



**FAMILY HANDBOOK**



Eunoia Forest School is a Durham Region-based program that encourages the use of outdoor spaces to develop your child’s natural curiosity and independent learning skills.

Eunoia’s Mission, Vision, and Values drive our program to meet the needs of the community and to create learning environments that are welcoming and respectful to each other and the environment. We provide a unique experience in a unique space.

Beautiful thinking happens in naturally beautiful spaces.



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This document provides a summary of our practices and policies. If you would like to read any policy in full, please contact [inquiry@euoniaforestschool.ca](mailto:inquiry@euoniaforestschool.ca) or our administrative number. We will keep you informed when any of the information in this handbook changes.

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# PROGRAM STATEMENT



# MISSION/VISION/VALUES

## **Our Mission**

Eunoia Forest School is a nature-based education program providing opportunities for holistic growth, authentic experiences, and education in the natural environment.

## **Our Vision**

Our nature-based experiences will foster a love for the environment and provide education through repetitive engagement with nature. Through exploration, children will build confidence and a sense of wonder. Mentors will guide children to build deep connections with their surroundings.

## **Our Values**

Eunoia Forest School is guided by values that influence our daily lives and interactions: Care, Health, Inclusivity, Respect, Responsibility and a commitment to Environmental Sustainability.



## ABOUT FOREST SCHOOLS

The [Child and Nature Alliance of Canada](#) defines Forest/Nature Schools (FNS) programs as ones that,

1. “Take place in any outdoor space, including urban greenspace, playgrounds, forests, creeks, prairies, mountains, shoreline, and tundra.
2. Is a sustained process of regular and repeated sessions in the same outdoor space, supporting children to develop a reciprocal relationship with the Land, and an understanding of themselves as a part of the natural world.
3. Views children and youth as innately competent, curious, and capable learners.
4. Is led by educators who share power with learners through play-based, emergent, and inquiry-driven teaching and learning methods.
5. Values children’s play - self-directed, freely chosen, intrinsically motivated - in and of itself. FNS programs provide adequate time and space for children and youth to dive deeply into their play.
6. Views risky play as an integral part of children’s learning and healthy development, and is facilitated by knowledgeable, qualified educators who support children and youth to co-manage risk.
7. Relies on loose, natural materials to support open-ended, creative play and learning.
8. Values the *process* as much as the *outcome*.
9. Prioritizes building reciprocal relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, who have been learning from this Land since time immemorial.
10. Practices, policies, and programming reflect and prioritize the building of engaged, healthy, vibrant, and diverse communities through consideration of access and equity in our decisions and actions.”

## WHAT IS EUNOIA FOREST SCHOOL?

Eunoia Forest School follows the Forest School ethos as outlined above by The Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. We provide an educational approach where learning meets play in the natural environment. Although there is a daily outline for learning, we follow an emergent, play-based curriculum that is child-led. Our outline usually brings us to a specific location with an idea of a skill that will be encouraged (shelter-making, fire creation etc.). However, the students lead the learning with support and guidance from our trained staff. Students of all abilities are provided opportunities for collaborative inquiry and reflective practice each day, coming together as a group to sit and discuss what they have learned, and how they can add on to their learning the following day.

Our program is located in a conservation area or a local park. We will travel throughout the grounds, exploring the forest and waterways safely. We will not leave the designated conservation or park areas, unless we are required to evacuate in an emergency.

## BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR LEARNING

In a world where we are surrounded by screens, outdoor learning is more important than ever. The power of education exists beyond the traditional classroom. All skills taught within a brick and mortar building are available to children in natural spaces. Children have access to fresh air and unique ecology, they build social skills while learning to problem-solve, and 'too much energy' is not a problem, as there is always something to explore. You won't find long lectures here, just quality inquiry between children and mentors.

Eunoia Forest School fosters respect for the environment and each participant in the program. Similarly, independence and collaboration grow together as each day passes and children become more confident with their choices and their understanding of their comfort zone.



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Eunoia would like to acknowledge the land and peoples of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island, First Nation. We offer gratitude to the land that we are on today, which is part of the Williams Treaties and one piece of the great Anishinaabeg Nation, including Algonquin, Ojibway, Odawa and Pottawatomi peoples. Today we will honour **the grass, dirt, and mud that we will sink our toes and feet into; the cedar, maple, and birch that we may run our hands across.** As we engage with nature and the life of plants, animals and people, let us show humility and kindness to those that we share the land with. We will honour the water that we observe, watch it flow and show respect for each drop that moves through the creeks here at Heber Down. We will take a moment to quietly observe **the birds, clouds, and sky as we breathe in the fresh air** that surrounds us here on Turtle Island. As a settler here, I will show gratitude by being kind to the land around me. I will be a caretaker, asking and thanking the land for the materials that I get to explore today and then returning them to their home. It is my responsibility to learn from, and honour, the peoples and land who have been here since time immemorial.

**\*Sentences in green allow for staff and children to add in what they are honouring and observing for that day.**

## DAY ROUTINE

Each day brings a new adventure. At Eunoia, children are forever finding new ways to explore and engage in the environment. This is a rough guideline for a day:

### Weekend Programs (Morning, Saturday Spring/Fall)

8:55 - 9:00 am - Drop-off  
9:00 - 9:05 am - Walk to site  
9:05 - 9:20 am - Morning check-in, welcome, land acknowledgement  
9:20 - 10:00 am - \*Exploratory play  
10:00 - 10:20 am - Snack and local play  
10:20 - 11:20 am - \*Exploratory play/\*skill-based learning  
11:20 - 11:30 am - Story-telling, debrief

### Weekend Programs (Afternoon, Saturday Spring/Fall)

12:25 - 12:30 pm - Drop-off  
12:35 - 12:40 pm - Walk to site  
12:40 - 1:00 pm - Afternoon check-in, welcome, land acknowledgement  
1:00 - 2:00 pm - \*Exploratory play/\*skill-based learning  
2:00 - 2:15 pm - Snack and local play  
2:15 - 2:45 pm - \*Exploratory play  
2:45 - 3:00 pm - Story-telling, debrief

### Summer Program

8:55 - 9:00 am - Drop-off  
9:00 - 9:05 am - Walk to site

9:05 - 9:30 am - Morning check-in, welcome, land acknowledgement  
9:30 - 10:30 am - \*Exploratory play  
10:30 - 10:45 am - Snack  
10:45 - 12:15 pm - \*Exploratory play/\*skill-based learning  
12:15 - 1:00 pm - Lunch and local play  
1:00 - 2:45 pm - Exploratory play/skill-based learning  
2:45 - 3:25 pm - Snack, story-telling, debrief  
3:25 - 3:30 pm - Pick-up

\*Exploratory Play - Where children explore the environment and programming is built on student interest. This may be new learning and exploration, or it may be a continuation from a previous day.

\*Skill-based Learning - Although children will always be learning new skills, this is the best time of day to introduce learning that is specific to a forest school. Activities include tool use, building fires, fishing, and tree-climbing. Skill-based learning is best done between 11am and 2pm to ensure maximum alertness and safety.

\*Local Play - All children are provided with time to eat their snack/lunch. As children finish their food, they are welcome to play in the local, designated area with loose parts and materials found and/or provided during programming.

## ROLE OF THE CHILD

Children are encouraged to let their natural curiosity guide them. Investigating the ecology that exists around Eunoia opens opportunities for creative learning. Children are expected to 'be themselves'. The more questions that are asked, the more answers your child will discover. We expect children to bring their 'calm' and their 'wild' and to use both to extend their desire to learn more about the environment around them.

We welcome and support all children. We will happily work with you and your child to develop an individualized plan to ensure that our environment and activities meet your children's unique needs.

## ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

Eunoia Forest School believes in child-led programming. Educators are mentors who lead the children to discover new skills and curiosities within the natural environment. Math and language learning happen naturally, and discussions are fostered to extend understanding. Activities are designed to encourage positive interactions and communication among children and between children and mentors. Educators encourage children to make confident choices in their learning while ensuring safety is at the forefront of every experience.

