

South Park Family School



HANDBOOK

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SCHOOL HOURS

Grade 1 to 5

8:45 – Warning Bell

8:50 – 10:32 Classroom Time

10:32 - 10:52 Recess

10:52 - 12:00 Classroom Time

12:00 – 12:20 Students eat lunch in the classroom

12:20 – 12:55 Recess Outside

1:00 Afternoon Classes begin

3:00 Children are dismissed for the day*

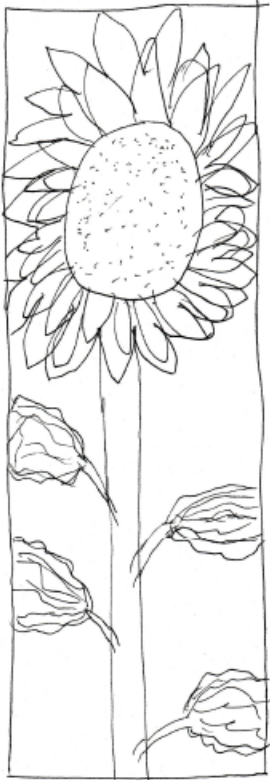
Morning Kindergarten Hours

8:45 – Warning Bell

8:50 – 11:32 - Classroom Time



A BRIEF HISTORY



South Park School was built in 1894. The students who were enrolled in the early years were the age of our present-day grade 4 through grade 8 students. They were in classes of up to sixty children.

The annex and the covered Douglas Street entrance were built in 1914.

South Park Family School has been a parent involved school since September of 1974, when it was established through the initiative of a group of parents from Gordon Head Cooperative Preschool. Its first home was Beacon Hill School, but it was soon moved to its present location. When the school began in 1974 it was limited to the primary grades. A grade level was added each year. We now offer a full program through grade 5, with approximately 170 students in eight or nine classrooms.

South Park was designated as a Heritage Building in 1978. In 1987 the facility was improved by the installation of a new heating system, a new library, renovated washrooms, a new office, an additional classroom, and an enlarged gym. Provincial heritage status was awarded to the school.

In 1994 the annex was renovated, providing office space for local heritage groups on the ground floor, a general meeting room upstairs, and a multi-purpose room which connects the two buildings and is solely for school use.

In May of 1994 South Park School celebrated its Centennial. The three-day event culminated in the sealing of a time capsule which will be opened in 2019.

During the summer of 2004, the main building of our school underwent a \$1.4 million seismic upgrade. Our community spent a number of years working towards this seismic upgrade.

SOUTH PARK PHILOSOPHY

The staff and parents of South Park School are committed to a philosophy that endeavours to develop the full potential of all children. We attempt to meet the needs of each child in the areas of intellectual, emotional, social, physical and aesthetic development.



We believe that this is best done in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect where parents are actively involved in their children's education and where teachers and parents work closely together.

We believe that children with positive self-concepts are the most successful learners, and so it is one of our goals to help children build their self-esteem. We strive to instruct children in ways that best fit their individual learning styles.

We believe that children thrive in an environment that encourages cooperation rather than competition.



Multi-age classes are organized wherever possible so that each student can be placed in an academic and social setting that will accommodate him or her most effectively.

We believe that parent participation is integral to the children's educational development.

We believe that letter grades are detrimental at the elementary school level, so other forms of assessment, evaluation and reporting are used in all classes.

IMPLEMENTING OUR PHILOSOPHY



We meet children's needs by:

- using eclectic methods of instruction to provide for individual learning styles
- using resource people, including parents, to assist in classroom and school activities
- discussing learning goals with staff, parents and children
- giving children as many experiences as possible that are relevant and current to enhance curriculum requirements
- making the learning process one which is stimulating, enjoyable, and challenging
- encouraging children to use their own interests, ideas, imagination and creativity as integral parts of their learning
- emphasizing the process of learning as well as the accumulation of facts, with a view to helping children become life-long learners
- emphasizing that learning is relevant, worthwhile and personally meaningful
- encouraging them to discuss and implement their ideas through the student council

Parents or guardians are involved by:

- supporting the philosophy of the school
- actively contributing to the life of the school in ways that reflect their interests, abilities and schedules
- maintaining close communications with teachers

We group children by:

- organizing heterogeneous classes
- having at least two age groups in a class, when possible

We enhance self-esteem by:

- acknowledging each child's individuality
- helping children work and play cooperatively



- helping children to develop empathy for others
- encouraging participation in a variety of activities and ensuring some positive success in these activities
- providing a secure environment which students feel free to take risks
- helping children take increasingly greater responsibility for their own learning
- giving students leadership opportunities
- asking students to lead 'Student-Led Parent Conferences' where they explain and demonstrate their progress and plans in the different areas

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

When a parent of a prospective student initially contacts South Park to indicate an interest in enrolment, pertinent information will be recorded on a wait-list form. The wait-list form is then filed according to the birthdate.

