the office through a phone call, note, email, or verbal communication of where and with whom your child should go after school. Please inform the person picking up your child that Picture I.D. may be required before they can pick up your child. Until that person becomes a familiar face, this allows us to keep all children safe.

If car seats need to be exchanged between drivers, please clearly label your car seat and speak to the office about an appropriate location for your car seat to be left.

Q. What is the procedure when my child is sick or unable to attend school?

A. Please phone the school office prior to 9am to let them know your child will be unable to attend. You will likely need to share specific details for the absence, so staff are aware of any illnesses.

Q. What is the procedure if I would like my child to stay indoors at recess?

A. Our school policy is that all children go out for recess unless the weather is very inclement, and outdoor play is considered unsafe at that time. In the event of extreme cold, teachers may consider a reduced outdoor playtime.

If you feel that your child is too ill to go outside, then it also holds true that they are likely too ill to be at school. On days where your child's health makes you feel they are unable to participate in regular programming, please keep them home until they are better and able to return to their usual programming. However, if there are unusual circumstances that necessitate your child staying indoors at recess, please discuss the matter with the teacher or office staff, to see where accommodations may be possible.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Why does my child's clothing come home so wet and muddy?

A. At Northumberland Christian School we are lucky enough to have a large, natural piece of land that is not fenced, allowing our children supervised access to nature in all its glory. Children have access outdoors to areas that are man-made or contain man-made structures, but they also have access to large open spaces, and wooded spaces. These natural spaces also come with the effects of the season, including puddles, and mud pits. These play areas are used by the children at their discretion, allowing them the opportunity to fully connect with nature, exploring until their heart's content.

Some days children may choose to remain on the pavement, exploring chalk, biking, driving cars, or skipping. Other days, the children may choose to play on the various structures available to them, building their large muscles through climbing, swinging, and jumping. Some days, the children may decide to go on an adventure, using their investigative and observation skills, as they dig in the mud, splash in puddles, catch bugs, and build forts.

Regardless of which activity your child may choose for their outside play that day, their endeavours are fully supported and encouraged by the staff at NCS. Our goal for outdoor play is to have educators foster a child's curiosity, imagination, and their desire to explore. The outdoor environment, in all its various states, holds the potential for rich child-led learning experiences. Interacting with natural elements and loose parts from nature, provides children with an inherently open-ended form of play. Through the use of natural materials (sticks, rocks, water, mud, dirt, pinecones, grass, etc.), young children are able to construct support for their constantly changing ideas and avenues of exploration.

“Learning through play—particularly in the case of messy play—is a process of discovery and exploration, without a focus on a specific end product. [This] open-ended nature of muddy play, as a loose part resource,... serves any purpose a child chooses.”¹

To help manage messy play, you may consider purchasing a ‘mud suit’ for your child. These are plastic suits which go on over your child's outerwear/clothing to allow for full head to toe coverage. They can be purchased online for approximately \$40. Preschool teachers are happy to help students don these outfits, and they may be left at school for daily use. An alternate approach to mud suits, would be to ensure you send your child to school in ‘old’ clothes that you do not mind being soiled, or to not feel as though you need to wash the mud from their outerwear each night, especially during the seasonal times where those items will end up covered in mud again the next day.

¹ Fruin, Hannah. “Muddy Play. Reflections on Young Children's Outdoor Learning in an Urban Setting (Voices).” *naeyc*, NAEYC, <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/mar2020/outdoor-learning-urban-setting>. March 11, 2021.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. Does the class celebrate birthdays at school?

A. Yes, birthdays are celebrated in Kindergarten (unless otherwise instructed by the parent). Teachers are not responsible for throwing a birthday party but instead may provide some simple decorations, or special birthday plans and activities. Such decisions are left to the discretion of the classroom teacher. The Kindergarten teacher works hard to make birthdays special for each child. This may look different from how birthdays are celebrated in another classroom or with another teacher, but rest assured your child will have a special day. Birthdays are also recognized by the wider school community during chapel, and with a special birthday prize from the office treasure chest.

Treats for sharing may only be given out if the guardian consults with the classroom teacher in advance of the special day to ensure that allergies are acknowledged, and all students are accounted for. If your child is having a birthday party with only a few children from the class, please invite them privately so as to not cause any jealousy among students. You are welcome to hand out invitations at the school only if all the students are invited.

Q. Can I volunteer in the classroom?

A. We are a school which places great value on our community connections. We view all members of our close and extended community as valued members with much to offer and contribute.

We encourage family members to volunteer in all aspects of our school. If you are interested in volunteering, please ask at the office, or speak with the classroom teacher about ways to get involved. Parent volunteers are invited inside the classroom, to join committees, to run school clubs or sports teams, to run or assist with special events, to facilitate on fieldtrips, etc. All volunteers must submit a current police check to the school. Volunteers will also be required to sign in/out at the school office.

Q. Can my child bring toys to school?

A. To avoid lost, damaged or broken items (and the corresponding emotions), families are asked to please leave all toys and books at home. The exception to this is on your child's show-and-tell day. That item is to be left in their backpack until show-and-tell and then placed back in their bag once finished. If guardians feel a toy incentive is necessary to get their child moving in the morning or for entertainment during the car ride, that is fine, but toys are to remain in the car once at school.

Q. What if I have more questions that have not been addressed in this handbook?

A. Please feel free to speak with administrators or the Kindergarten teacher if you have any questions or concerns with any of the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in this handbook. We are always happy to answer any questions and accommodate your needs to the best of our abilities.

Telephone: 905-372-8766 or Email: office@northumberlandchristian.ca