



**THE
SUNFLOWER
SCHOOL**
inspiring young minds

PARENT HANDBOOK

The Sunflower School is a magical place of relationships and interactions that weave parents, children, and educators into a culture of learning and loving.



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Aanii. The Sunflower School acknowledges that the land upon which we operate today is Treaty 19 territory, which is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, including the Ojibway, Potawatomie and Chippewa, and the people of the Three Fires Confederacy. We are aware that our settler acknowledgement uses language which may differ from languages used by First Nations Peoples. We understand that language is fluid and living, and we respect this diversity. In recognition of this, we are committed to building important relationships with First Nations Peoples in order to enhance our knowledge of the many languages and histories within Ontario. We are compelled to embrace the valuable contributions of Indigenous Peoples in our work with children and families. We acknowledge the “Dish with One Spoon” treaty with respect to ecological and environmental sustainability: the “dish” representing the land that is to be shared peacefully and the “spoon” representing the individuals living on and using the resources of the land in a spirit of mutual cooperation. We wish to express gratitude to Mother Earth and for the resources we are using, and honour all the First Nations Peoples who have been living on the land since time immemorial. *Miigwech!*

Anishinaabemowin language:
“*Aanii*” = “*Hello/Hi*” (*casual*)
“*Miigwech*” = “*Thank you*”

THE HUNDRED LANGUAGES OF CHILDREN

No way
The hundred is there
The child is made of one hundred
The child has a hundred languages
A hundred hands
A hundred thoughts
A hundred ways of thinking
Of playing, of speaking
A hundred, always a hundred
Ways of listening
Of marveling, of loving
A hundred joys
For singing and understanding
A hundred worlds to discover
A hundred worlds to invent
A hundred worlds to dream
The child has a hundred languages
(And a hundred, hundred, hundred more)
But they steal ninety-nine
The school and the culture
Separate the head from the body
They tell the child to think without hands
To do without head
To listen and not to speak
To understand without joy
To love and to marvel
Only at Easter and Christmas
They tell the child
To discover the world already there
And of the hundred
They steal ninety-nine
They tell the child
That work and play
Reality and fantasy
Science and imagination
Sky and earth
Reason and dream
Are things
That do not belong together
And thus they tell the child
That the hundred is not there
The child says
“No way – The hundred is there.”

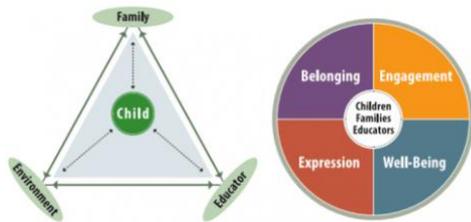
Loris Malaguzzi



PROGRAM STATEMENT

The Sunflower School delivers an inclusive, child-centered, family-oriented program based on a Reggio-inspired philosophy where children are viewed as competent, capable, curious participants and contributors in their environments. We are committed to supporting families and children to reach their potential through developing relationships built on respect and providing an environment that supports positive and responsive interactions. This begins with relationships among staff, students and volunteers and ripples out to relationships with children, families, community, our learning space and the materials we use with children.

Every person who enters The Sunflower School should feel that they belong here, that they are engaged in the program, that their well-being is supported and even enhanced just by being here, and that they are free to express themselves. These four foundations of belonging, engagement, well-being and expression are the rights of all children and provides the basis of our goals and expectations for our program.



As such, this program statement is a living document that continually evolves with the ongoing engagement of the staff and families in our program. Annual and ongoing review of the program statement with staff, students, volunteers and families ensures its continued relevance. The Sunflower School's staff are supported to make meaningful contributions to the ongoing development and evolution of the program through professional learning provided in the form of onsite pedagogical leadership, attendance in training, workshops and conferences, and support with education.

The following statements specify the approaches we will employ to: promote health, safety, nutrition and well-being; foster positive and responsive relationships; support exploration, play and inquiry; and support family engagement and communication.

Approaches to Promote Health, Safety, Nutrition and Well-Being

The health, safety, nutrition and well-being of the children in our programs is a primary focus of The Sunflower School. Our goal is for all children to develop a sense of self, health, and well-being that they are able to bring with them into their later years. We recognize the significant importance of the early years in children's development and strive to provide children with a strong foundation.

The Sunflower School supports these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, such as by:

- Providing nutritious foods and beverages that incorporate family and cultural preferences and are in accordance with *Canada's Food Guide* and approved by a Registered Dietician, including one main meal and at least two snacks per day;
- Involving the children and families in menu choices,
- Providing experiences for children to engage in food preparation (e.g., baking activities),
- Being sensitive to and accommodating for children's food restrictions and allergies,
- Creating family-style, positive eating environments with foods and portion sizes that are responsive to children's cues of hunger and fullness,

- Ensuring that all staff members are trained and able to appropriately respond to health, safety and emergency situations,
- Engaging children in physical activity and decreasing the amount of time that is spent in sedentary activities,
- Providing opportunities for children to engage in risk at a level that is appropriate for their development,
- Supporting mental health wellness through encouraging children's development of self-regulation, resiliency and a rich emotional vocabulary,
- Providing opportunities and organization of materials to support children's growing autonomy and independence (e.g., using real dishes for mealtimes),
- Completing daily health checks through communication with families to understand the child's state of health entering the program and continually monitoring their health during their involvement in the program,
- Performing at least daily opportunities for sleep, rest or engagement in quiet activities depending on each individual child's needs and development,
- Coordinating with Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health to ensure that all health and safety procedures are in accordance with research-based best practices,
- Providing at least two hours of time spent learning outside on a daily basis (weather permitting),
- Monitoring children's engagement in activities to determine optimal periods for transitions,
- Providing a variety of indoor, outdoor, active, rest and quiet experiences throughout the day.

Approaches to Foster Positive and Responsive Relationships

Positive and responsive relationships are essential to high-quality early learning and care. Our goal is to nurture authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging between children, adults and the world around them. We create opportunities for children to connect to others in their world, support their experiences of being valued, and provide opportunities to be part of a community. Through responding positively to children's cues and engaging in reciprocal interactions secure relationships are developed. We believe that supporting children's internal capacity to self-regulate and engage in positive interactions is the foundation for optimal learning, development, health and well-being.

The Sunflower School supports these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, such as by:

- Welcoming and greeting children and families at arrival,
- Providing opportunities for children to engage with and make contributions to the world around them,
- Promoting engaged citizenship through empowerment, empathy and advocacy,
- Supporting the development of a sense of community within the Centre and the community as a whole,
- Providing opportunities for children to be heard and for their contributions to be appreciated within their communities,
- Advocating for children as active, competent people who have a stake in society,
- Encouraging children's active participation within their communities,

- Honouring children's ideas and contributions by responding to them in a respectful way and by focusing on using authentic language in our interactions with them,
- Interacting with children on their level,
- Actively play partnering with children to expand their learning and support their social experiences,
- Knowing when to be an intentional observer in a play scenario and to support these learning experiences from afar,
- Modeling resiliency and problem-solving skills with children and helping them to identify their feelings, the feelings of others, and possible solutions,
- Placing importance on encouraging children to develop authentic skills for solving problems, instead of having them take part in a prescribed solution (e.g., making a child say "sorry"),
- Getting to know the children on an individual basis to identify and work to proactively minimize stressors, and to help the children become self-aware,
- Actively listening to children and giving them the time and space to express themselves,
- Incorporating learning experiences for the children to engage in a range of group sizes,
- Responding to challenging behaviours with the most appropriate and effective but least intrusive strategy,
- Reframing challenging behaviours by reflecting on why they may be occurring and what the child might be trying to express,
- Acknowledging and positively reinforcing children's efforts in a meaningful way by being specific when describing actions and reactions,
- Encouraging children to be respectful of the ideas of others and modeling this ourselves,
- Talking about emotions and modeling empathy and self-regulation out loud for children to hear.
- Incorporating materials that add to a homelike feeling within the learning environments (e.g., curtains, plants, lamps, natural lighting, soft colours, pillows, real materials),
- Providing interesting and complex open-ended learning materials for children to engage with and explore,
- Including real items (e.g., dishes, lamps, glass jars) for children to use and explore in their play,
- Providing natural elements (e.g., sticks, rocks, shells, plants) to help children explore the natural world,
- Role-modeling and encouraging respect for materials in the shared learning environment,
- Providing opportunities for extended and uninterrupted play and exploration multiple times each day,
- Providing a variety of learning experiences and materials for children to freely choose to play and express themselves with,
- Engaging with children during their exploration, play and inquiry to support and extend their meaning-making of their experiences,
- Engaging in open-ended conversations with children and asking thought-provoking questions to help expand the children's learning and our understanding of their explorations,
- Having an awareness of the many languages that children use to express themselves and providing opportunities for children to share their thoughts and ideas in a variety of ways,
- Reviewing documentation of learning experiences with the children in order to encourage their reflection on their learning,
- Capitalizing on spontaneous, meaningful learning moments during the day by being actively engaged with the children,
- Creating learning environments that mirror the ideas, values, attitudes and cultures of those who use the space,
- Involving local community partners in children's explorations and inquiries (e.g., visiting various areas, families' workplaces, regularly exploring in the marsh, making use of locally donated resources and materials, inviting relevant experts in to share knowledge with the children, etc.).

