

Early Childhood Services (ECS)

Informational Handbook

Whispering Hills Primary School

2020 – 2021



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Athabasca, Alberta T9S 1N3**

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Celebrating a Community of Learners and Leaders

Proud to be an APPLE School

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Dear Families,

Welcome to the Whispering Hills Primary School family. This handbook is designed to provide you with information about our school, the programs we offer, school policies, and important events hosted at our school.

Whispering Hills Primary School is a dual track school, offering classes in English and French Immersion to students in kindergarten to grade three. We emphasize using a TEAM (Together Everyone Achieves More) approach. We realize that your child can achieve the most success when we synergize together.

The Education Act supports this relationship and outlines the parent or guardian's responsibility to:

- a) Act as the primary guide and decision-maker with respect to the child's education
- b) Take an active role in the students' educational success including assisting the student.
- c) Ensure that the child attends school regularly
- d) Ensure that the parents and guardians' conduct contributes to a welcoming, caring, safe, respectful, and safe learning environment.
- e) Cooperate and collaborate with the school staff to support the delivery of specialized supports and services to the student.
- f) Encourage, foster, and advance collaborative, positive, and respectful relationships with the teachers, principals, other school staff, and professionals providing supports and services in the school.
- g) Engage in the students' school community.

Please keep this handbook in a convenient place for future reference. We look forward to meeting you and encourage you to drop into our school as often as you can. Come and see your child(ren) working and participating in school activities, eat lunch with them, and/or volunteer.

If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please feel free to contact us. Communication among staff, families and students enhance the effectiveness of your child's education.

In the Best Interests of Students,

Lorna Anderson – Principal

Marianne Saunders – Assistant Principal

WHPS STAFF

Teachers

Mrs. Azure McGhee
Mrs. Tracy Lundell (on-line)
Mme Kathy Asfeldt
Mme Michelle Aleixandre (French Immersion)

Administration

Principal	Ms. Lorna Anderson
Assistant Principal	Mrs. Marianne Saunders
Executive Secretary	Mrs. Michelle Bahry
School Secretary	Mrs. Wanda Semashkewich

Important Telephone Numbers

Central Office	780-675-7080
Transportation	Toll Free 1-888-488-0288 ext. 16

Bell Schedule

8:30 a.m.	Centre Activities as students arrive
8:50 a.m.	Classes begin
10:30 – 10:45 a.m. or 10:50 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.	Morning Recess
12:15 – 12:40 p.m. or 12:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Lunch Recess
2:00 – 2:15 p.m. or 2:20 p.m. – 2:35 p.m.	Afternoon Recess
3:25 p.m.	Dismissal

Supervision of children begins at 8:20 a.m.

PROGRAMS

Aspen View Public Schools works to create a safe, caring, welcoming, and respectful environment by teaching students the Zones of Regulation, utilizing the Bucket Filling philosophy, and APPLE School programs.

Zones of Regulation

Self-regulation is something everyone continually works on, whether we are aware of it or not. We all encounter trying circumstances that test our limits from time to time. If we are able to recognize when we are becoming less regulated, we are able to do something about it to feel better and get ourselves to a better place. This comes naturally for some, but for others it is a skill that needs to be taught and practiced. This is the goal of The Zones of Regulation, or Zones for short.

What are The Zones of Regulation?

The Zones curriculum provides strategies to teach students to become more aware of, and independent in controlling their emotions and impulses, managing their sensory needs, and improving their ability to problem solve conflicts.

The curriculum is designed to help move students toward independent regulation. The Zones of Regulation incorporates Social Thinking® (www.socialthinking.com) concepts and numerous visuals to teach students to identify their feelings and level of alertness. The Zones will also help students to understand how their behaviour impacts those around them and learn what tools they can use to manage their feelings and states.

The Four Zones: Our Feelings & States Determine Our Zone

The **Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behaviour, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

The **Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however, one has some control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.

The **Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focussed, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings, such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.

The Zones can be compared to traffic signs. When given a green light or in the Green Zone, one is “good to go.” A yellow sign means to be aware or take caution, which applies to the Yellow Zone. A red light or stop sign means stop, and when one is in the Red Zone, this is often the case. The Blue Zone can be compared to the rest area signs where one goes to rest or re-energize.

All of the zones are expected at one time or another, but the curriculum focuses on teaching students how to manage their Zone based on the environment and people around them. For example, when playing on the playground or in an active/competitive game, no one would think twice about one being in the Yellow Zone but that would not be the same in the library.