Mentors at Eunoia have earned their licence or are working toward completing training to practice as an Ontario Certified Teacher, Early Childhood Educator, and/or Forest School Practitioner. All staff have experience facilitating learning in nature and engage in ongoing professional learning.



## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



## PLACE-BASED LEARNING

Eunoia Forest School strives to give students a variety of experiences throughout the day. Although we have specific meeting grounds, our learning takes place throughout the natural environment. If student interest leads to a muddy area or a stream, we believe that learning will be most beneficial in those spaces. Our programs always follow emergent curriculum philosophies: children are leaders of their learning and staff are mentors who provide the safe spaces, questions, and guidance to lead students to answers.

As a student-led, nature-based school, our programs look different each week. Programs are shaped around the interests, skills, and experiences of the children who are enrolled and are adapted to weather conditions for authentic and safe learning. As they say, when life gives you rain, make mud pies and explore insects!

## ACHIEVABLE CHALLENGE BY CHOICE

Each child comes to Eunoia with their own set of experiences and exposures that guide their reaction to any given activity. These reactions translate into three zones of learning, each of which has value:

1. **Comfort Zone** - This is where activities are comfortable for the child and cause little to no emotional response. Still, activities in the Comfort Zone are valuable because they allow children to demonstrate competence and mastery in skills that were once achievable challenges.
2. **Achievable Challenge Zone** - This is where a student feels ready to try something new. They may feel a bit nervous, but are mostly excited. Asking questions, receiving adult support, watching peers, or approaching a task in small steps may support the child to feel ready. The Achievable Challenge Zone is where new ideas and skills are learned, so it is where we encourage students to be.
3. **Worry Zone** - This zone causes a high emotional response. Students learn to recognize their feelings as an important indicator of how to stay safe and continue learning in the Achievable Challenge Zone.

At Eunoia, we encourage children to attempt achievable challenges at their own pace. Each child has their own threshold for moving between the Comfort, Achievable Challenge, and Worry Zones for a given activity within the program. Staff provide students with the skills and information to make choices about their participation. We celebrate the courage to say “no” just as much as the courage to say “yes”.

## RISKY PLAY

Eunoia Forest School comes with an element of risk. “Risky play” is broad: it involves children finding the level of thrill and excitement that fosters their development. [Outside Play](#) provides these examples of risky play:

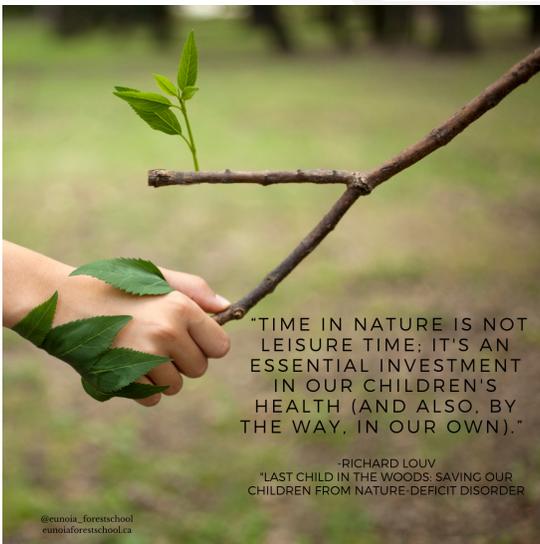
- Play with heights - climbing
- Play with speed, such as running/cycling fast
- Play with tools - drills, hammers, rope, etc.
- Dangerous elements - fire and water
- Chance of getting ‘lost’ - hiding behind trees or roaming the designated play area
- Rough-and-tumble play - play fights, rolling in the dirt, etc.

Risky play will look different for all children and all ages. Two children of the same age may want to climb a tree, and one will stay on a low branch while the other climbs higher. Eunoia provides students with the skills to make confident decisions and offers safe spaces where trained staff monitor and evaluate appropriate risk-taking. As explained in [an expert position statement on active outdoor play](#), “Access to active play in nature and outdoors—with its risks—is essential for healthy child development”.

For more information or questions regarding Risky Play, we encourage you to visit [www.outsideplay.ca](http://www.outsideplay.ca) or contact [elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca).

## PLANNING AND OBSERVATION

Eunoia Forest School always has a plan for the day. Staff consider the location and relevant themes to plan beneficial learning experiences, and these plans evolve once children arrive and join staff in setting intentions for the day. Our plan is always flexible and follows the lead of the children in the group. Our staff are able to extend play, ask open-ended questions, and support students, even if the program deviates from the original plan.



Staff observe children’s learning and play to guide each day’s program. Staff observe children’s inquiry questions and interests, then reflect and plan opportunities to enrich play and learning within the environment. With consent from families, staff capture photos and oral documentation throughout the program to plan the best next steps.

## TOOL USE

Using tools is a part of the experience at Eunoia Forest School. Children and staff build trusting relationships that inform when and how children use tools: children demonstrate necessary skills and knowledge, along with an appropriate sense of responsibility, and staff support children to use tools in their Achievable Challenge Zone. The tools we use can include, but are not limited to, saws, hand drills, hammers, rope, and knives.

Although safety is always our top priority, tool use comes with inherent risk. Our staff have thorough knowledge of the tools being used and provide ongoing supervision when children are using tools.

## LOOSE PARTS

Loose parts are materials that can be picked up, moved, and manipulated within the environment. Although natural loose parts such as sticks, rocks, and leaves are most important to Eunoia, we also offer synthetic loose parts such as rope, balls, and tarps to enhance learning opportunities. Loose parts are open-ended and support student curiosity.

## TREE-CLIMBING

Children are avid explorers and climbers. Whether it's the playground or rocks, children enjoy challenging themselves to climb wherever possible. At Eunoia Forest School, we encourage children to climb and play on the various landscapes in our environment. Students are encouraged to only climb as high as they are tall.

## FIRE USE

Students will have opportunities to build and create fires. Students must demonstrate required skills and show understanding and respect for strict guidelines before they are provided with the tools to create fires (e.g., matches, magnesium, and steel).

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

We assess the effectiveness of our programs on an ongoing basis, through pedagogical documentation of children's learning and through reflective journaling and discussions among the Owner/Operator, staff, and volunteers. We continually build on our successes and adjust our strategies, tools, and resources as we discover opportunities to improve outcomes for children.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



## LEAVE NO TRACE

There are 7 principles outlined by Leave No Trace Canada. Eunoia does its best to follow the principles in order to foster sustainability and respect for our natural environment. For more information, please visit, <https://www.leavenotrace.ca/principles>

|  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Plan Ahead and Prepare              | Eunoia Forest School staff always looks through the environment prior to setting up the program and activity for the day.  |
| 2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces | Although we do not camp overnight, we do ‘camp’ during the day. We ensure that the surfaces are durable and that children have a safe space to explore.  |
| 3. Dispose of Waste Properly           | We are very conscious of our impact. The materials that we bring in are the same materials we bring out. Handwashing materials are used away from natural water sources and ‘catholes’ are dug at least 20cm deep.   |
| 4. Leave What You Find                 | At Eunoia, we believe that students can explore the natural environment and appreciate it. In a gentle, holistic way, we teach why it is important to leave what we find in the forest. In our experience, most children choose to leave nature items behind to enjoy at a later time. However, there are instances when a child finds a rock, stick, or other treasure that they want to take home. In these instances, we will support a child’s decision to take the item home and will continue to teach “leave what you find” in a child-friendly manner. |
| 5. Minimize Campfire Impacts           | Creating a campfire is a skill that our students practice during their time at Eunoia. Our fires are small and controlled to minimize impact. All materials are set up beforehand and are created with direct, ongoing supervision by staff.   |
| 6. Respect Wildlife                    | We appreciate all of the wildlife that exists in Eunoia’s space. We encourage children to observe from a distance. We do not feed wildlife. However, we use our inquiry skills to learn more about animals’ habitats and patterns. We are excited to share our space with wildlife!  |
| 7. Be Considerate of Others            | We are considerate of community members who may be in our space when walking trails or biking through the environment. Children learn etiquette for sharing outdoor spaces, such as moving over for a bike to pass, taking rest breaks away from trails, and speaking at respectful volumes.   |