Approaches to Support Exploration, Play and Inquiry

When children are able to explore the world around them with their natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged. Our goal is for the indoor, outdoor and natural environments to engage children in active, creative and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry. Through this type of play and inquiry, they develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, and innovating, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.

The Sunflower School supports these goals through the implementation of a variety of approaches, such as by:

- Observing and engaging with children to understand their questions and inquiries and using these as a guide for programming,
- Respecting and supporting the children's sense of curiosity and wonder,
- Viewing the environment as the "third teacher" and understanding the significant impact it has on our program,
- Organizing the learning environments in a way that makes them aesthetically appealing, uncluttered, engaging and welcoming,

Approaches to Support Family Engagement and Communication

Care and learning cannot occur without the support of the family. Our goal is for families to be active participants in their child's experiences at The Sunflower School. We strive to establish positive, responsive relationships with children and their families by promoting engagement and ongoing communication about the program and their children.

The Sunflower School supports these goals through the implantation of a variety of approaches, such as by:

- Communicating with families on a daily, in-person basis at minimum at arrival and departure,
- Communicating our perspective of the children's learning and development with families in daily documentation sent electronically through our communication app and posted on documentation boards,
- Encouraging families to share their perspective on the children's learning and development through in-person sharing and electronic responses in our communication app,
- Encouraging families to share pictures and stories of their child's time at home with family,

- Displaying family information and photographs throughout the learning environments,
- Incorporating aspects from a variety of cultures within the learning environment (e.g., food, music, art, photographs, artifacts, etc.),
- Inviting family participation within the daily program and encouraging them to share their varied perspectives and cultural experiences with the children,
- Creating a comfortable place in each learning environment for families to stay and visit,
- Connecting families with local community partners for additional support and services,
- Planning special events and social activities for families to engage in throughout the year (Curriculum Night, Winter Solstice, Graduation and many other annual family nights at the Centres).

Our Use of Documentation

The Sunflower School's educators use a variety of documentation methods to share in the joy of children's learning and development, support our communication with parents/guardians, reflect on our planning and creation of environments and experiences, review the impact of our interaction and planning approaches, and to support and monitor the implementation of our program statement. On a daily basis, each class writes a small piece of documentation that draws attention to the children's experiences from the day. These go out on our communication app's daily report. These pieces of daily documentation share a broader picture of what is happening in each learning environment on a regular basis.

Within each classroom, more individually and long-term focused documentation pieces are also created and shared with families. These documentation pieces reflect the children, families and educators in each individual learning space and take on a variety of formats, including individual learning stories, group reflections, storybooks, and documentation panels located in your child's classroom as well as in the halls and/or on the playground.

Learning Outcomes

When children leave The Sunflower School, it is our goal that they will:

- Participate as a member of an independent community,
- Care for themselves, others and the community,
- Treat others with love and compassion,
- Cooperate with other children to accomplish group goals,
- Celebrate group accomplishments,
- Laugh and play with a tangible sense of joy,
- Express many human emotions in language and art,
- Be inquisitive,
- Initiate new ideas and invent solutions to problems,
- Sing and dance with exuberance,
- Paint, draw, sculpt and construct objects of beauty,
- Maintain the community's spaces in cleanliness and order,
- Greet guests with courtesy and charm,

- Stick with difficult tasks or come back to them later in order to succeed.

Guiding Children and Behaviour

The purpose of our school and our team is to provide a warm and caring environment in which each child can play, learn and grow. Keeping in mind the development of the children, consistent limits have been set. These reflect concerns about issues of health and safety, appropriate use of toys and equipment, and respecting the rights of each child as an individual. Children respond best to positive direction, encouraging language and tone of voice. We believe a child learns respect by being given respect. Our child guidance policies reflect these beliefs. The following methods will be used as appropriate to individual situations:

- Redirection: guiding a child towards an acceptable option when engaged in an unacceptable activity,
- Natural and logical consequences,
- Limit-setting: boundaries are developed by the team for the children as a group or for individual children, according to specific situations,
- Modeling appropriate behaviour,
- Offering and encouraging choices,
- Anticipating conflict and planning an appropriate program environment,
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement.

Prohibited Practices

Under no circumstances will children be harmed physically or emotionally by a staff member. Contravention of this policy by staff would be dealt with under terms of employment. Also, parents or guardians, students, and other adults are required to maintain this same policy while they are on the premises of The Sunflower School.

The Sunflower School prohibits the following:

- Corporal punishment, which may include but is not limited to hitting, spanking, slapping and pinching,
- Physical restraint of children, including but not limited to confining to a high chair, car seat, etc. for discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless for the purposes described in the regulation (to prevent self-harm, harm to others, and only until risk of harm/injury is no longer imminent),
- Locking the exits of the child care centre for the purpose of confining a child, or confining to areas or rooms without adult supervision (unless such confinement occurs during an emergency),
- Use of harsh, degrading measures or threats, or derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate or frighten the child or undermine their self-respect, dignity or self-worth,
- Depriving the child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding, or
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

Inclusion Policy

Inclusion/inclusive: an approach to policies and practice in early years settings where all children and families are accepted and served within a program and where each child and family experiences a sense of belonging and is supported to participate fully in all aspects of the program or service. Inclusive practice includes being attentive to the capabilities, personalities and circumstances of all children and

understanding the diversity of development of all children (College of Early Childhood Educators: Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, 2017).

The Sunflower School is committed to supporting high quality, inclusive practices in an environment that is reflective of every child's capacity and interest. We believe that children of all abilities should have access to participate in meaningful programs that support our image of the child. When children are together as part of the group, their development is enhanced and positive social attitudes are fostered, as is their sense of belonging. All children need support to reduce or eliminate barriers so they can learn and fully engage in experiences with their peers. Our staff are responsive to the individual abilities and needs of each child, and work as a team with families and Dufferin Child and Family Services' *Inclusion for Children with Additional Needs* program to develop, implement and review Individual Support Plans for children additional needs. Occasionally, additional staff are required as part of a strategy to include every child.

Right of Exclusion Policy

In very rare circumstances, there are scenarios in which a decision is made by our Executive to terminate care from The Sunflower School. This may include a scenario where a child has been struggling with severe aggression, and the intervention strategies brought forth by The Sunflower School are ignored or inconsistently implemented by the child's family. It is the position of The Sunflower School that every child and family has a right to access our services, however if the safety of children and staff in our programs is at risk and a solution cannot be reached, then The Sunflower School may be in a position to end the relationship of service. If parents/guardians are asked to withdraw their child, two weeks' notice will be given. In circumstances where danger is imminent to either other children, staff or anyone else, The Sunflower School reserves the right to terminate without notice but will provide compensation for the required two-week period.