Bucket Filling Program

Whispering Hills Primary School students and staff are “Bucket Fillers.” The idea of “Bucket Filling” comes from the book, *Have You Filled a Bucket Today?* by Carol McCloud. The bucket represents a person’s emotional bank account for mental and emotional health. A person who is a “bucket filler” is a person who says or does caring things that makes others feel special. When you make someone feel special, you are filling their bucket. When you fill another person’s bucket, you’re also filling your own.

Anyone can be a “bucket filler.” It does not cost anything, and it does not take much time. When you say or do mean or thoughtless things, you dip into another’s bucket. That’s called “bucket dipping.” You can never fill your bucket by dipping into another’s bucket. When you dip, you empty your own bucket.

APPLE School

Whispering Hills Primary School is pleased to be a part of the APPLE Schools project, in partnership with the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta. **APPLE** stands for **A Project Promoting healthy Living for Everyone**. APPLE Schools strive to promote wellness and create environments that foster lifelong health and wellness by making the healthy choice the easy choice.

Whispering Hills Primary School is one of many schools in the province, and more recently in Canada, that works with students, teachers, parents, and community members to create a healthy school community and improve the eating behaviours and physical activity habits of students.

We ask families to provide a nutritious lunch and discourage students from bringing pop, chocolate bars, candy, chips, or glass containers to school. Please send ample nutritious snacks to last throughout the day. Students will eat in their classrooms under the supervision of their classroom teacher. Currently there are no microwaves in the classrooms.

Due to severe allergies, some classes will be designated as being nut-free. A note will be sent home from the teacher identifying the types of food that must not be sent to school. Thank you for your support in keeping the children at Whispering Hills Primary School safe!

French Immersion

French Immersion is a program designed for children whose first language is not French and whose parents may not speak French; French-speaking families may also choose to take advantage of the program. It provides students with the opportunity to become fluent in both French and English through a very natural process, similar to that of a toddler learning how to speak. Students of all abilities can be successful in the program.

In a typical French Immersion Kindergarten classroom, the teacher speaks French most of the time, using repetition and modeling. The children may respond in English but are encouraged to use French as they learn some words. The success of the program is due largely to the fact that students are using their new language in meaningful ways. In Kindergarten, this is done through a variety of interesting themes which provide a context for learning new vocabulary.

In addition to learning another language, children in French Immersion Kindergarten are taught math concepts, and pre-reading and writing skills. The program is naturally animated as the teacher uses many gestures and expressions to communicate. Drama, stories, and songs are also used to bring the language to life.

Between the first day of Kindergarten and the end of Grade 1, the child's French language skills evolve from listening and basic understanding to responding with simple phrases and being able to carry on a simple conversation – at no expense to the child's English. Children learn languages easily and as a parent of a child in French Immersion, you have the opportunity to watch the exciting process of language acquisition for a second time.

Please pick up a brochure on French Immersion or talk to a French Immersion teacher or parent if you have any questions about the program.

Look to the future! How would a second language benefit your child in twelve years?

ECS CURRICULUM

The **Early Childhood Services (ECS)** is a coordinated system of local and provincial programs, designed to be developmentally appropriate and meet the diverse needs of young children and their families prior to entering Grade 1.

Programs developed by ECS engage children in activities, which require them to:

- Be active learners
- Build a shared set of experiences
- Develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare them for future learning

The Kindergarten Program

The Kindergarten program is based off the Primary Programs Guiding Principles. These principles are derived from current education research and understanding of young children, families, communities, and their schools.

These principles are designed to help guide Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers on the nature of young children and their learning processes, which will assist teachers in developing responsive learning environments.



Kindergarten is meant to solidify the foundation for developing and accomplishing new ideas, develop language, solve problems, and express thoughts and feelings. In order to succeed in building this foundation, the Kindergarten program is composed of seven learning areas, which will allow an easier transition into the subject area expectations of elementary school.

The Guiding Principles

- Childhoods differ depending on social and cultural circumstance
- Children’s development is influenced but not determined by their early experiences
- Children interact and learn in a variety of contexts
- Children are co-constructors of knowledge and partners in learning
- Children are unique and active contributors to their learning

- Children construct and represent knowledge in a variety of ways
- Children are citizens and active participants in school and society
- Children are active collaborators in and users of assessment
- Children may require specialized programming and supports to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes that prepare them for later learning

All information regarding Early Childhood Services was taken from the Education Alberta website. For more information regarding Early Childhood Services and Early Childhood Programming, please visit: <https://education.alberta.ca/early-childhood-education/early-childhood-services>

GENERAL INFORMATION

Registration (AP 300)

A copy of your child's birth certificate is required. Students must be 5 years old on or before December 31 of the current school year to attend Kindergarten.

