



T O R O N T O
NATURE SCHOOL

Parent and Guardian Handbook

Dear Parent / Legal Guardian,

This handbook contains all of the details you need to know before sending your child to Toronto Nature School! It includes everything from what to bring and wear, illness and absence policies, payment and refund policies, your responsibilities as a parent/guardian, terms and conditions and more.

Please take the time to read this document thoroughly and in full. After doing so, if you still have any questions, please contact us directly using the information at the end of this handbook!

Warmly,
Julia Donnelly O'Neill
Founder / Teacher
Toronto Nature School

Our Mission

At Toronto Nature School our goal is to connect kids and nature and education. We strive to ensure that all children have a wonderful, fun and engaging outdoor experience while learning.

Example of a typical full day program:

- 9:00am Drop off
- 9:15am Lesson / Focus for the days exploration, washroom use
- 9:30- 10:30am Adventure / Explore / Work outside, beach, forest, green space
- 10:30am Snack, lesson review explore, share learning
- 10:45am Outdoor open ended free play, working on team building activities
- 11:30am Return for Lunch
- 12:00pm Lunch time reminders of proper hygiene after outdoor play, washroom use
- 12:30pm Literacy book time
- 1:00pm Review learning connecting with Curriculum.
- 1:15pm Adventure / Explore / Work outside, beach, forest, green space
- 2:00pm Snack time, recap of learning
- 2:35pm Return to School, hand washing
- 2:45pm Closing circle: what did we learn today , what questions do we still have
- 3:00pm Pick up

Pick up

Pick up will be at 2245 Queen Street East, Lower level for all programs. If you are late for pick up you may be charged an additional childcare fee. Students will only be sent home with people who were identified on their approved pick up form. If someone different will be picking up your child please notify the school. If you need to pick your child up early from class please notify staff in the morning so that arrangements can be made on where to meet the class.

Staff Ratios

- Little Explorer (Ages 3-4) 6:1
- Nature Kindergarten (Ages 3.8-6) 8:1
- Nature School (ages 5-9) 1:10
- PA Day/ Weekend Program (1:10)
- Camps 1:8



Weather

We run school in all weather and do not cancel classes because of weather. We use strategies to keep warm and will be using our Home Base School @ 2245 Queen Street East, Lower Level space to warm up on cold, wet or days with thundershowers.

What to Bring and What to Wear to Nature School

We will be learning outside every day at Toronto Nature School. We believe that when children are dressed up appropriately they can be outside in winter, rain and shine! During inclement weather we do our best to make sure that students are comfortable and safe. Please ensure that students are dressed appropriately for the weather each day. Please send extra clothing. Please label all items.

What to Bring

- Sunscreen and/or bug spray applied beforehand at home (in Fall/Spring/Summer)
- Rain: waterproof boots, rain pants, waterproof coat, hat
- Personal hand sanitizer
- Personal tissues
- Water bottle
- Hat (seasonally appropriate, ie for sun, rain or cold)
- Snack (one healthy nut-free snack that your child can open independently, 2 snacks if attending a full day program)
- Extra pair of clothes
- Comfortable shoes that allow for hiking, boots that will work well in snow and ice
- Weather appropriate clothing (including rain gear and any extra layers)
- Lunch if attending a full day program
- Backpack
- Indoor Shoes
- Winter wear (waterproof gloves, warm hat, neck warmer). Please send 2 pairs of waterproof gloves for full day program

Please do not bring additional toys from home.

For students attending full day programs you may store extra clothing in a ziplock labeled bag at the School

Dressing in the Winter

We recommend students wear 3 layers. A base layer (eg. Merino Wool), middle layer (fleece, goose down) and an outer layer waterproof, wind proof layer.

Waterproof mitts or gloves and an extra pair in backpack.

Warm winter socks (you may want to size up on winter boots) and an extra pair in backpack.

Illness/ Absences

If your child will be ill or absent please let us know by email.

Participants who have symptoms of COVID-19 or who have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID- 19 will not be allowed to attend the program .

We ask that parents / guardians **do not** send their child to school if they are sick. If a child is sick at school, we will contact you to pick them up. If your child has a communicable disease please let the school know immediately.