In any case:

- o Parents/guardians are notified of documented observations
- o Directors will guide the implementation of strategies to support the child which includes action from families
- o If action plans are ignored and concerns remain, Directors will meet with families to arrive at a solution
- o If action plans are continually ignored and the safety of the child, other children, staff, etc. is at risk, the Executive may determine that terminating care is the final action

FIRST DAY AT THE SUNFLOWER SCHOOL

On your child's first day, please bring the following:

Water bottle, labelled with your child's name,

Backpack for your child's belongings,

Photograph of your family for your child's classroom,

Clothes for outdoor play:

Winter: snowsuits, boots, mittens, hat

Spring & Fall: splash/med pants, rain boots

Summer: summer shoes for outdoor play

All children must have indoor & outdoor shoes year-round (indoor shoes can be rubber-soled slippers),

Blanket, and if your child sleeps with a comfort item they can bring that (doll or cuddly toy)

Extra set of clothes, labelled with your child's name (especially if your child is toilet training)

If your child is toilet training, bring extra sets of underwear (we do not want your child to feel embarrassed or upset during a toileting accident and if they have an extra set of their own clothes, it will help the situation)

Toddler Program:

Soother or pacifier for sleep time
Diapers and wipes for the week

Infant Program:

Indoor walking shoes
Blanket for sleep times
Food labelled in containers
Bottles labelled with your child's name
Diapers and wipes
Extra clothes

Diaper cream

Sunscreen

STARTING YOUR CHILD CARE JOURNEY

Children and parents/guardians may experience separation anxiety when a child begins a new program. It is our practice to have a set routine for your daily departure. Please speak with your child's educator to develop a plan that you and your child will be happy with. Our educators have many good examples of successful "goodbye" routines.

Visit days are a part of a positive, happy transition to The Sunflower School. The first visit day is with your child in the classroom. This is your opportunity to get to know the educators and our program and for your child to see that you are happy with your care for them. The second visit day is for you to bring in all of your child's belongings and to leave them for approximately two hours so that we can see how happy or unhappy they may be. Our goal is for them to feel safe and happy.

FLOW OF THE DAY

The following is an outline of your child's day in their respective program:

Infant Program (Townline Location Only)

8 months to 18 months (sleep as needed)

7:00am – 8:30am	Children arrive during the morning; teachers greet each child and accompanying adults and facilitate separation issues. Children wash their hands upon arrival. Breakfast is also served during this time. Children will engage in quiet play activities.
8:30am – 9:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning activities • Diaper changes • Wash hands for snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snack time
9:00am – 10:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor experiences
10:00am – 11:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning activities • Sleep as needed • Circle time
11:00am – 11:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diaper changes • Wash hands for lunch
11:30am – 12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch time
12:00pm – 1:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diaper changes • Tidy up from lunch • Quiet play
1:00pm – 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afternoon activities • Diaper changes • Wash hands for snack <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snack time
3:30pm – 4:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor experiences
4:30pm – 5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet play • Diaper changes • Evening snack time & prepare for home

Toddler Program
18 months to 2.5 years

7:00am – 8:30am	Children arrive during the morning; teachers greet each child and accompanying adults and facilitate separation issues. Children wash their hands upon arrival. Breakfast is also served during this time. Children will engage in quiet play activities.
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning meeting time • Wash hands for snack • Morning snack • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Morning program activities • Preparing for outdoors • Outdoor experiences • Diaper changes / toileting as need • Wash hands & prepare for lunch
11:30am – 12:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch time • Clean up from lunch • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Prepare for sleep time
12:30pm – 2:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep / rest time
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Put beds away • Wash hands for snack • Afternoon snack • Afternoon meeting time • Preparing for outdoors • Outdoor experiences • Afternoon program activities
5:00pm – 5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet activities • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Evening snack time & prepare for home

Preschool Program
2.5 years to 4 years

7:00am – 8:30am	Children arrive during the morning; teachers greet each child and accompanying adults and facilitate separation issues. Children wash their hands upon arrival. Breakfast is also served during this time. Children will engage in quiet play activities.
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning meeting time • Wash hands for snack • Morning snack • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Morning program activities • Preparing for outdoors • Outdoor experiences • Diaper changes / toileting as need • Wash hands & prepare for lunch
11:30am – 12:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch time • Clean up from lunch • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Prepare for sleep time
12:30pm – 2:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleep / rest time
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Put beds away • Wash hands for snack • Afternoon snack • Afternoon meeting time • Preparing for outdoors • Outdoor experiences • Afternoon program activities
5:00pm – 5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet activities • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Evening snack time & prepare for home

Kindergarten & School Age Program – Before & After School Care
4 years to 10 years

7:00am – 8:00am	Children arrive during the morning; teachers greet each child and accompanying adults. Children wash their hands upon arrival. Breakfast is also served during this time. Children will engage in quiet play activities.
8:00am – 8:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk to school • Take Kindergarteners directly to teachers
2:50pm – 3:15pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick up children from school
3:15pm – 3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands for snack • Snack time
3:30pm – 5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Afternoon activities • Outdoor experiences • Evening snack offered & prepare for home

Kindergarten & School Age Program – PA Day/School Holiday
4 years to 10 years

7:00am – 8:00am	Children arrive during the morning; teachers greet each child and accompanying adults. Children wash their hands upon arrival. Breakfast is also served during this time. Children will engage in quiet play activities.
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning meeting time • Wash hands for snack • Morning snack • Morning program activities • Preparing for outdoors • Outdoor experiences • Wash hands & prepare for lunch
11:30am – 12:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lunch time • Clean up from lunch
Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash hands for snack • Afternoon snack • Afternoon meeting time • Preparing for outdoors • Outdoor experiences • Afternoon program activities
5:00pm – 5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet activities • Evening snack time & prepare for home

Makerspace Program
2.5 years to 4 years

8:30am – 9:00am	Children arrive during the morning; teachers greet each child and accompanying adults and facilitate separation issues.
Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning meeting time • Wash hands for snack • Morning snack • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Morning program activities • Preparing for outdoors • Outdoor experiences • Diaper changes / toileting as need
11:30am – 12:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean up from experiences • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Prepare for home
5:00pm – 5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quiet activities • Diaper changes / toileting as needed • Evening snack time & prepare for home

THE CHILDREN

The experiences for your child is our most important core value at The Sunflower School. Children's voices are heard and each child is respected for their uniqueness.

Parents as Partners

Parental involvement is an essential element of The Sunflower School's method of early childhood development and is critical to the success of the program and the individual child. It is an intrinsic element in supporting, guiding, and caring for your child. Your communication is valued and is an important tool in the life of the school.

The Sunflower School uses a communication app that allows us to share the day-to-day activities of the children with parents/guardians, including their engagement with experiences, snack and meal reports as well as sleep or rest reports. This is also a great way for families and educators to send messages to each other as needed.

The Parental/Educator program provides opportunities for parents to ensure the implementation of positive self-image, language skills, motor skills and problem-solving skills in the evolving child. Parental involvement is also an essential component to open communications.

In addition, our family event "Curriculum Night" provides the opportunity for sharing developmental information and providing assistance on a personal basis.

The Sunflower School offers its educators lectures, presentations, and workshops on topics of interest relating to family/child education and parent education to deepen the understanding of early childhood development.

Overall, the Parental/Educator program provides a bond between home and school that gives the child's life a sense of wholeness and completeness.

All parents/guardians wishing to participate in a field trip must provide us with a clear Criminal Reference Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening.

THE EDUCATORS

Our qualified staff consists of Directors, Supervisors, Early Childhood Educators, Early Childhood Assistants (including Apprentices) and on-site Kitchen staff. Directors and Early Childhood Educators are all registered with the College of Early Childhood Educators. All program staff are 18 years of age and older. All staff working with the children are certified in First Aid and CPR Level "C" and possess clear Criminal Reference Checks with Vulnerable Sector Screening.

Training and Professional Development

Our educators are committed to ongoing continuing education and professional development, and are required to obtain a minimum of 20 hours of professional learning each year.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Hours of Operation

Our Townline, Lord Dufferin Centre and Broadway locations operate from Monday to Friday, 7:00am to 5:30pm inclusive. During the winter holidays, our operating hours are reduced to 8:30am – 4:30pm for the days we are open between Boxing Day and New Year's Eve.

Please refer to our Late Fee policy under the section "Fees" regarding after-hours pick-ups. **On the Friday of a long weekend, The Sunflower School will be closed at 5:00pm.**

There will be care available for School Age and Kindergarten children during the following scheduled school closures:

- Winter Break

- March Break
- Summer Holidays
- PA Days

The Sunflower School also closes on the Thursday and Friday before the Labor Day long weekend in September. Our educators use this time for classroom maintenance and preparations for the new school year in September, as well as for professional development.