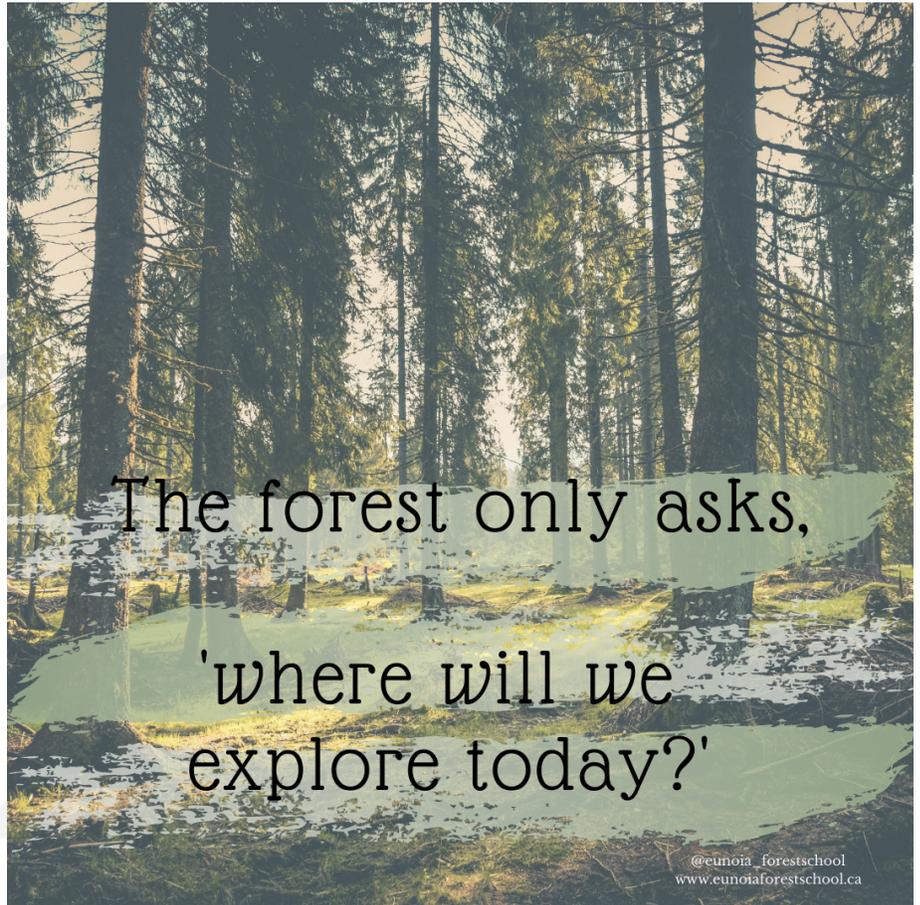
PROGRAM INFORMATION - POLICIES AND  
PROCEDURES



## INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Eunoia Forest School works to dismantle all barriers to participation in our school. We welcome all children and make all reasonable accommodations and modifications to ensure students have equitable opportunities to experience joy and success in activities alongside their peers. Our goal is to make Eunoia accessible to all students and to nurture a caring community, where our diverse identities--including race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and mental or physical disability--are recognized and valued.

If you have any reason to believe your child may need accommodations, modifications, or specific support, or if you would like your child to bring a service animal to Eunoia, please let us know when you complete your registration form or package. If you have any questions about accessibility and support, please email Elisha Blair at [elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca).



## REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Please review our Registration, Waitlist, and Refund Policy in [Appendix 1](#).

Families must use our CampMinder registration portal to register with Eunoia Forest School. Once you have registered, you will see the remaining forms in our registration package via your account through CampMinder. Alternatively, families may call our administrative line for registration information and/or email [inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca) to request that a registration package be sent via email.

The registration package includes a general waiver. A parent/guardian must sign this waiver (electronically or on paper) prior to the child's start date for the child to participate in Eunoia's programs.

Please let us know if your child has any medical needs or requires any accommodations when completing your registration form or package. We welcome all children and invite you to read our accessibility beliefs and practices below. We will work with you to develop an individualized plan for your child and to ensure necessary paperwork is completed if your child requires medication during a program.

## PROGRAM FEES

Spring and Fall payments are due in full at the time of registration, \$75.00 of the total fee is a non-refundable deposit. For Summer programs, a \$75.00 deposit is due 24 hours after we confirm your child's registration. Fees must be paid 21 days in advance of your program start date. Payment can be made by cash, e-transfer (to [ellisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:ellisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca)), or debit/credit through your online account.

- Spring/Fall program (5-weeks) - \$170.00 + HST
- 5-day program - \$350.00 + HST
- 4-day program - \$300.00 + HST

For our Summer program, Eunoia Forest School offers a discount for families enrolling multiple children:

- 10% discount applied for siblings
- If you would like to register 4 or more children, please contact [ellisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:ellisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca) to discuss a discount.

\*If you require a payment plan, please contact [ellisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:ellisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca).

We may change fees seasonally. We will provide at least 14 days notice of any fee changes.

## WAITLIST

Registrations are accepted and children are placed on the waitlist in chronological order (e.g., based on the date and time requests are received). Once any siblings of currently-enrolled children on the waitlist or children of staff members on the waitlist have been enrolled, we contact families in the order their children were placed on the waitlist.

Within 24 hours of a program start date, the Owner/Operator may contact any family who is known to be available, interested, and able to complete the requirements of program registration.

Please inform us if you only want to be contacted about programs scheduled for particular dates.

## REFUNDS

Eunoia Forest School determines refunds based on the circumstances of the individual situation. Refunds are not given unless there are extreme circumstances that prevent a child from participating in Eunoia Forest School.

1. Refunds will not be given if a program is canceled due to inclement weather. Please see our Weather and Closures procedure below.
2. A child who is absent or leaves for a portion of the day due to illness, injury, appointment or due to removal under our Behaviour Guidance Policy and Procedures will not be provided a refund. We will offer partial or full refunds if your child is unable to attend if we must cancel your program due to COVID-19 restrictions.
3. Eunoia Forest School will provide a partial or full refund, based on when you cancel your registration - this policy is reflective of the current COVID-19 restrictions:
  - 21+ days prior to start date: Full refund, minus the \$75 deposit
  - 15-20 days prior to start date: 50% refund, minus the \$75 deposit
  - 15 days or fewer prior to start date: Payment is non-refundable.

## WITHDRAWAL

We look forward to your child joining our program! We will work with you to support your child's individual needs and to resolve any issues that arise. On rare occasions, to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all children, staff, and volunteers at Eunoia, we may need to withdraw your child after all reasonable strategies to support a child's full participation have been tried or if a member of your family violates our policies and procedures. If, for any reason, you would like to withdraw your child, you can do so by emailing [inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca).

## WEATHER AND CLOSURES

Eunoia Forest School operates during most types of weather. Eunoia Forest School monitors the weather throughout the day and makes all decisions based on student safety. In extreme cold (-30 degrees°C) or extreme heat (30 degrees°C), staff will adjust the time spent outdoors according to students' clothing, development, and comfort. Staff and volunteers will visually monitor students for signs of frostbite or heat exhaustion and guide children to engage in healthy habits (e.g., staying hydrated). Students will also be provided with the skills and tools to conduct self-checks. In the event of wind gusts, we will stay away from forested areas and overhead hazards. During unexpected thunderstorms, staff, students, and volunteers will move to a sheltered area or, if the sheltered area is too far, take the "lightning position" until it is safe to move to shelter.

Although rare, we may cancel a program or end a program early if thunderstorms, wind, cold, or other weather conditions are extreme and a significant risk to student safety.