A legal land description is required on the registration form as well as your municipal address; the blue sign.

The school recognizes that many of our students come from a variety of parenting and guardianship arrangements. As per **AP 300-21 & AP 322-1 GUARDIANSHIP/CUSTODY ORDERS – CUSTODY ISSUES**, the school requires the individual arrangements, the most recent copy of the guardianship/custody document signed by the Court on file. When documents are changed or updated, the school must receive an updated copy. **Please bring the original copy of the guardianship/custody document to the school office, and we will make a copy for our files.**

Arrival in the Morning and Afternoon Pickup

All Kindergarten children use the front entrance in the morning when they arrive. If you are dropping off your child after 9:00 am, please use the drop off/pick up zone to the north of the school. Call the office at 780-675-4546 and someone will come out to welcome your child. All students will be picked at the north end of the school. Students will be escorted to the pick up zone by a staff member and physical distancing will be maintained. Family members must remain by or within their vehicle when picking up their children. Entrance into the school will not be permitted. When family arrives, students will be permitted to leave the pick up zone. Thank you for your patience as we get to know you.

Transportation (Home & School)

Notify your child's teacher by writing a note in the child's agenda, or phone the school office at 780-675-4546 of any change in the bus riding schedule. It is imperative that the office (780-675-4546) is informed of any changes prior to 3:00 p.m., as it is school policy to put students on the bus if we have not been notified of changes. For more information about bus transportation, contact Rhonda Alix (Transportation Coordinator) at 1-888-488-0288 and have your land location and municipal address ready.

Attendance

Regular school attendance contributes significantly to academic success; consequently, monitoring of attendance is vital and must represent a cooperative endeavour of the students, parents, teachers, and school administrators.

Please notify the school by calling 780-675-4546, emailing the school at whps@aspensview.org or send a note with your child if it is a planned absence. If your child will not be riding their regular bus, **please inform us as well as the driver.**

Absences can be reported 24 hours a day, seven days a week by calling 780-675-4546 and leaving a message. When leaving a message, please state:

- Name of student
- Length of absence
- Reason for absence

Alert the office of any communicable sickness, allergies, or other physical conditions.

If we have not received communication with regard to your child's absence prior to 9:30 a.m., you will be contacted by the automated system informing you that your child has been marked absence with an unknown absence and to contact the school to verify.

Weather

In the event of excessive rain or extreme cold, recess periods will be spent indoors under classroom supervision. As a general guideline, when the temperature reaches -23 degrees, recess will be indoors. Other factors may be considered.

All students are required to go out for recess. Please ensure that children are dressed warmly and comfortably for the outside weather. Fresh air and exercise are beneficial for clear minds. Children have individual lockers, so they can keep extra mittens, sweaters, etc. handy for cold. If your child is ill (bad cough, fever, etc.) they should stay home to recuperate. Teachers and parents work together to decide if a student should be staying in for recess, as each case is unique. However, the expectation is that if they are well enough to come to school, they are well enough to go outside.

In the event of extreme weather conditions developing during the day, busses may be sent home early. It is the bus driver's responsibility to call parents of every child on their bus. We will make every effort possible to contact the parents or emergency contact should this situation arise. Busses **will not** leave a child if no one is home. If temperatures are -40°C or below in the mornings, busses do not run but the school will remain open. You can also check the Aspen View website (www.aspensview.org) for updates on the bus routes and/or follow us on Facebook.

Belongings for School

Please make sure that your child has the following when attending school:

- Lunch kit (**for two healthy snacks and a nutritious lunch**)
- Indoor running shoes, with non-marking soles (**no laces please, unless your child can tie their own laces**)
- Backpack (**large enough to hold an 8 ½" x 11" communication folder**)
- Each child receives a folder for communication between home and school and an agenda paid for by our Fundraising Society

Please ensure that your child's first and last name is clearly marked on all personal belongings (shoes, boots, lunch kit, coat, backpack, etc.)

Eye See ... Eye Learn

In order to set your child up for success, we strongly recommend that your child have a comprehensive eye exam to rule out any visual barriers they may experience prior to entering Kindergarten. Research confirms that vision and eye health can have an impact on a student's success in learning. Alberta Health Care covers the cost of the exam and should your child require glasses, Eye See ... Eye Learn provides **ONE FREE PAIR**. Additional paperwork will be sent home in the fall.