Programs Available at Each Location

Lord Dufferin Centre Location

- Toddler Program (18 months to 2.5 years)
- Preschool Program (2.5 to 4 years)
- Makerspace Program – ½ days (2.5 to 4 years)
- Kinder & School Age Program (JK to Grade 4)

Townline Location

- Infant Program (8 months to 18 months)
- Toddler Program (18 months to 2.5 years)
- Preschool Program (2.5 to 4 years)

Broadway Location

- Toddler Program (18 months to 2.5 years)
- Makerspace Program – ½ days (2.5 to 4 years)
- Kinder & School Age Program (Kindergarten to Grade 3)

Daily Arrivals and Departures Including Release of Children

The safety and security of each child in our school is of the utmost concern to us. We recommend children are dropped off by 9:00am in order for the child to derive the most from the program. It is our policy that parents/guardians inform us if they are going to be arriving later than 10:00am so that not only are all children accounted for, but so educators can plan outdoor activities or excursions accordingly. We cannot leave a staff member behind to receive a late child. Parents/guardians are encouraged to use our communication app to send a message to their child's educator making them aware of your child's absence or late arrival. Parents/guardians also have the ability to mark their child absent for the day using the communication app.

Arrivals

Do not hesitate to tell the educators anything you think they should know regarding your child (e.g., your child did not sleep well last night). Even if the educators seem busy, they will be pleased to hear anything that helps them to understand your child and to plan wisely for child's day.

Toddlers and Preschoolers have differing skills but all should be able to remove their own hats and mittens. Assist them only as necessary. Encourage independence for these tasks.

Bring your child to their educators after their outdoor clothing is removed for a simple visual health check before your child joins the group. It is a requirement under the *Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)* that all educators complete a quick visual check daily. An educator cannot be responsible for a child they do not know has arrived; please make contact with an educator before leaving them with their group. Educators are required by the Ministry of Education to maintain accurate attendance records indicating the arrival and departure times of each child.

Departures

Upon picking up your child, be sure to make contact with their educator to let them know you have your child. For your child's safety, we ask that children not be lifted over the fence surrounding our playgrounds.

We recommend that you come for your child at a regular time each day since small children generally feel more secure when their daily routines are predictable. If you know you will be later than usual, please send your child's educators a message using our communication so that they may prepare your child.

If you cannot come for your child, please **notify us as early as possible in writing** (i.e., using our communication app) who the individual will be picking up your child. Your child will not be released to anyone without your permission. The person who will be picking up your child **must** be able to provide educators with photo identification if the educators do not know them. As new families join our programs, we ask that even parents or guardians bring photo ID for pick-ups during the period where families and educators are getting to know one another, at least until staff can identify parents/guardians without photo identification.

For Kindergarten and School Age children, it is very important that you notify The Sunflower School in a timely manner if you will be dropping your child off or picking them up directly from their school.

For the mornings, we ask that you notify us prior to 8:00am if you are taking your child directly to school. For the afternoons, please notify us prior to 2:30pm if you will be picking your child up directly from their school.

Authorization for Pick-Up

The enrolment application provides space for families to indicate the names of those who are "authorized" to pick-up the child. We ask that staff be informed ahead of time when someone other than yourself will be picking up.

Process for Moving to the Next Program

Children move from program to the next (e.g., from Toddler to Preschool) based on the following criteria:

- Availability of space in the next program
- Chronological age
- Developmental readiness

The decision to move a child up to the next age group is made by the Director in consultation with educators and parents/guardians. Once a child is scheduled to move up, the parent/guardian will be notified of the move date and any fee changes. A movement schedule will be developed outlining the process with each child's needs being considered. This is shared with each family prior to the visitation period. During the weeks prior to the move date, the child will visit their new group for a portion of their day to ensure a smooth transition.

It is important to note that your child will not automatically move up to the next age group as soon as they become of age. Remember, children move from one program to the next based on the criteria above. Rest assured; our educators are experts in providing developmentally appropriate programming inclusive to all children in their program. This means that even though your child may be one of the older ones in their group, they are receiving developmentally appropriate materials and experiences based on their individual needs, as opposed to one general program design based off the younger age group.

School Tours

The Sunflower School hosts an Open House four times per year. Families on our wait list are invited via email of an upcoming Open House, where they will then have the opportunity to meet some of the team, as well as view the classrooms with your child. Open Houses are generally scheduled on Saturdays and take place from approximately 10:00am to 12:00pm.

Enrolment Applications

Enrolment applications must be completed before the child starts at The Sunflower School. The application is designed to meet all the requirements from the Ministry of Education and Public Health.

A reminder that an anticipated start date as requested by the parent or guardian at the time of completing the application is not guaranteed. A this time, it is more likely that your child receives a spot in September compared to any other time of the year.

Registration Procedure

When a child care spot becomes available, the registration process is as follows:

- Prospective families are contacted by the Enrolment Director via email offering them a space for their child
- Families must respond in a timely manner with their decision to accept or decline the available child care spot
- Upon acceptance of a spot, a \$500 deposit is required which will be applied to your first invoice. This deposit is refundable if you inform us 8 weeks before your child's start date that you no longer need the spot. If you inform us less than 8 weeks before your child's start date, the deposit is non-refundable.
- The Enrolment Director will coordinate with the Director or Supervisor of your child's school and you will be asked to complete and return the following:
 - Your child's current immunization status (Public Health form)
 - CWELCC Form
 - Direct Withdrawal Form to arrange pre-authorized withdrawals from your account and select payment schedule
 - Application Form (if any information is missing)
- You will be contacted by the Director or Supervisor to welcome your family to our school, to arrange your child's visit days, confirm your child's start date and confirm that all required documents have been completed and returned to us

Emergency Preparedness

The Sunflower School has an Emergency Preparedness Plan outlining the policies and procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency or evacuation. Parents/guardians will be notified of our whereabouts and what has occurred one of three ways:

- Message through our communication app
- Signage on the front door
- Phone call from staff

Each location has its own Emergency Preparedness Plan – please visit our website for further details.

Emergency Contacts

The Sunflower School requires information on how to contact parents or guardians in cases of emergency or illness. Families need to provide at least two emergency contacts in the event that parents/guardians cannot be reached; parents/guardians will always be contacted first. This information is provided in our enrolment application.

Wait List Policy

At The Sunflower School, we understand that securing child care is complex. A family's wait list status (with status defined as high-probability or low-probability) is based on numerous factors, and we will offer spaces according to the list below regardless of when care was applied for:

- Available space which is influenced by current and projected enrolment (age groupings as per CCEYA)
- Preferred or flexible start date
- Age of the child(ren)

The Sunflower School's current families, internal transfers between our schools, and employees are given priority when spaces become available.

We try to predict our enrolment cycle from 6 to 18 months in advance. There may be times when demand is so high that we are unable to accommodate new families onto the wait list. **There is no fee charged to be on the wait list.**

Families are only considered to be on the wait list when the following has occurred:

- Enrolment application is completed
- Communication is followed up in a timely manner

There is one wait list maintained for all of our locations. When space becomes available, families are contacted by the Enrolment Director with the offer of a space at the location with the availability. Families may choose to accept the space or wait until their desired location has availability. If a family declines an available space, they will remain at their position on the wait list. When a family accepts a space, registration is confirmed once fee arrangements are in place.

The wait list will be visibly available for the Enrolment Director to advise prospective families of their position on the wait list. The wait list is private and confidential. Each child will be given a number and placed on the wait list.

The wait list policy may be affected during complete school closures (government mandated) which are unforeseen (e.g., pandemics). During these times, child care centres may be required to operate at reduced enrolment. If this is the case, the wait list may be frozen as our current enrolment would be our priority.

Orientation Visits by Parent/Guardian and Child

We strongly recommend each family visit the appropriate classroom for a minimum of two occasions. The purpose of these visits is to acquaint the child to their new environment while a familiar face is present. For the first visit, the child's parent/guardian will stay with them and it usually lasts 1 hour. For the second visit, the parent/guardian is encouraged to leave their child for approximately 2 hours. During these visits, a gateway appointment takes place at which time policies and procedures are reviewed as well as the enrolment application form to ensure all information required is provided.

Withdrawal

If you wish to withdraw your child from our school, you are required to provide 4 weeks' notice in writing. One month's fees will be charged in lieu of proper notice.

FEES

Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) Funding

The Sunflower School is currently enrolled in the CWELCC system. The agreement is for the calendar year 2024/2025 with the County of Dufferin for the provision of CWELCC funding. As of January 1, 2025, fees have been reduced by 59%. The fee charts will be posted in the front hallways of our schools.