We will email you as soon as possible, usually no later than 7:30AM on the day of the program, if the program must be cancelled. We will follow up with text messages or phone calls to ensure you are informed.

Refunds are not provided due to the weather, but we will do our best to provide a make-up day if a full day of program is cancelled.

## ILLNESS

We follow current public health guidelines regarding COVID-19 and will ensure all students and families are informed of our COVID-19 protocols before arriving at Eunoia Forest School.

Eunoia Forest School strives to keep our community as healthy as possible. If your child is experiencing any symptoms of illness, they cannot return to Eunoia until 24 hours after symptoms have stopped, or a qualified professional has determined that your child is not experiencing a communicable illness or is otherwise clear to return to Eunoia. The exclusion period may differ, depending on the illness your child is experiencing, based on guidelines from the Durham Region Health Department.

Parents must screen their children prior to arriving at Eunoia each day using the school and child care screening guide.

As per current public health requirements, If you feel sick or have any new or worsening symptoms of illness, you should stay home until your symptoms are improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea) and contact your health care provider if needed.

Please stay home if your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms that are new, worsening, and not related to other known causes or conditions that your child already has

- **Fever** and/or **chills** (Temperature of 37.8°C or 100°F)
- **Cough** or barking cough (croup)
- **Shortness of breath**
- **Decrease or loss of smell or taste**

- **Sore throat or difficulty swallowing**
- **Runny or stuffy/congested nose**
- **Headache**
- **Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea**
- **Extreme tiredness or muscle aches**
- They have been **told to isolate** by a health care provider or public health unit

We will make all possible accommodations to allow students who cannot attend because they fail COVID-19 screening to attend a future program session.

**Eunoia is a place-based experience that requires students to feel their best to ensure they are able to participate in the program fully. If your child is feeling too unwell to participate in the program, please keep your child home for the day and return when they feel better.**

## ABSENT/SICK DAYS

If your child will be away, please call our administrative number, leaving a voicemail if we are unable to answer. Eunoia Forest School Staff do not check email for attendance information. If your child is absent and we have not heard from you via phone, we will call you around 9:30 AM to confirm your child's absence.

Eunoia Forest School follows government and public health guidelines and expects all staff, volunteers, and students to do the same.

## DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP

You must provide, in writing, the name and phone number of anyone authorized to pick up your child. The designated person will be required to show photo identification upon arrival. If any other person arrives to pick up your child, Eunoia Forest School staff will call you to seek your verbal consent to release your child to the person.

Regardless of marital status, we will only prevent a parent from picking up a child if they are clearly denied access rights in a custody order that you have provided to us.

Drop-off is between 8:55 AM and 9:00 AM, for Morning-Spring programs and Summer programs. Drop off for Afternoon-Spring programs between 12:25 PM and 12:30 PM each day. Pick-up is at 11:30 AM, and 3:00 PM for our Spring morning and afternoon sessions, and 3:30 PM for our Summer programs, unless otherwise arranged between you and Eunoia staff. If your child will not arrive or be picked up on time, please call our administrative number as soon as possible. We do not check email for attendance information.

NO-SMOKING POLICY

Eunoia’s program sites and offices are smoke-free. We prohibit smoking or lighting tobacco, e-cigarettes, or cannabis, except in the case of Indigenous spiritual or cultural purposes.



## RISK MANAGEMENT

Eunoia Forest School believes that there is value in co-assessing and co-navigating risks within activities and the environment. Students learn how to recognize, manage, and overcome risks in order to become comfortable to engage in activities. Students learn that some risks create growth while others cause worry, so we must listen to ourselves and trust our ability to manage developmentally-appropriate risks. (You can read more about Risky Play above.)

Eunoia Forest School's environment and programs come with inherent risks. Eunoia Forest School staff conduct seasonal and daily checks for environmental risks. EFS staff also conduct activity assessments that include a benefit/risk evaluation of each specific experience. Students are given tools and strategies to make choices for each activity that best suit their individual needs and are offered gentle guidance and support to take educated risks within the program.

## WATER GUIDELINES

Water-based activities are an important part of Eunoia Forest School programming. To protect and promote safety:

1. Students **must wear a life jacket at all times** during water-based activities.
2. A fully-stocked, waterproof first aid kit is always readily accessible to staff during the program.
3. Water areas are clearly defined and free from hazards. The water temperature is suitable for entry.
4. Students are taught necessary skills and safety protocols before all water-based activities
5. A rescue throw bag is accessible during all water-based activities.



## INCIDENT REPORTING

Please review our Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures in full in [Appendix 2](#).

Eunoia takes all precautions to ensure safety within our programs. Although rare, an Incident Report is completed any time there is a significant accident or injury, a medical emergency, a significant behaviour issue, an unusual event, or a near-miss affecting the health, safety, and/or well-being of a child, staff, volunteer, or other community member at Eunoia.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

At minimum, all staff have Standard First Aid and CPR Level 'C'. Emergency procedures and phone numbers are kept on site at all times. Staff always carry a cell phone in case of an emergency.

All staff and volunteers are trained in our emergency management procedures.

In the event of an emergency, the educators will:

- Assess the nature and extent of the emergency and communicate with each other to ensure:
  - First aid is provided as required
  - All members within the group are accounted for and supported
  - An adult calls **911** as necessary and relays:
    - The nature of the emergency
    - Details of the affected person(s)
    - The program address and location of the emergency
  - A parent/guardian or emergency contact of the affected person(s) is called
  - An adult travels to the program entrance if an ambulance has been called to direct the paramedics to the location of the emergency
  - A staff member or parent/guardian/emergency contact accompanies any individual transported by ambulance, bringing the individual's medical and health information with them
  - The group moves safely to our evacuation site, if necessary
  - The Owner/Operator of Eunoia Forest School is called

The Owner/Operator will:

- Liaise with emergency services and follow their directions until the incident is over
- Ensure that accurate, pertinent information is communicated to families, staff, and volunteers as soon as possible and as updates occur
  - We will call each family by phone, especially if an emergency involves one or a few children. If an emergency affects the entire school (e.g., a fire or evacuation), we may meanwhile send an email with general information to ensure information is shared efficiently. We will also post notices at our program entrances and update our voicemail as relevant (e.g., if we have evacuated).
- Ensure that the emergency is documented and reported as required and as soon as possible
- Debrief children, families, staff, and volunteers after the emergency and coordinate support for children, staff, and volunteers who have experienced distress
- Coordinate the return of normal operations at Eunoia

## IMMEDIATE AND/OR ONGOING EMERGENCIES

Safety is a priority within our programs. Please review key information about how we prepare for, and respond to, emergencies in [Appendix 3](#). (This information comes from our Emergency Management and Fire Safety/Evacuation Policy and Procedures.)

## BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

Eunoia Forest School believes in providing a safe, calm, and positive environment for all students to learn and build relationships. Students are given the tools and strategies for self-advocacy and conflict resolution with guidance and support from Eunoia's staff and volunteers. Eunoia Forest School staff and volunteers use positive behaviour guidance strategies, and we have zero tolerance for:

- Corporal (physical) punishment
- Physical restraint or forcefully grabbing, moving, or picking up a child (unless the restraint or action is to stop a child from hurting themselves or others, and is only used as a last resort and until the danger is no longer imminent)
- Locking exits or confining a child to an area or room without adult supervision (such actions are only implemented during a lockdown or other emergency management drill or procedure, not as a behaviour guidance strategy)
- Harsh or degrading measures or threats
- Derogatory language used toward, or in the presence of, a child
- Language that would humiliate, shame, frighten, degrade, or harm a child or otherwise affect their sense of self or well-being negatively
- Humiliation, name-calling, shaming, isolating, or other degrading actions
- Singling out a child in a group setting
- Depriving a child of basic needs, such as, shelter, food, water, sleep, clothing, or access to the washroom or medical care
- Inflicting any bodily harm, including making a child eat or drink against their will
- Any other form of sexual, emotional, or physical abuse or neglect

Eunoia Forest School staff plan learning experiences and respond to children's behaviour in ways that promote self-confidence, self-awareness, and self-advocacy as foundations for problem-solving within the environment and with peers. We aim to prevent and resolve problems by considering the needs of each individual child in a given situation. Hence, we encourage you and your child to share any information that will help us to support your child's individual behaviour needs.