Reporting Student Progress (AP 360-1)

Questions regarding your child's academic and social progress should be directed to your child's teacher. Parent/Teacher conferences are held in November and in March. Exact dates for the Parent/Teacher conferences will be provided at a later time.

In November during the interviews, you will receive a progress report outlining your child's early learning progress to date. In March, you will receive the first assessment which provides more detailed information on your child's learning. At the end of the year, you will receive your child's final assessment.

Feel free to chat with your child's teacher about their progress.

Nutrition Grant

Funds awarded purchase breakfast snacks, milk, healthy snack and lunches for all students. All of these items are free and offered to students on a rotation. Milk is free every day. Healthy snack is once a week. Healthy lunches are not scheduled to date. No child will ever go hungry.

Whispering Hills Primary School Council

This committee is an advisory body of parents, whose primary mission is to support and enhance student learning. All family members are welcome to attend the School Council meetings, which are typically held on the second Tuesday of the month. Each class is encouraged to have a class representative. Free childcare is provided.

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee oversees the already, well-organized fundraisers. Your responsibilities are minimal yet powerful as you have a say on where and how funds are spent. Without a new executive, we will *lose* our casino, which brings in between \$50,000 to \$65,000 every 18 months. **We cannot afford not to have an executive.** All parents, Kindergarten to Grade 3, are urged to attend these meetings, which are held every month at WHPS. The meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of the month just before the School Council meeting. You may choose to attend one or both of the meetings. Free childcare is provided.

As per Administrative Procedure 520 School Generated Funds – Fundraising we adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1.1 Fund raising activities which involve students or staff must be approved and supervised by the principal and directed toward the support of an identified:
 - 1.1.1 Authorized school activity
 - 1.1.2 Approved capital project
 - 1.1.3 Recognized charitable cause
- 1.2 Acceptable forms of fund raising include:
 - 1.2.1 The sale of a usable product
 - 1.2.2 The provision of a worthwhile service
 - 1.2.3 Participation in activities in support of charitable causes
 - 1.2.4 Participation in activities that benefit student skills or health (e.g., read-a-thon, walk-a-thon)
- 1.3 No person involved in a fundraising activity shall benefit financially from that activity
- 1.4 Fund raising activities shall not interfere with the regular operation of the school
- 1.5 Funds are not to be raised in excess of the project requirement; however, if fundraising activities generate excess funds, that money may be directed to another authorized project

Canadian Parents for French

Canadian Parents for French is a national group of volunteers who recognize the importance of learning French as a second language and actively supports opportunities for our youth to learn and use French.

Cultural programs such as French performances, events, and camps are completely reliant on member support to administrate. CPF relies 100% on membership fees and fundraising to provide opportunities to the community. When you become a CPF member, 65% of your membership fee supports the activities in our local chapter:

1 Year Membership = \$25 (\$16.25 will remain in Athabasca)

3 Year Membership = \$60 (\$39.00 will remain in Athabasca)

Locally sponsored activities include:

- Camp de Plein air Lussion (Grade 4/5)
- French Music Festival Award
- French Oral Proficiency Awards (K-Vernacular)
- French Cultural Day
- Fundraising for Grade 9 Quebec Trip

POLICIES

Volunteering

At this time we are unable to welcome volunteers into the school.

Administering Medicine to Students (AP 316)

A parent may make a request that medication be administered to a child during school hours. Such requests shall be in writing, on the Request for Administration of Medication to Students form. The teacher is unable to administer any medicine unless this form is complete. This form is available at the office or from the website. The physician must sign it.

<https://docushare.aspenview.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-213408/AP%20316%20Administering%20Medicine%20to%20Students%20Clean.pdf>

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (AP 180)

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) came into effect for all school boards on September 1, 1998. This act sets, controls, and provides standards on how we collect, use, and disclose your personal information.

The Education Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act authorize the School Board to collect personal information it needs to operate its programs.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act also requires the School Board and its agents to protect the personal information of students and parents from unauthorized disclosure, provide for individuals to have access to their personal information, and to provide for public access to a broad range of non-personal information.

General personal information such as a student's name, photograph, grade level, etc. may be published in school newsletters, yearbooks, newspapers, or similar documents, and may be

shared with school councils or health authorities to facilitate home contact or the provision of information to the home.

Photos can be taken by staff for school use. During public events (concerts, graduations, etc.) you are permitted to take photographs as you see fit. During private functions (classroom events), you are not allowed to take photos without written permission of every child's parent. Please respect the privacy of others.