Any child **under six years of age** for the full calendar year **and** enrolled in a licensed Infant, Toddler, Preschool or Kindergarten group (as defined in the CCEYA) is **eligible**.

Any child **turning six years old between January 1 – June 30** in the calendar year **and** enrolled in a licensed Kindergarten group is **eligible up until June 30 in the calendar year**.

Any child **turning six years old between July 1 – December 31** in the calendar year is **eligible up until the end of the month in which they turn six in the calendar year**, regardless of the child's age group.

Once a six year old is ineligible as described above, a full time Before and After School rate will be charged.

Families receiving fee subsidy will continue to receive subsidy and will also see the above same reduction amounts in their parental contributions (to a minimum of \$0/day).

The Sunflower School may choose to opt out of the CWELCC system if government restrictions cause financial harm to our business. The CWELCC system is an annual (January to December) agreement.

CWELCC Funding Fees as of January 1, 2025

Program	Daily Fee
Infant <i>8 months - 18 months</i>	\$22.00
Toddlers <i>18 months - 2.5 years</i>	\$22.00
Preschool <i>2.5 years - 4 years</i>	\$22.00
Makerspace <i>2.5 years - 4 years</i>	\$15.59
Kindergarten <i>Before and After School</i>	\$14.65
School Age <i>Before and After School</i>	\$30.00
Kindergarten <i>After School Only – Broadway location</i>	\$12.00
School Age <i>After School Only – Broadway location</i>	\$17.00
School Holiday <i>Kindergarten</i>	\$22.00
School Holiday <i>School Age</i>	\$52.00

The Sunflower School enrolled into the CWELCC system agreement as of April 1, 2022.

CWELCC Base Fee Reduction Calendar for January 2025 for full-fee children (Daily fees with 59% off our regular daily fees)

Program	Original Daily Fee as of March 27, 2022	New Daily Fee as of January 1, 2023 with 52.75% Reduction	New Daily Fee as of January 1, 2025 with 59% Reduction
Infant	\$76.00	\$35.91	\$22.00
Toddler	\$69.00	\$32.60	\$22.00
Preschool	\$63.00	\$29.77	\$22.00
Makerspace	\$33.00	\$15.59	\$15.59
Kindergarten <i>Before and After</i>	\$31.00	\$14.65	\$14.65
Kindergarten <i>After only at Broadway</i>	\$18.00	\$8.51	\$12.00
Kindergarten <i>School Holiday</i>	\$63.00	\$29.77	\$22.00

"Base fee" (or "base rate") means any fee or part of a fee that is considered to be a mandatory charge to a parent for providing care, including anything a Service Provider is required to provide under the CCEYA (e.g., daily fee for care, mandatory registration fee, etc.), or

anything a Service Provider requires the parent to purchase from the Service Provider, but does not include a non-base fee. Base fees include the daily fee and registration fees.

“Non-base fee” (or “non-base rate”) means any fees charged for optional items or optional services, such as transportation or field trips, or any fees charged pursuant to an agreement between the parent and the Service Provider in respect of circumstances where the parent fails to meet the terms of the agreement (e.g., fees for picking up a child late, fees to obtain items that the parent agreed to provide for their child but failed to provide), as defined in the CCEYA. Non-base fees include overdue/service charges on accounts, late fees which go directly to staff, field trip fees and fundraising activities.

School Fee Payment Policy and Payment Options

School fees are charged monthly. The Sunflower School creates invoices at the end of the month to reflect your child’s schedule for the next month. All payments are arranged via direct withdrawal, and you can choose to have your payments withdrawn on either the 1st or the 2nd of each month (you will pick one date for all future withdrawals, e.g. you may decide to have all payments withdrawn on the 1st of each month).

- No cash or credit card payments,
- You will complete an authorization form for pre-authorized withdrawals from your account and supply a VOID cheque for initial set-up,
- If you need immediate changes to your payment or invoice, you will contact our Enrolment Director, Rachel Donatelli as soon as possible,
- Invoices are available upon request from Rachel Donatelli. If you wish to receive an invoice each month, you can email Rachel with this request.

Rachel Donatelli: rachel@thesunflowerschool.ca or (519) 938-5385.

Service Charge for Returned Payments

Payments returned by the bank for any reason will be subject to a service charge of \$25.00 to recover the school’s banking and administration costs.

Income Tax Receipts

Childcare is tax deductible. An income tax receipt will be issued to each family reflecting the fees paid from January 1st to December 31st of each year. Tax receipts are emailed to your family by February 28th each year. If you have an outstanding balance on your account, payment is required before a tax receipt is provided.

Overdue Accounts

Parents/guardians are required to keep their accounts up to date. School fees are due on the 1st or 2nd day of each month (whichever date you have authorized for withdrawals). Accounts will be in arrears as of the 3rd day of the month. You will be subject to an interest charge of 2% per month for all outstanding balances. If the account remains in arrears, the child may be given notice of termination from the school. Any outstanding balances will be automatically withdrawn from your account after one month in arrears.

Over-payments

An over-payment of fees is applied to future fees owing and normally is not refunded unless a child withdraws from the school.

School-Age Programs (Includes Kindergarteners)

Our School-Age programs run from September to June. Your before and after school rate is applied every month including the months with school holidays such as March Break. If your child attends our camp and/or PA Day program, there will be a fee associated for that time. If your child is not attending during a school holiday, then your regular before and after school monthly fee will apply.

In July and August, our Kinders and School Agers can pick and choose the weeks they would like to attend Summer Camp. All fees for Summer Camp are due before the summer starts. Registration is required for camps and PA Days. If you have registered your child for a PA Day, we require two weeks’ written notice for cancellation. If your child is registered for Summer Camp, you are required to provide written notice for any cancellations within the first week of June.

Late Fee

The Sunflower School remains open until 5:30pm each day (5:00pm on the Friday of a long weekend). In the event your child is late to be picked up, a fee will be levied and is payable on your monthly fee. This fee will then be paid to the educator who stayed late with your child. Please sign the late pick-up slip provided by the staff. The late fee is payable at a rate of **\$10.00 for the first five minutes and \$1 per minute for every minute after** (per child if there are siblings in our programs). Our staff must be released from duty on time. It is requested that parents arrive promptly before 5:30pm to pick up their child in order for staff to fulfill their duties and close the school promptly at 5:30pm. We understand that there may be some emergencies or extenuating circumstances that arise (e.g., severe weather). Please send your child’s educator a message through our communication app or call the school directly to let staff know that you will be late.

Included in your Monthly Fees

Full fees must be paid for the weeks containing statutory holidays, snow days, vacations and children off sick.

HOLIDAYS AND VACATION

Statutory Holidays

The Sunflower School recognizes the following as statutory holidays:

- New Year’s Day (January)
- Family Day (February)
- Good Friday (March/April)
- Easter Monday (March/April)
- Victoria Day (May)
- Canada Day (July)
- Civic Holiday (August)
- Labor Day (September)
- Thanksgiving Day (October)
- Christmas Day (December)
- Boxing Day (December)

Full fees must be paid for the weeks containing these holidays.

Snow Days (see also School Closures: Planned & Unplanned)

Snow days for The Sunflower School are determined by the decisions of the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB). All staff and families are notified via text message through our communication app by 6:30am if The Sunflower School will be closed due to inclement weather. Full fees must still be paid in the event of school closures due to inclement weather.

Absences

Parents/guardians are advised to mark their child absent using our communication app if their child will be absent for the day. The Ministry of Education and Public Health requires our school to document the reason for a child's absence, so please ensure you include this information in a message to your child's educators on our communication app.

Vacation

The school remains open year-round for your convenience. Since we do not close during the year (with the exception of the last two days of the week of the Labor Day long weekend), we require parents/guardians to pay their usual fees each month regardless of family vacations and time spent away from the school.

NUTRITION

Children are offered a simple breakfast, morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack daily. Our lunches are catered and our snacks are prepared in-house. Menus are available for families to download for themselves, as well as posted in your child's classroom. Filtered water and fruit are available to children all day.

At times, we may have children with severe allergies and therefore it is our policy that **no outside food is brought into the school** (e.g., your child arrives with their own bagel for breakfast). The exception to this is if your child has special dietary needs and is not able to eat what is on our menus. In these cases, parents/guardians will make arrangements with the Director and bring food directly into the Kitchen. Please ensure that all containers are labelled with your child's name and dated.