We make every effort to support a child through behaviours that contradict individual and program goals. In most cases, and with your support, we are able to develop strategies to support a child's learning and continued enjoyment of our programs. However, due to Eunoia Forest School's nature-based location, safety is our top priority. Hence, certain behaviours are prohibited and may result in your child being sent home and/or withdrawn from our programs.

### **Prohibited Behaviours**

Although rare, behaviours in our Suspension Policy, including the following, are prohibited within Eunoia Forest School:

- Disregarding personal safety or the safety of others
- Threatening students, staff, and/or volunteers
- Failing to follow set limits
- Running away
  - If your child needs 1:1 consistent supervision, please inform us when completing your registration form or package so that we can coordinate sufficient staffing to

support your child or plan for you to attend the program with your child. If it is determined that your child needs 1:1 supervision after your child has already registered, we may need to delay your child's participation until we can work with you to arrange sufficient support.

Sending a child home is rare and is done only after all other reasonable strategies have been exhausted. In the unlikely event that your child is sent home for the day, you will be called and your child will need to be picked up immediately. We will discuss how your child can return to the program safely. Eunoia Forest School reserves the right to review your child's enrollment and decide that they cannot return to Eunoia.

There will not be a refund for time missed due to prohibited behaviours. We can happily provide our Registration, Withdrawal, and Waiting List Policy for more information.



## FOOD

Students are required to bring their own lunch, snacks, and refillable water bottle to Eunoia each day. Since Eunoia practices environmental sustainability and low-impact learning, families are highly encouraged to pack a **litterless** lunch that is easy to carry in a backpack. Please label all food containers with your child's name--this helps protect the safety of children with allergies.

Students are not allowed to share food with other students. In a special circumstance, and when COVID-19 guidelines allow, Eunoia staff may provide a snack to students. The snack will be packaged with a label that has a full list of ingredients.

There may be times when Eunoia Forest School forages and consumes wild edibles. This is done with extreme care, research, and professional knowledge about each material and is always optional for students. All allergies and intolerances are considered when foraging and offering wild edibles.

Eunoia Forest School is a **nut-aware** environment. We also email families a list of foods that must be avoided due to allergies among children, staff, and volunteers prior to the start of each program. Please ensure that nuts or items from the allergen list are not in your child's lunches or snacks, as some children may experience anaphylaxis -a severe, life-threatening reaction- if exposed to these items.

Since Eunoia programs occur in public environments, we are unable to guarantee a full allergen-free zone. However, we take steps to mitigate the risks of exposure to nuts or other allergens. Students with anaphylactic allergies must have an EpiPen or alternate emergency medication on them and with their group staff at all times.

Please inform Eunoia of your child's allergies so that we can develop an individualized plan to support your child's health and medical needs.

## DRINKING WATER

Students are expected to arrive with a reusable, filled water bottle at the beginning of each day. Students will be able to refill their water bottle with clean, safe drinking water provided on site at Eunoia.

## HANDWASHING

Staff carry environmentally-friendly materials for hand hygiene. In our outdoor environment, handwashing is not always an option, but hand sanitizer is provided. Your registration package includes a form for you to complete if you consent to your child using hand sanitizer. Students are expected to wash or sanitize their hands after touching animals, bugs, or contaminated materials, after using the washroom, after wiping or blowing their nose, and before and after eating. Hand hygiene routines are enhanced according to public health advice during the COVID-19 pandemic. When on the main site, clean water is available to hand wash with soap.

## TOILETING PROCEDURES

Washrooms are located on site. Staff will monitor that washrooms are cleaned by the site owners and will sanitize washrooms in between uses as per our COVID-19 protocols. Staff will also ensure that washrooms are adequately stocked with proper materials for hand hygiene, including by providing paper towels if only hand dryers are present.

If a child needs to use the washroom during an activity located away from washroom facilities, they are guided to do an “outdoor pee” or dig a “cat hole” in a private place away from other children, play areas, and water sources. The child will then clean their hands with hand sanitizer carried by staff. All students **must** be able to **independently** use the washroom (including wiping), unless a child has developmental or medical needs and you have discussed your child’s needs with us so that extra support can be arranged. Please send your child an extra change of clothes each day.



## CLOTHING AND EQUIPMENT

Suitable clothing and equipment are the number one way to keep your child comfortable and protected from the elements while at Eunoia Forest School. Students do not need all items each day but please check the weather forecast each morning to determine which items should be packed.

Suggested items according to the season:

### All Seasons

1. Water-resistant backpack
2. Lunch and snacks
3. Reusable water bottle
4. Change of clothes (including extra socks)

### Spring or Fall

1. Warm sweater or jacket
2. Gloves
3. Light hat for warmth
4. Base layer (e.g., shirt and pants)
5. Extra waterproof boots
6. Plus, all items on the summer list

### Summer

1. Rain gear: waterproof boots, pants, and jacket
2. Running shoes
3. Water shoes
4. Sun hat
5. Lightweight clothing (light coloured clothing that covers arms and legs for protection against ticks, mosquitoes, sun, and plants such as poison ivy)
6. Bathing suit
7. Sunscreen
8. Insect repellent

All students must be dressed appropriately. If a student is not dressed appropriately to spend the day outdoors, they must leave with their parent/guardian to change and gather needed items before they can join the program.

Local thrift stores are a great place to access some of these materials. We are currently building a lending library of clothing for Eunoia families to access throughout the program. If you are missing a specific item, please check with us first. If you have clothing that you would like to donate to our program, please email the Owner/Operator at [elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca)

## TICK PREVENTION

Ticks are a natural risk in Eunoia's nature-based learning environment. The best ways to protect against ticks are to wear clothing that covers exposed skin and to perform regular tick checks. Eunoia teaches children how to perform tick checks and reminds children to perform checks throughout the day and after the program.

For more information please visit: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-lyme-en-factsheet-2019-11-20.pdf>



## STAFF AND STUDENT RATIOS

We assign a small number of children per staff to enable safe, quality programming for all children at Eunoia Forest School. Our maximum staff:student ratios are:

- 1:8 for Explorers (children 4-6 years)
- 1:10 for Wanderers (6-10 children years)
- 1:12 for Adventurers (10-12 years)

Volunteers may provide additional support beyond staff:student ratios. Volunteers are not counted in staffing ratios. Each group often has a Lead staff and a Support Staff as needed, specifically for excursions off of our main site.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers may join our program from time to time. Volunteers may be long-term or join on occasion to share a specific skill. All volunteers are screened according to our Staff Screening Measures and Police Records Check Policy and Procedures and are 14 years of age or older.

Volunteers are trained in all Eunoia policies. Volunteers are never left alone with children and are supervised by a staff member at all times. Supervising staff monitor the volunteer's interactions with children, mentor volunteers' skill development, and promptly address any concerns regarding the volunteer. Volunteers are expected to act professionally within their capacity and the limits of their role, seeking support as needed and reporting any concerns that arise.

Parents who wish to volunteer within the same week(s) that their child attends, will be placed in a grouping that differs from their child's age-group. A parent who volunteers as part of our Inclusion Policy for support of their own child will be placed in the same age group to provide 1:1 support.

We welcome applications from interested volunteers through the Contact Us page on our website at [eunoiaforestschool.ca/contact-us](http://eunoiaforestschool.ca/contact-us).

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff and volunteers work collaboratively at Eunoia to deliver programs that offer each student the opportunity to build on their skills and knowledge to grow and develop within their \*Zone of Proximal Development. Staff lead programs and supervise volunteers, who assist and offer specific skills.