See the office for Enrolment Procedures form for more detailed information.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT AT SOUTH PARK SCHOOL

The purpose of parent involvement is to:

- provide opportunities for parents to contribute actively to the life of the school
- enrich and enhance school programs
- raise funds to purchase resources and support programs
- facilitate positive communication with teachers, students, staff, and other parents concerning all aspects of the school program

Our Expectations of Parents

Parents can expect to:

- Attend family and general meetings.
- Help in some of the following ways:
 - in classrooms with individual students, small groups, or as general assistants to children or teachers
 - in the library
 - with general school needs (i.e. typing, making charts, assembling newsletters)
 - as members of the executive or as class coordinators
 - by joining or heading a committee (Education, Heritage...)

- helping on field trips or with other activities planned at family meetings or by the teacher
- Support class and school expectations by:
 - attending student-led parent conferences
 - providing basic supplies and appropriate clothing for their children
 - discussing school behavioural expectations with their children, including the Code of Conduct
- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time and return homework, notices, and library books.
- Follow the communication guidelines when registering a concern or question (speak first with the teacher, then, if necessary, with the principal, the director of instruction, the superintendent, and then the school board).
- Have the opportunity to be involved in class placements for their children, following the printed guidelines which are sent home each spring.

The amount of time parents give to the school will vary depending upon their individual circumstances, but we expect every parent will be involved in some way. In many instances, this involvement will be outside school hours.

We believe that the amount of parent participation is directly proportional to the quality of education at South Park School.

Participation in the classroom



Parent participation in the classroom begins when the teacher has established routines and behavioural expectations with the class. Teachers new to the school often need extra time at the beginning of the school year for this purpose.

Parent and community participation is facilitated by an open-door policy which allows access to classrooms at most times. Please be aware that a closed door does not mean a closed classroom! Often doors are closed to keep the heat in or the noise out. Please enter quietly (don't knock!) and either help where you can or wait until the teacher is free to direct you. Please hold adult conversations outside the classroom.

Our Expectations of Children

Students are expected to:

- work cooperatively
- work to the best of their abilities
- show courteous and responsible behaviour by respecting the rights of other children and adults
- respect directions given by school staff members, parents, or other adults
- be responsible for assignments at school and at home
- be on time

- remain on school premises during school hours (8:40-3:00 Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri. and 8:40 – 1:45 Wed.) unless given specific (usually written) permission to leave by a parent or supervising teacher(e.g. going home for lunch)
- cross streets at designated crosswalks
- bring required supplies
- understand and follow the South Part Code of Conduct (Safety, Respect and Responsibility) which is sent home each September and reviewed throughout the school year

OTHER SCHOOL INFORMATION



Learning Support

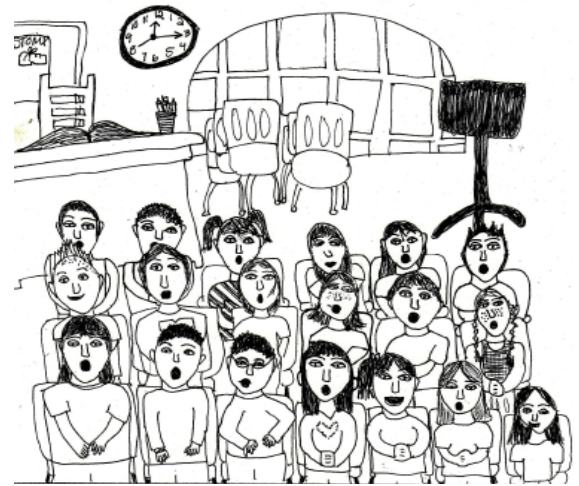
South Park has a part-time learning support teacher who assesses students, teaches individuals or small groups needing extra help in academic areas, and consults with staff, parents, and District personnel to further facilitate students' learning. This is done through Reading Recovery and Balanced Literacy, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, counsellors and speech therapists.

Library

We have an excellent library. Students are encouraged to borrow and read a wide variety of books. Parents are welcome to borrow books from the children's, parents', and teachers' sections. The library is often open for student use during lunch recess with parent supervision.