Parents/guardians of our Infants must speak directly with the Director of the school to inform them of their infant's dietary needs. If they are only eating pureed food or on a special diet, parents/guardians must supply the food for the child. Please ensure that all containers are labelled with your child's name and dated. Depending on your infant's needs, you must supply the school with breast milk or formula (in its original container/package). The Sunflower School can provide homogenized (3.25%) milk if required.

Any instructions related to your child's eating must be provided in writing.

CLOTHING & PERSONAL ITEMS

Children are encouraged to wear comfortable play clothes that can be easily laundered (we use materials such as paint and glue daily). Please consider pants with elastic waistbands that your child can manage on their own at toileting time. Shoes and slippers with non-slip soles need to be worn daily, as indoor shoes are required every day. Outdoor boots will not be permitted in the classrooms. We ask that children do not wear flip-flops in the warmer months.

In accordance with the CCEYA (weather permitting), we take the children outside for a minimum of two hours each day. In our program, we are outside for at least one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. For your child's comfort and protection, please have hats, two pairs of mittens, scarves, snowsuits, boots and warm socks for the winter months, and splash pants or a Muddy Buddy for the spring and fall months. Please provide an extra complete change of clothing and extra underwear to be kept in your child's cubby. In the event an article of clothing needs to be borrowed from The Sunflower School, please return it promptly so that it can be on-hand when needed again.

Children requiring diapers and wipes need to have a good supply on hand. Staff will send you supply requests via our communication app then items need to be replenished. Please check in with your child's educator on a regular basis to see if your child requires supplies.

FIELD TRIPS

Throughout the year, trips are planned to special places of interest in and around the town on an occasion, buses are hired for trips. A notice will be sent home in advance of an excursion to inform you of the date, time and destination which will also require your written permission for

your child to participate. Depending on the venue, a small fee may apply. Parents/guardians are also welcome to accompany us as long as they provide us with a clear Criminal Reference Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening. Those who choose not to have their child participate in a field trip must notify the classroom educator to make alternate arrangements for care.

SCHOOL CLOSURES: PLANNED & UNPLANNED

Unplanned Closures

Snow days for The Sunflower School are determined by the decisions of the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB). They have several criteria to decide whether to close schools amid inclement weather which includes early morning road conditions, weather forecasts for the day and the ability to return students home at the end of the day. There are times when UGDSB is closed for a school holiday (e.g., PA Day or March Break) and inclement weather takes place. In these circumstances, Management will investigate the actions of local school boards who are open at the time and in the event there are no school boards open to determine the course of action, the Executive Director will make the decision to remain open or close for the day. All staff and families are notified via text message through our communication app by 6:30am if The Sunflower School will be closed due to inclement weather.

Kindergarten and School Age children are not permitted to stay at The Sunflower School on school bus cancellation days as we cannot accommodate their program during regular school hours.

Planned Closures

Each year, The Sunflower School will be closed on the Thursday and Friday before the Labor Day long weekend. Our educators use this time for classroom maintenance and preparations for the new school year in September, as well as for professional development.

HEALTH & SAFETY

All children must bring indoor shoes to wear during the day. Educators will assist your child in changing into their outdoor shoes/boots when getting ready for outdoor time. All parents/guardians and visitors must remove their shoes when they enter the classrooms. Mats are provided at each doorway.

Immunization

Prior to admission, each child must be immunized as per Ministry and Public Health regulations. If the parent/guardian chooses not to immunize their child, they must complete and provide us with one of the following Ministry of Education exemption forms:

- *Statement of Conscious or Religious Belief* (must be signed by a Commissioner for Taking Affidavits)
- *Statement of Medical Exemption* (must be signed by a healthcare provider and include their license or registration number)

If a child is not immunized, they must remain at home if an outbreak occurs at The Sunflower School.

All children are required to be up-to-date with the appropriate immunizations. Families are asked to notify the office in writing of any immunizations the children receive, so that our files can be updated. Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health reviews the immunization records of each child at The Sunflower School on an annual basis and may exclude children from attending if they have not met their requirements.

Serious Occurrences

Every effort is made to provide the highest quality of care for children. The Sunflower School and the Ministry of Education are not responsible

for accidents or injuries. The parents/guardians assume this responsibility. Parents/guardians are notified immediately of incidences.

The Ministry of Education has a policy that requires licensed child care centres to post information about serious occurrence that happen at a centre. A *Serious Occurrence Notification* form must be posted at the centre in a visible location for 10 days. A serious occurrence could include:

- Death of a child
- Fire or other disaster on-site
- Complaint about a service standard
- Unplanned disruption of normal operation (excluding snow days)
- Abuse, neglect or an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child
- An incident where a child goes missing or is temporarily unsupervised

A serious occurrence is considered to be any life-threatening injury that requires medical attention, life-threatening response to a medical condition, or any type of activity that requires police notification or intervention including abuse. If any of these events should take place while a child is in our care, appropriate action will be taken immediately. Any staff that was present at the time of the occurrence will be required to prepare a written report for the Ministry. As well, they will be required to stay at The Sunflower School until the Director or another designated person has interviewed them. This is followed up by a preliminary inquiry report by the Director and/or a designated person. Depending on the nature of the occurrence, the police and/or local Children's Aid Society (i.e., Dufferin Child and Family Services) may be notified.

Child Protection Responsibilities

The staff at The Sunflower School are legally required to comply with the CCEYA. The Act directs staff to report to the Children's Aid Society if they have reasonable grounds to suspect abuse and neglect (including issues of lack of supervision). The staff member is legally obligated to report suspected abuse. The staff receive ongoing in-service training to ensure they are up-to-date with current legislation and reporting requirements.

The following is a sample list of reportable concerns:

- Any questionable marks on a child, or signs of physical abuse
- Signs of serious neglect or a pattern of neglect
- Any disclosure from a child, indicating that they have been injured by another person while in their care

It is important to note that if there are any serious concerns, the staff must contact the Children's Aid Society and may not be permitted to speak to the family. It is the responsibility of the Children's Aid Society to make the decision about the severity of each situation and determine an appropriate course of action.

Health & Well-Being of your Children

In order for children to participate in the program, they must be healthy. The following health policies are maintained:

Parents are required to keep their child at home if they display any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 38°C or higher
- Undiagnosed rash
- Communicable disease (as listed below)
- Diarrhea and/or vomiting

- Persistent cough
- Head lice (until all live lice and eggs are gone from the hair)

Children with the following diseases or illnesses should remain at home and away from others:

- Chicken Pox: until the child is well enough to participate in all activities regardless of stage of rash
- Diarrhea: until child is diarrhea free for 24 hours without the use of medication
- Impetigo: until the antibiotic treatment prescribed by a doctor has been taken for at least 24 hours
- Measles: for at least 4 days after the rash begins
- Mumps: for at least 9 days after the swollen glands first appear
- Pink Eye: until the antibiotic treatment prescribed by a doctor has been taken for at least 24 hours
- Ringworm: until treatment has started
- Rubella: until at least 7 days after the rash first appears
- Strep Throat/Scarlett Fever: until antibiotic treatment prescribed by a doctor has been taken for at least 24 hours
- Whooping Cough: until antibiotic treatment prescribed by a doctor has been taken for at least 5 days
- Lice: until all live lice and eggs are gone from the hair

If you suspect your child has a communicable disease, keep your child home and away from others. Contact your doctor for a diagnosis. You must have a doctor's note readmitting your child to our licensed programs. Your doctor will advise you regarding care and treatment when a communicable disease is diagnosed. Please call the Director to inform us if your child has a communicable disease so that the information can be posted, according to our licensing requirements. Names will be kept confidential.

Multiple first aid kits are kept on-site throughout the schools and are accessible to all staff. The educators in each program are all certified in first aid and CPR training.

In the event that your child should become ill during a program, the parent/guardian or emergency contact (if parent/guardian cannot be reached) will be called to pick up the child. Appropriate care will be provided for your child until you arrive.

It is our policy that ill children are cared for at home. We try to balance the need for parents' work responsibilities with the child's need to be excluded from care; however, all of the children's health and well-being are our first priority. In the case of serious injury or illness during school hours, the following procedure will be followed:

- The school will try to contact one or both parents/guardians;
- If parents/guardians cannot be reached, one of the emergency contacts provided will be notified;
- Failure to contact any of the above, we will call an ambulance.