Staff and volunteer responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

1. Protecting and promoting the physical and emotional safety of all students
2. Creating positive environments where all students feel safe, welcome, and supported
3. Demonstrating respect throughout all interactions with students, families, colleagues, and the environment
4. Embodying Eunoia Forest School's Mission, Vision, and Values

\*The Zone of Proximal Development encompasses skills and concepts that the child has yet to master, but are within achievable reach.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN/FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

You are central to your child's success and enjoyment in our program. A strong home-school partnership strengthens your child's learning and growth.

As a parent/guardian, your responsibilities include, but are not be limited to:

1. Completing all required forms and payments prior to the program start date
2. Ensuring your child is equipped with suitable clothing and gear for safety and success throughout the program (as detailed below). **Clothing is the main factor for a student feeling comfortable throughout the program. If a student arrives without suitable clothing and required gear, they must leave with their parent/guardian to change and gather needed items before they can join the program.**
3. Communicating honestly with the staff at Eunoia Forest School, providing any information that will assist Eunoia in meeting your child's needs
4. Following all Eunoia Policies and Procedures, using this Parent Handbook as a guide
5. Contacting Eunoia Forest School staff or the Owner/Operator, Elisha Blair if issues arise

We think of families broadly and encourage all family members to be involved in your child's learning.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We seek opportunities to partner with community organizations who can provide unique experiences and learning opportunities for students at Eunoia, while boosting children's sense of connection. We will inform you when a community partner is joining a program, and we welcome your suggestions for partnerships!

## CHILD PROTECTION

Eunoia Forest School nurtures a positive environment and experience for all children. All Eunoia staff and volunteers understand and recognize that under Ontario's *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*, they have a duty to report suspected child abuse immediately.

## PRIVACY

Eunoia Forest School takes all measures to protect your family's personal information. We will never share your child's personal or health information with third parties, unless we are legally required to do so or you have provided consent. A binder with your child's medical information is kept securely on site at all times in case of an emergency. A digital copy of your child's information is also kept in a secure digital form. Our Privacy Policy is posted at [eunoiaforestschool.ca](http://eunoiaforestschool.ca) for you to review at any time.

Your registration package includes a media release consent form. If you provide consent, your child's photo, video, and/or images of their art or creations will only be used for agreed-upon purposes (e.g., Eunoia's website, parent communication about programming, Instagram, and/or printed promotional materials) and if your child also consents. If you have any questions, please reach out to Elisha Blair at [elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca).

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Eunoia Forest School uses Instagram and Facebook to promote our programs to the general public. We will not post photos or videos of your child or their creations unless you have provided written consent. We invite you to follow us [@eunoia\\_forestschool](#) on Instagram and [@eunoia\\_forestschool](#) on Facebook.

## COMMUNICATION

Eunoia Forest School wants to hear your feedback, questions, and concerns. We encourage you to share general questions and comments at pick-up and drop-off. For matters requiring more in-depth discussion, please call our administrative number or email [inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca) so we can schedule a meeting or phone call when we are able to provide you with our undivided attention.

We will communicate with you throughout the program, updating you about how your child is doing and what they are learning. If your child is injured or involved in an incident, we will notify you. We will also provide you with a report to review and sign after any significant incident involving your child.

## COMPLAINTS AND/OR CONCERNS

Your comments and concerns are important to us. Your feedback helps us grow and improve our programs—we respond to feedback as we receive it, and we review feedback as we assess our programs. If you have any program concerns that you do not feel your child's educator can address, please email the Owner/Operator, Elisha Blair, at [elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:elisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca).

## HOURS/HOLIDAYS

Eunoia Forest School's administrative office is open from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM.

Programs are offered from 9 AM - 3:30 PM.

Eunoia Forest School is closed on public holidays. In 2023, our administrative office and programs are closed on July 1, July 31, September 4, and October 9.



APPENDIX



## APPENDIX 1

# Eunoia Forest School Registration, Waitlist, and Refund Policy and Procedures

Created: from April 14, 2021 Registration, Waiting List, and Refund Policy and Procedures in  
May 31, 2021

Effective: May 31, 2021

Revised: March 21, 2022, August 17, 2022, **February 25, 2023**

Note: *Owner/Operator* refers to the Owner/Operator or Designate

## Purpose

Eunoia's Registration, Waitlist, and Refund Policy and Procedures aims to:

- facilitate common understanding of a fair process for enrolling in, or withdrawing from, programs at Eunoia Forest School,
- set out a transparent process for coordinating access to program spaces in order to:
  - support families as they plan their schedules,
  - provide opportunity for individualized program planning,
  - enable the efficient administration of Eunoia business, and
  - ensure Eunoia supports as many learners as possible within capacity limits,

and

- demonstrate that confidentiality and equity underlie Eunoia's practices.

## Policy

- We welcome all families residing in Ontario with children 4-12 years of age to register for our programs.
  - Children must be 4-12 years of age, or, if programs are operating on or after September 1st, turning 4 years old by the end of the year.
- You may choose to register for one or more programs at a time.
- We strive to fulfill all registration requests.
- We collect information when you register and before your child participates in any program to ensure we are able to meet your child's needs and to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all children, staff, and volunteers at Eunoia.

- Your child is enrolled once you have paid a non-refundable deposit.
- Registration fees must be paid and required registration information (e.g., a general waiver) must be provided before program start dates.
- When the maximum capacity of a program is reached, the [Waitlist Procedures](#) are followed.
- There is no fee to be on the waitlist.
- The Owner/Operator or Administrative Assistant manages the waitlist.
  - The birth dates of children are included on the waitlist so that we can match children to appropriate program spaces.
  - The waitlist is maintained in a manner that protects the confidentiality of all children and families on the list.
  - Due dates may be adjusted to accommodate individual family circumstances at the discretion of the Owner/Operator.
- The timing and reason for withdrawal determine whether we provide a refund or credit.

## Procedures

### Registering Your Child

- To register for a program:
  - indicate your interest by completing the applicable online form at <https://eunoiaforestschool.ca> (via CampMinder).
    - There are limited circumstances when we cannot accommodate your child:
      - if your child does not match the age ranges of our programs,
      - if suitable programs have reached capacity,
      - if your child has been suspended as per Eunoia's Suspension of Children Policy and Procedures,
      - if a parent/guardian or family member has been denied access to Eunoia for violating Eunoia's Code of Conduct and there are no other family members who can liaise with Eunoia, and/or
      - if Eunoia cannot immediately meet a child's needs, as discussed in Eunoia's Individualized Support Plan Policy and Procedures.
- To complete your registration, you must:
  - pay your deposit within 24 hours of being offered a space,
  - pay the full program fee at least 21 days prior to your program start date,
    - If your enrollment start date is sooner than 21 days, your payment is due in full within 24 hours of being offered a space, unless the Owner/Operator has agreed to alternate arrangements.

and

  - return a completed registration package (including completed waivers) at least 14 days before your program start date.
    - The information in the registration package must be true, accurate, and complete (e.g., sharing all information that would affect how a child participates in Eunoia's programs).

- If your enrollment start date is sooner than 14 days, the due date may be adjusted in consultation with you.
- Any time the child re-registers for a program starting less than 366 days since their first enrollment, the Owner/Operator and parent/guardian will review the child's most recent completed registration package and provide written, signed confirmation that all of the information remains current or that appropriate adjustments have been made. The written confirmation will be stored in the child's file.
  - You will be moved to the waitlist if you do not meet a specified due date (as of 11:59 p.m. on the specified date).
  - If the child re-registers for a program more than 365 days after their initial enrollment, a new registration package must be completed.
- When completing your registration, please share any information that will help us provide your child with a safe, enriching experience.
- You may request a 15-minute virtual meeting with a Eunoia staff member to become familiar with our school.

## Registration Fees

- Current program fees are listed at <https://eunoiaforestschool.ca> or are available by contacting our administrative office. Fees listed online are inclusive of deposits.
- Payment is accepted by debit/credit card, e-transfer, and/or cash.
  - If payment by these methods is not possible, please contact [inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca) for alternate arrangements.
- If you require a payment plan, email [ellisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:ellisha@eunoiaforestschool.ca).
- We provide an invoice when we receive your deposit and when we receive your full payment.
- Tax receipts are issued yearly.
- Fees are subject to change seasonally.
  - You will be given at least 14 days notice of any fee changes.