Special Needs

We have a positive learning environment for all children. If your child requires special accommodations please reach out to the team. We will try our best to accommodate them when possible.

Hygiene and Sanitation

We will be enforcing regular hand washing. When soap and water is not available we will be using hand sanitizer. Please put a personal hand sanitizer in your child's backpack. We ask that students do not share snacks.

Ticks

There are ticks in Toronto woods and park areas. We stay on the paths in the Ravines which helps protect against ticks. For more information about ticks please check out: https://www.toronto.ca/community_people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/lyme-disease/blacklegged-tick-surveillance-results/

Allergies

Please inform staff of any and all allergies on the medical information form in your registration package. If your child is anaphylactic, please inform the staff and provide two epipens for your child.

If it is seasonal allergies please inform staff and write it on the medical forms.

Washrooms

We have access to washroom facilities at our home base at 2245 Queen Street East, lower level. Children will be encouraged to use the washrooms before heading outside. Once outside washrooms are limited. They are able to have an “outdoor pee”, use our portable potty, or use a public bathroom space (at the beach, the park etc) when applicable.

It is important that participants are toilet trained and able to use the bathroom by themselves.

Parent / Guardian Responsibilities:

- 1.Ensure all forms are completed in full and submitted prior to beginning the program.
- 2.Ensure your child is dressed for the weather. (please read thorough checklist)
- 3.Provide staff with all relevant information required to meet the needs of your child.
- 4.Follow all policies and procedures laid out in this handbook.

Terms and Conditions

In order to participate at Toronto Nature School registration must be completed and the appropriate fees must be paid. Fees vary by age group, program and session. Please refer to the website for tuition information.

Payments for all programs can be made on the website www.torontonatureschool.ca

Toronto Nature School reserves the right to terminate the contract (with refund for the unused days) if it is deemed not a good fit for the child.

Payment Policy

Payment for each session is due upon registration. For Nature School and Nature Kindergarten, payment for the Fall Session is due upon registration with the following two session payments for the Winter and Spring sessions due in November and February respectively. Dates for these subsequent payments can be found on the website. There is also an option to pay in full. Little Explorers, Weekend Programs, Summer Camp and PA Day Camp payment details are also outlined on the website.

Refund Policy: Nature School & Nature Kindergarten

Payment for the Fall session is required for Nature School and Nature Kindergarten upon registration. \$300 of this is non-refundable.

A refund, less \$300 will be issued for a cancellation made during the notice period of 28 days prior to the start date of the program.


Once the program has started there will be no refund unless the spot can be filled. If the spot is filled a refund for the remaining days will be granted, less the \$300.

If the program is canceled or changed due to low enrolment a full refund will be issued.

COVID- 19

In the instance Toronto Nature School cancels programming due to COVID- 19, families will receive a 65% pro-rated refund and online instruction will be offered during regular scheduled class time. Refunds will be determined on a case to case basis and are not given unless there are extreme circumstances that prevent a child from participating in Nature School.

Any and all refund requests should be made in writing by email to hello@torontonatureschool.ca



Refund Policy: Little Explorer, Weekend Program, PA Day, Summer Camp

Recreation fees are refundable, less a \$75 administration fee, if requested 14 days prior to the program's start date.

If cancellation is received less than 14 days prior to your child's start date no refund will be provided.

No refunds will be given for sick or missed days for students.

The above policy is not applicable during a time of force majeure or circumstances beyond our control (natural disaster, quarantine, pandemic etc).

Risky Play

Students learning to navigate outside is part of all our programs and as such there is some risk. Toronto Nature School staff thoroughly assess risk daily and do a site assessment at each space.

Assessment and Reporting

Educators will take pictures, collect notes and work. This form of assessment is used to communicate with parents and guardians.

Communication

Please use email: hello@torontonatureschool.ca to communicate, including if you are running late or need to contact someone in case of emergency. To see what we're up to, we will be updating our Instagram page regularly of photos of our adventures - this is a great way to follow along!

If you have any further questions, please [visit our website](#) or email the school hello@torontonatureschool.ca