Please assist The Sunflower School in keeping your child's family information and emergency contacts current. In the event the school needs to contact you and/or your child's emergency contact, out-of-date information can seriously affect the staff's ability to provide the appropriate care to your child in a timely manner.

Anaphylaxis Management Policy

Strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic causative agents: The Sunflower School will replace any food items and causative products that any child has an allergy to, to reduce the risk of reaction.

Communication plan: The Sunflower School will provide information from parents/guardians on any life-threatening allergies, including anaphylactic allergies, to all applicable staff including Educators, Directors, Kitchen Staff and any other persons who may be on the premises.

Development of an Individualized Plan for a Child with Anaphylaxis: The parents/guardians will give a detailed description of the following areas:

- Child's allergy
- What strategies to take to monitor and avoid an allergic reaction
- Signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction
- What action should be taken by applicable persons ordinarily at the location
- Parents/guardians to give written consent for an applicable person to administer the allergy medication in the event that their child has an anaphylactic reaction
- Who is to be contacted if their child has an anaphylactic reaction
- Parents/guardians will advise the appropriate personnel with any changes to the child's allergy history, treatment, or if the child outgrows an allergy and no longer requires the medication

Every plan will be reviewed by appropriate staff and any other relevant person on the premises.

Training

All staff or any other persons on the premises will receive training from a physician, parent/guardian, Public Health nurse or from an appropriate organization providing first aid and CPR training on procedures to be followed in case of an anaphylactic reaction including how to recognize the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and administering the medication.

- Parents/guardians of children carrying their own asthma or emergency medication will give permission for their child to self-administer. Staff will make sure that the child has the medication in their possession prior to leaving the site;
- Where a child does not self-administer the medication, the staff on the premises will have easy access to the medication and take on all outings.

Sunscreen

Due to ongoing environmental issues, we strongly suggest that families use sunscreen for their child. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to supply their preferred brand of sunscreen exclusively for their child to use, or have access to the supply of sunscreen purchased by The Sunflower School. Sunscreen will be applied to all children as per the parent/guardian's written instruction. Sunscreen supplied by the parent or guardian must be in its original container, labeled with the child's full name, and not expired. Children should have sunscreen applied at home prior to getting dressed as Public Health encourages full-body coverage (e.g., even on the skin covered by clothing).

Personal Hygiene

Personal hygiene is part of our ongoing program. The children are encouraged to and assisted in washing their hands and faces throughout the day.

Soothers/Pacifiers

If your child uses a soother, they may bring it to the school with them. All soothers must be labeled so they do not get mixed up. Soothers usually remain in the child's backpack until sleep time. If a child is upset, the soother may be used to comfort them.

Rest Time

Toddlers and Preschoolers must rest for 2 hours each day in accordance with healthy child development practices. Children who no longer engage in naps will be provided with quiet activities to engage in during sleep time. When your child is ready to transition out of nap times, you will provide us notice in writing that your child is no longer required to sleep. For our older Preschoolers attending Kindergarten in September, we encourage the omission of naps by the summer time so that they have ample time to adjust before starting school.

Please bring a small blanket for your child's cot (fitted sheets are provided). If they sleep with a doll or stuffed animal, you may provide that as well. Infants will sleep as they need it throughout the day in cribs located in a separate room.

Accident Reports

All accidents will be documented on a form for parents/guardians to review the details of the accident and a copy will be provided and put in your child's cubby to take home, or a copy will be sent via our communication app.

Fire Drills

The Sunflower School has a written procedure for fire drills that has been approved by the local fire department. Every staff member is familiar with this procedure, and each room has specific instructions for moving the children safely from the building. The procedure is posted in each classroom and fire drills are practiced and documented once per month. Parents/guardians may not pick up their child during a fire drill until the fire drill is complete. If you arrive to pick up your child during a fire drill, you must stay until the end of the drill as we need to account for everyone on the premises.

In case of an emergency that makes the premises unsafe, the children will be evacuated from the building. Parents/guardians will be notified should it become necessary to move the children to our emergency locations:

- Lord Dufferin Centre: 1 Elizabeth St. (Family Medical Building)
- Townline: 15 Townline (RJ Burnside)
- Broadway: 32 First St. (Lord Dufferin Centre)

All infants are placed in the designated emergency crib and rolled to the appropriate exit. The emergency bag must be taken on all drills and all actual evacuations.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Sunflower School will only accept medications for life-threatening illnesses or medical conditions for children in our care. Life-threatening or prevalent medical conditions includes Asthma, Diabetes, Seizure Disorders, and Anaphylaxis. Children deemed to have a prevalent medical condition will have an *Individualized Plan for a Child with Medical Needs or Anaphylaxis* created in consultation with the child's family and health care team where appropriate, which will outline the medical condition and daily routine management while at The Sunflower School.

If your child becomes ill and requires an antibiotic, it is not considered to be life-threatening, therefore staff are not permitted to accept or administer this medication to your child. It is recommended that you consult with your health care provider to schedule doses for before and after your child attends the school, otherwise you are welcome to come into the school to administer the medication to your child as required.

If your child is determined to have a prevalent medical condition requiring the administration of medication, parents/guardians must:

- Consult with the Director to create an *Individualized Plan*,
- Provide written authorization for the administration of the medication and include information for the dose and frequency/schedule for administration, and any other information related to the administration of the medication.

THE GREEN PATH

Pesticides and Pest Prevention

We use non-toxic techniques both inside and outside the facility to prevent and control pests (both insects and weeds). If a serious threat remains and pesticide application is the only viable option, parents are notified in advance and a licensed professional applies the least toxic, most effective product at a time when children will not be exposed to the application area for at least 12 hours.

Air Quality

We avoid conditions that lead to excess moisture, which contributes to the growth of mould and mildew. We maintain adequate ventilation and air flow; we repair water leaks and we keep humidity within a desirable range. We do not allow cars or other vehicles to idle near the facility. We do not use scented candles or air fresheners. We do not permit smoking anywhere on the premises or in sight of children.

With respect to the poor air quality created by forest fires, we monitor and abide by the recommendations set out by Environment Canada and our local Public Health unit.

Household Chemicals

We use biodegradable, non-toxic cleaning products and least toxic disinfecting products. When other products are required, they are used only for their intended purpose in strict accordance with all label instructions. Cleaning products are stored where children cannot access them. We only use chlorine bleach when and where it is required or recommended by Public Health. We use only low-VOC latex paint and do not paint when children are present.

Lead

We use only cold water for drinking and cooking and we run the water for 5-10 seconds or until it feels noticeably colder. We do not use imported, old, or handmade pottery to cook, store or serve food or drinks. We supply a rough mat at the entrance of our facilities and encourage the wiping of shoes before entering.

Mercury

We do not use any mercury-containing thermometers. Instead, we use digital thermometers. We securely store and recycle all used batteries and fluorescent and compact fluorescent light bulbs.

Furniture & Carpets

Furniture is in good condition without foam or inside stuffing exposed (same applies for stuffed animals or any other foam item). Furniture is made of solid wood, with few, if any items made of particleboard. Area rugs are vacuumed daily and cleaned at least twice per year using biodegradable cleaners.

Plastics and Plastic Toys

We avoid toys made out of soft plastic vinyl (we only buy those labeled "PVC-free"). We never use the microwave to heat food that is in plastic containers, plastic wrap or plastic bags.

Recycling and Garbage Storage

We recycle all paper, cardboard, glass, aluminum and plastic bottles. We keep our garbage covered at all times to avoid attracting pests and to minimize odours.

SCHOOL COMMUNICATION

It is our goal to maintain open communication with families as much as possible. Experiences of conflict and differences are valued as opportunities for discussion, repair of relationships and reaching new points of view. Communication is the key to a positive experience for you and your child in our school. Parents/guardians are welcome to drop in at any time to pick up their children or visit the program, without advance notification. If a short visit is too difficult for your child (e.g., your child becomes upset when you have to leave/return to work), the educators will discuss this with you. Please feel free to call or send educators a message through our communication app if you are concerned about your child, or wish to speak with your child's educator(s). We are also available daily for any questions or comments you wish to make. We appreciate feedback and suggestions.

Instagram

The Sunflower School has an Instagram account for each location. Only parents/guardians of current children enrolled may request to follow for access to photos. Your child will only be photographed for posts on our Instagram accounts if you have given your permission in our Enrolment Application.