## Waitlist Procedures

### Adding Your Child to the Waitlist

- If there is no space for your child, their name is placed on the waitlist.
  - Registrations are accepted and children are placed on the waitlist in chronological order (e.g., based on the date and time requests are received).
- If your child is placed on the waitlist, the Owner/Operator will inform you of your child's position on the list.
  - Please inform us if you only want to be contacted about programs scheduled for particular dates.

### When a Space Becomes Available

- The Owner/Operator determines who is offered a space that becomes available according to the following criteria:

- Priority is given to these individuals on the waitlist:
  - siblings or household members of children who are currently enrolled and
  - children of staff.
- Once the above children have been offered a space, we contact families in the order their children were placed on the waitlist.
- Within 24 hours of a program start date, the Owner/Operator may contact any family who is known to be available, interested, and able to complete the requirements of program registration.

## Offering you a Space

- We will email and/or call you if we can offer you a space that has become available.
- We will send 1 email and make 1 attempt to reach you by phone, leaving a voicemail if applicable.
- You must call or email us within 24 hours of our attempt to reach you by email to indicate whether you would like the available space.
- Your deposit is due within 24 hours of accepting the available space.
- If you do not meet the specified due dates or if you decline the available space, the next child on the waitlist will be offered the space.
  - You will remain on the waitlist.
    - If we offer you a space on 3 separate occasions without you responding or accepting a space, you will be removed from the waitlist and must complete a new request to enroll in a program.

## Questions about Your Position on the Waitlist

- All inquiries about the waitlist and registration are directed to, and managed by, the Owner/Operator or Administrative Assistant.
  - You can email [inquiry@forestschool.ca](mailto:inquiry@forestschool.ca) or call our administrative office to inquire.
- We are happy to inform you of your child's current position on the waitlist and to estimate the likelihood of your child being offered a space.
  - We do not disclose the names of other children/families on the waitlist.

## Cancelling Your Registration or Withdrawing Your Child

- You can withdraw your child by emailing [inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca](mailto:inquiry@eunoiaforestschool.ca). (Notice of withdrawal must be provided in writing.)
- We work with families to support each child's individual needs and to resolve any issues that arise. To protect the health, safety, and well-being of all children, staff, and volunteers at Eunoia, the Owner/Operator may withdraw children as outlined in Eunoia's Suspension of Children Policy and Procedures.

## Refunds and Credits

- If you cancel in writing at least 21 days before your program start date, we will refund your full payment, minus your deposit.

- If you cancel in writing 15-20 days before your program start date, we will refund 50% of your payment, minus your deposit.
- If you cancel in writing fewer than 15 days before your program start date, your payment is non-refundable, except in the following circumstance:
  - You will be offered a credit or a 50% refund (less deposit) if your child is unable to attend because of COVID-19 symptoms or isolation requirements.
- Refunds and credits are otherwise not offered for an absence from program.
- We will offer you the choice of a full refund (less deposit) if we cancel your program due to COVID-19 restrictions. We will offer a refund or credit if we must cancel program because of staff illness.
  - Refunds or credits due to COVID or staff illness are prorated to the number of days your child has attended the program, with any day your child has attended at least part of the program counted as a full day of attendance.
- Refunds are not provided if a program is cancelled or ends early due to the weather. If two or more full days of program in a given session are cancelled, we will provide alternative programming (e.g., an at-home activity or, if possible, a make-up day of programming).
- If you are moved to the waitlist because you did not provide required documents and/or payments on time, any deposits or payments that you have made will be credited to your account.
- A child who is absent or leaves for a portion of the day due to illness, injury, appointment or due to removal under our Suspension of Children Policy and Procedures or Code of Conduct Policy and Procedures will not be provided a refund or credit.

## Complaints

- If you are dissatisfied with Eunoia's Registration, Waitlist, and Refund Policy and Procedures or decisions, we will happily discuss your concerns and try to reach a common understanding or resolution with you by following Eunoia's Complaints and Concerns Policy and Procedures.

## Glossary

**Capacity** maximum group size, as determined by the Owner/Operator

**COVID-19 Waiver** a document that discusses the precautions families must take, as well as the risks families assume, when participating in Eunoia programs during the COVID-19 pandemic

**Deposit** non-refundable dollar amount specified at <https://eunoiaforestschool.ca> and/or in the Eunoia Family Handbook

**General waiver** a document that discusses the precautions families must take, as well as the risks families assume, when participating in Eunoia programs

**We** the Owner/Operator and all staff and volunteers of Eunoia

**Withdraw** cancel your registration or decide that your child will no longer participate in a program

**You** the parent/guardian of a child who is attending, or may attend, Eunoia



## APPENDIX 2

# Eunoia Forest School Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures

Created: May 12, 2021

Effective: May 12, 2021

Revised: March 21, 2022, **February 23, 2023**

### Notes:

*Owner/Operator* refers to the Owner/Operator or Designate

For easier reading, *visitor* includes parents/guardians, service providers, and support workers

## Purpose

Eunoia's Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures aim to:

- promote the health, safety, and well-being of children, staff, volunteers, and other community members at Eunoia,
  - by gathering and communicating information about accidents and other incidents to:
    - ensure children receive appropriate follow-up care after an incident,
    - ensure families are informed of events that may affect their children's well-being,
    - identify issues and patterns and take steps to prevent further incidents,
  - and
  - help identify critical incidents and otherwise comply with Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), 1990*.

## Policy

- Aiming to provide the same level of care and risk prevention offered in licensed child care and overnight camps in Ontario, Eunoia's Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures are based on regulations for those settings (e.g., standards set out in the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*).
- Eunoia prepares and retains reports of all incidents that occur at Eunoia, including those involving children, staff, volunteers, and other community members.
- Eunoia shares reports and notifications with parents/guardians so that families are aware of an incident their child has experienced, the care their child has received and may need, and the steps Eunoia is taking to enhance school safety in response to an incident.

# Procedures

- An Incident Report is completed any time there is a significant accident or injury, a medical emergency, a significant behaviour issue, a near-miss, or an unusual event affecting the health, safety, and/or well-being of a child, staff, volunteer, or other community member at Eunoia.
  - An Incident Report is completed any time first aid is administered in relation to any accident or injury involving a staff member.
- If the incident is a life-threatening illness or injury or another serious incident, a Serious Incident Report and a Serious Incident Notification Form ([SINF](#)) are completed and an Incident Report is completed for each individual who was ill or injured.
  - If staff:child ratios are ever exceeded, the occurrence is reported as a serious incident.
  - Staff use their training, judgment, and definitions in the [Glossary](#) below to determine whether a report must be completed and to decide which report is appropriate. If unsure of whether a report is required, staff will err on the side of making a report.
  - If any person dies or is critically injured at Eunoia, the Owner/Operator or Designate will notify an inspector at the nearest Ministry of Labour office via phone immediately and will send a written report of the circumstances of the incident to a Regional Director of the Ministry of Labour within forty-eight hours after the incident.
- Whenever an incident occurs, these steps are followed:
  1. The nearest available staff member or volunteer responds with first aid or other immediate steps outlined in Eunoia's Emergency Management and Fire Safety/Evacuation Policy and Procedures as necessary and within their capacities (e.g., performing first aid if certified, but otherwise calling for a certified colleague).
  2. A staff member notifies the child's parent/guardian or, if unavailable, an alternate emergency contact. (If the incident has affected a staff member or volunteer, a staff member notifies the individual's emergency contact.) The Owner/Operator notifies an inspector at the nearest Ministry of Labour office, if necessary (as noted above).
    - Parents/guardians/emergency contacts are notified over the phone or at pick-up, depending on the severity of the incident. Notification is only provided via email at the request of a parent/guardian and if the incident is mild (e.g., a near-miss).
      - If the staff member is concerned that notifying a parent/guardian that their child was harmed by an incident will put the child at risk of harm from a parent/guardian, the staff member will notify the Owner/Operator. If the Owner/Operator shares the staff member's concern, the parent/guardian will not be notified or provided with a report. The Owner/Operator will note the decision and rationale in Eunoia's Daily Written Record (DWR) and inform the staff member who raised the concern, as well as any other staff or volunteers who need this information to keep the child safe.
  3. The incident is documented.
    - Each required Incident Report is completed by the staff member who first observed the incident using Eunoia's [Template Incident Report](#).
      - If the person providing first aid to a staff member was not a Eunoia employee, a Lead Mentor or the Owner/Operator will assist the person who provided first aid to complete the Incident Report. The names and signatures of all individuals involved in completing the report will be included on the report.