Fine Arts

1. South Park has a quality music program for all students. They learn to sing, dance, and play classroom instruments. They also study music theory and appreciation and have the opportunity to join primary or intermediate choirs. Band is also offered.
2. Students complete a great variety of art work, some of which is displayed in our June art show which is mounted by parents. They have the chance to work with clay in the clay room.
3. Students are involved in drama activities in their classrooms and they see many plays and musical performances by visitors. All-school performances are generally produced every other year. These performances involve parents, students and staff.



Buddy System

Students in senior classes are paired with students in junior classes. They participate in a variety of activities on a regular basis. The buddy system encourages cooperation and respect between older and younger students.

Extra Curricular Sports

We participate in cross-country and track and field, including District competitions. Our school facility and population do not allow us to participate in a wide variety of inter-school competitive sports. Participation may change from year to year, depending on the availability of skilled parent coaches, available sponsor teachers and interested students.

World Citizenship

South Park is classified as a Green School, with Jade School status. We practice recycling and maintain a school garden. A variety of special events help students support their community.

Child Care

At this writing there is a licensed after school childcare program held at the school before and after school, organized and supervised by a former parent. Daycare is offered during most discretionary days, as well. Information about fees, schedules, and registration is available in the school office.

There is free childcare during general meetings and family meetings.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: South Park is an Alternative School. What does this mean? Is the curriculum different?

A: South Park was designated an alternative school in 1974 by the School Board. It is not a neighbourhood school, but rather an open boundary school with specific policies for enrolment. Parents, teachers, and students choose to be here because of the strong commitment to teamwork, parent involvement, and sound educational practices which focus on the development of the whole child and his or her needs. We are presently working to further enhance our focus on Fine Arts and Worldwide Citizenship. Responsibility and cooperative learning are encouraged in many ways.

We follow the standard BC curriculum, focusing on the process of learning as well as the product. Students are encouraged to evaluate their progress, set goals and contribute to decisions about their education. We believe that letter grades are detrimental at the elementary school level, so other forms of assessment, evaluation and reporting are used.

Students call their teachers and other staff members by their first names.

Q: How are decisions made?

A: Day to day classroom decisions are made by the teachers. Decisions about academic programming, scheduling, and the like are made at regular staff meetings. Parents can have input and help to make decisions about non-curricular matters at family, general, and executive meetings, and in committees. Students are invited to make presentations, as well.

Decisions are made in an atmosphere of mutual respect and cooperation.

Q: What is a 'family'?

A: A 'family' refers to the school community (students, parents, and staff) as well as to each class community (students, teacher and parents).



Q: What is a 'family meeting'?

A: Family meetings are held every other month in the evening, usually in the classroom. Childcare is provided. These meetings are for the parents and teacher of the students in each class. Each division holds its own meeting. They give all an opportunity to get to know each other and to work together to make the class the best it can be.

The family meetings serve many purposes. Information is shared, ideas and suggestions are discussed, volunteers are sought, programs are explained, and decisions are made.

Q: What is a coordinator?

A: Each classroom and specialty program has two or more coordinators who facilitate parent involvement in the classroom and in the entire school, in order to enrich our children's educational experiences. In family meetings they report important information from the PAC meetings.

Q: What is P.A.C. and the executive?

A: PAC stands for Parent Advisory Council. In our PAC executive we have 6 offices: chair, vice-chair of coordinators, vice-chair of committees, treasurer, secretary, and VCPAC delegate who are elected annually. All the coordinators, the principal, and a staff representative are also members of the executive. The executive meets monthly. All parents are welcome to attend.

Q: What is S.P.C. and what is its purpose?

A: S.P.C. stands for School Planning Council. The Ministry of Education mandated the formation of School Planning Council in 2003. SPC membership consists of the following:

A) the principal of the school;

- B) one of the teachers at the school, elected annually by secret ballot by the teachers who teach at the school;
- C) 3 representatives of the parents' advisory council who are
 - (i) parents of students enrolled in the school,
 - (ii) elected annually by the parents' advisory council
- D) one of the representatives elected under subsection (3) must be an elected officer of the parents advisory council.

The roll of the School Planning Council is to consult with the Parents' Advisory Council during the preparation of the school plan.

Q: What if I cannot come into the classroom during school hours?

A: There are many ways that parents can help outside school hour, such as by attending meetings, doing committee work, fund raising, typing, and so forth.

Q: Does South Park have a catchment area?

A: No. Students come to South Park from all over School District 61. Refer to the Enrolment Procedures in this handbook.