Lord Dufferin: @sunflowerlorddufferin
Townline: @sunflowerschooltownline
Broadway: @tsplaystudio

Website

On our website (www.thesunflowerschool.ca) we have a parent section. In this section is our menu, schedule of the day, and more information will be added over time. We have also added an event calendar in which you can click on dates to reveal the event for the day. Parties, field trips and PA Days will be part of our event calendar.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Prior to a student's or volunteer's first day engaging with the children at The Sunflower School, they must review and sign-off on all school policies and procedures, including:

- Administration of Drugs and Medication Policy
- Anaphylaxis Management Policy
- Criminal Reference Check Policy
- Emergency Preparedness Plan and Policy
- Fire Safety Plan and Policy
- Parent Issues and Concerns Policy
- Playground Safety Policy
- Program Statement and Implementation Policy
- Sanitary Practices Policy
- Serious Occurrence Policy
- Sleep Supervision Policy
- Staff Training and Development Policy
- Supervision of Students and Volunteers Policy
- Wait List Policy

Students and volunteers will also review all *Individualized Plans for Children with Anaphylaxis or Medical Needs*, as well as the document outlining all allergies and food restrictions in The Sunflower School's programs. Students and volunteers are required to provide The Sunflower School with a clear Criminal Reference Check with Vulnerable Sector Screening as well as all relevant immunization records (or authorized exemption) as required by Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health.

The following protocols also apply:

- There is a written procedure for monitoring behaviour guidance practices

- Activities and information of all children and staff are private and confidential
- No child is supervised by a person less than 18 years of age
- Only employees of The Sunflower School have direct, unsupervised access to the children
- Students and volunteers are:
 - Not permitted to have direct, unsupervised access or be alone with a child at any time
 - Provided with an orientation
 - Expected to comply with the policies and procedures outlined in their orientation
 - provided a copy of their roles and responsibilities
 - provided a copy of the Parent Handbook and will have access to the CCEYA via online
 - supervised by the Director or designate

Students are provided with The Sunflower School's *Student Placement Framework* which outlines their goals and expectations during their placement time at The Sunflower School.

As of April 2024: Where a student is employed by the Centre and concurrently enrolled in an applicable post-secondary program, the student may be counted in ratio in the program as an employee.

PARENT ISSUES & CONCERNS

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 encourage positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents or guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their child(ren). Our staff are available to engage with parents in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

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

Issues or 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 or guardians within one business day. The person who raised the issue or concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process. Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to all 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 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 supervisor and/or licensee. Directors have the right to refuse service if the conversation is deemed to be inappropriate or disrespectful.

Negative conversations or comments online about services or interactions will not be tolerated. If there is a concern, we ask that you bring it forward to your Management team before going online. Any or all unjust, negative comments about The Sunflower School will be treated as an act of defamation of name.

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/guardian will be advised to contact the local Children's Aid Society directly. Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to the Children's Aid Society as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

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 our Ministry of Education Program Advisor.

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the CCEYA 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 unit, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labor, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers, etc.) where appropriate.

Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent/Guardian to Report Issue/Concern	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in Responding to Issue/Concern
Program Room Related e.g., schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, dietary needs, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to: - The classroom staff directly OR - The supervisor or licensee	- Address the issue or concern at the time it is raised OR - Arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within one business day
General, Centre or Operations Related e.g., child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, wait list, menu, etc.	Raise the issue or concern to: - The individual directly OR - The supervisor or licensee	Document the issue or concern in detail. Documentation should include: - The date and time the issue was received - The name of the person who received the issue
Staff, Duty Parent, Supervisor and/or Licensee Related	Raise the issue or concern to: - The individual directly OR - The supervisor or licensee All issues of concern about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety or well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as the parent or guardian becomes aware of the situation	- The name of the person reporting the issue - The details of the issue; and - Any steps taken to resolve the issue and/or information given to the parent or guardian regarding the next steps or referral
Student or Volunteer Related	Raise the issue or concern to: - The staff responsible for	

	supervising the student or volunteer <i>OR</i> - The supervisor or licensee All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety or well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as the parent or guardian becomes aware of the situation.	Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter. Ensure the investigation of the issue is initiated by the appropriate party within one business day, or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing. Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent/guardian who raised the issue or concern.
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SAFE ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL POLICY

The Sunflower School will ensure that any child receiving care is only released to the child's parent/guardian or an individual that the parent or guardian has provided written authorization for the child care centre to release the child to. 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:

- Greet the parent/guardian
- 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 application under *Who Else is Authorized to Drop Off & Pick Up Your Child?* or where the individual is not listed, ask the parent/guardian to provide authorization for pick-up in writing (e.g., note, message on Communication App or email).
- Sign the child in on the classroom attendance record.
- Document the change in pick-up procedure in the daily written record (Staff Communication Book and/or Staff Communication App).

Where a child has not arrived in care as expected and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off (e.g., left a voice message, sent a message on the Communication App or advised the closing staff at pick-up), the staff in the classroom must:

- Inform the Supervisor or Director and they must commence contacting the child's parent or guardian not later than 10:00am. Staff shall send the child's parents/guardians a text message via our Communication App (e.g., "Safe Arrival Check: Please call or message us ASAP to confirm your child's absence or late arrival for today. Thank you.") If the child's parent/guardian has not responded within 30 minutes of their message being sent, the staff will notify the Supervisor or Director. The Supervisor or Director will attempt to contact a parent/guardian via phone call and leave a message if the call isn't answered (e.g., We have attempted to contact you regarding your child's absence today. Please return our call or respond to our message to confirm your child's absence or late arrival for today. Thank you.) The Supervisor or Director

will document the phone call attempt in the daily written record. If the child's parent/guardian does not respond to either message or phone call, the child will be marked absent for the day and communicated in the daily written record (e.g., "Parent was called at 10:45am; no response; child marked absent.").

- 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:

- The staff who 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 to. Where the staff does not know the individual picking up the child (i.e., parent/guardian or authorized individual),
 - Confirm with another staff member that the individual picking up is the child's parent/guardian or authorized individual
 - Where the above is not possible, ask the parent or guardian or authorized individual for photo identification and confirm the individual's information against the parent/guardian or authorized individual's name on the child's file or written authorization.

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

- 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 within an hour of that time, the staff or Supervisor or Director shall contact the parent/guardian via our Communication App and advise that the child is still in care and has not been picked up.
 - Where the staff is unable to reach the parent or guardian, staff must call the parent/guardian and leave a message if unanswered. 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 or guardian or authorized individual who was to pick up the child, the staff shall wait until program closes and then refer to procedures under "Where a child has not been picked up and the centre is closed."

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

- Where a parent/guardian or authorized individual who was supposed to pick up a child from care and has not arrived by 5:30pm, staff shall ensure that the child is given a snack and activity, while they await their pick-up.
- One staff will 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 their contact information is available.
- If the staff is unable to reach the parent/guardian or authorized individual who was responsible for picking up the child, the staff shall contact an emergency contact listed on the child's file.
- 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 6:30pm, the staff shall proceed with contacting the local Children's Aid Society (CAS) at (519) 941-

1350 (Dufferin Child and Family Services. Staff shall follow the CAS's direction with respect to next steps.

Dismissing a child from care without supervision procedures:

- Staff will only release children from care to the parent or guardian or other authorized individual. Under no circumstances will children be released from care to walk home alone.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Lord Dufferin Centre:

32 First Street, M1
Orangeville, ON L9W 2E1
(519) 307-7500

Contact:

Rebecca Murray, RECE | Director
rebecca@thesunflowerschool.ca

Townline:

9 Townline
Orangeville, ON L9W 3R4
(519) 938-5147

Contact:

Keri Best, RECE | Director
keri@thesunflowerschool.ca

Broadway:

289 Broadway
Orangeville, ON L9W 1L2
(519) 941-0909

Contact:

Sarah Sayffi, RECE | Director
sarah@thesunflowerschool.ca

Executive Director & Licensee:

Heather Jackson, RECE | Executive Director & Licensee
heather@thesunflowerschool.ca

Enrolment Director:

Rachel Donatelli, Enrolment Director
rachel@thesunflowerschool.ca
(519) 938-5385

Ministry of Education:

Mary Velanovski | Program Advisor
(905) 693-9711 ext. 566
mary.velanovski@ontario.ca

Licensed Child Care Help Desk:
1-877-510-5333
childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

We look forward to caring for your child and sharing in their educational journey, and we look forward to working with your family!