- Each required Serious Incident Report and SINP is completed by the Owner/Operator.
  - The Owner/Operator uses as much detail as possible when completing the Serious Incident Report (e.g., constructing a timeline of events, specifying names and roles, and describing weather and environmental conditions) but does not include any identifying information (e.g., gender-specific pronouns, ages, or names of children, staff, or any program group) in the SINP. She may interview individuals involved to obtain relevant information.
- Any symptoms of ill health demonstrated by a child are recorded in the child's individual file by the staff member who observed the symptoms.
- 4. Incident documentation is shared.
  - Staff provide an electronic or paper copy of an Incident Report to the child's parent/guardian or the affected community member.
    - Parents/guardians or the affected community member are requested to provide a signature or emailed response to indicate that the report has been received.
    - Parents/guardians or the affected community member are also encouraged to inform Eunoia of any additional needs their child or they may have arising from the incident.
  - The Owner/Operator communicates findings and next steps from any Serious Incident Report to all staff and volunteers. If necessary (as noted above), the Serious Incident Report or alternative written report required by the *OHSA, 1990* is shared with the Regional Director of the Ministry of Labour within forty-eight hours after the incident.
  - Each SINP is emailed to families and is displayed in a conspicuous location at Eunoia's entrance for at least 10 program days.
- 5. The Owner/Operator reviews and signs each Incident Report within 24 hours of the incident and initiates related procedures (e.g., Monitoring Compliance and Contraventions or Suspension of Children) as necessary.
  - In the case of staff Incident Reports, the Program Lead Mentor may complete steps in Eunoia's Workplace Health and Safety Policy and Program before passing the Incident Report to the Owner/Operator to review.
- 6. Each incident is logged in Eunoia's DWR by the person who documented the incident in step 3, using initials to refer to the affected individual(s).
- 7. The Owner/Operator continues to add notes to the preliminary Serious Incident Report and updates the SINP as new information is obtained (e.g., as the incident evolves or comes to a resolution and/or as action plans are implemented).
- Incident reports and, when necessary, a preliminary Serious Incident Report and SINP are completed as soon as possible after an incident has occurred, once the immediate medical and care needs of all affected individuals, people providing care, and witnesses have been met.
  - The initial required documentation is completed and, as applicable, provided to a parent/guardian or affected individual within 24 hours of the incident.
- If multiple people have been affected by an incident, one report is completed for each individual.
  - To maintain confidentiality, each parent/guardian receives only the report that pertains to their child, and this report does not name any other children.
- Incident reports, Serious Incident Reports, and SINP are filed securely and retained for 99 years, in a folder designated for Incident Reports.

- The folder is accessible to facilitate reviews as necessary and as permitted by Eunoia's Privacy Policy.
- Blank copies of Eunoia's Template Incident Report are kept in each Eunoia first aid kit.

## Glossary

**Community members** in this policy, children, parents/guardians, additional family members, staff, volunteers, the Owner/Operator, service providers, support workers, visitors, and all other members of the public who interact with Eunoia or live and work near Eunoia

**Critical injury** as defined in *Ontario's Health and Safety Act, 2000*:

"an injury of a serious nature that,

- (a) places life in jeopardy,
- (b) produces unconsciousness,
- (c) results in substantial loss of blood,
- (d) involves the fracture of a leg or arm but not a finger or toe,
- (e) involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot but not a finger or toe,
- (f) consists of burns to a major portion of the body, or
- (g) causes the loss of sight in an eye" ([R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 834, s. 1.](#))

**Incident** a significant accident or injury, a medical emergency, a significant behaviour issue, a near-miss, or an unusual event affecting the health, safety, and/or well-being of an individual at Eunoia. For clarity, an incident report is completed every time first aid is administered to a staff member.

**Incident report** document completed using a template to indicate:

- the circumstances of the injury  
and
- any first aid administered.
  - Specifically, the Incident Report includes:
    - name of the child or name and (if applicable) position of the affected staff member, volunteer, or other community member,
    - names of witness(es),
    - date and time of the incident,
    - location of the incident,
    - description of the incident (i.e., clear and succinct factual details, including environmental conditions, equipment being used, and relevant rules in effect),
    - nature of the injury (if relevant),
    - staff response (e.g., what first aid was provided, and by whom, plus where, how, and by whom the individual was transported off site for care, if applicable),
    - follow-up instructions for the individual's care,
    - proposed steps for Eunoia to resolve and/or prevent similar incidents,
    - name and signature of the staff member who completed the report,
  - and
  - the Owner/Operator's signature.

**Near-miss** an event that almost resulted in an incident (e.g., near drowning or a fall due to malfunctioning equipment that does not result in an injury)

**Serious incident** an event posing a higher level of risk to individuals at Eunoia, as compared to other incidents. An outbreak declared by public health is a serious incident, as are all emergencies in Eunoia's Emergency Management and Fire Safety/Evacuation Policy and Procedures, with the exception of extreme weather, pandemic, and a minor utilities malfunction.

**Serious Incident Notification Form (SINF)** a tool for communicating with families about serious incidents at Eunoia. The SINF is a summary document that indicates:

- the incident (i.e., type of incident and a summary description)
- date of occurrence
- Eunoia's response to the incident and the outcomes of actions taken and
- when the notification form was completed, with the Owner/Operator's name and signature.

The SINF is updated as new information is obtained (e.g., as the incident evolves or comes to a resolution and/or as action plans are implemented).

**Serious Incident Report** an internal document written on lined paper with numbered pages. A Serious Incident Report includes all known information pertinent to understanding the incident and is updated as new information is obtained (e.g., through an investigation, through communication with other individuals or agencies, and/or as the incident evolves or comes to a resolution). A Serious Incident Report includes:

- description of the incident, including:
  - date and time,
  - location of incident,
  - what happened, and
  - who was involved,
- actions taken and resulting outcomes,
- current status of the incident and of the individuals affected,
- a list of all calls and contacts, including a list of who was notified of the incident (e.g., emergency services, a children's aid society, and/or parents/guardians), and
- the date and the Owner/Operator's signature at the end of each entry.

**Service provider** in this policy, any person who provides service that involves directly interacting with children and who is employed by a third party contracted by Eunoia (e.g., resource teachers, speech and language pathologists, nurses, occupational therapists, entertainers, sport/activity instructors, and other individuals providing presentations or lessons; NOT fire/health inspectors, CAS investigators, or inspectors)

**Support worker** a person who supports a child's participation in an activity or program. A support worker may be a staff member, a service provider, a family member of a child, or an individual contracted by a family, at the discretion of the Owner/Operator

## APPENDIX 3

# Key Information from Eunoia's Emergency Management and Fire Safety/Evacuation Policy and Procedures

February 25, 2023

## General Procedures for Responding to an Immediate or Ongoing Emergency

- The First Observer initiates the response procedures applicable to the specific emergency as expeditiously as possible, delegating to staff or volunteers for assistance as necessary.
  - When emergency services are needed, 911 is called as soon as possible,
    - and a staff member or volunteer greets emergency vehicle(s) at the site entrance to provide direction to the appropriate location.
  - Access to the emergency location is limited to necessary individuals.
  - The Owner/Operator is notified of the emergency as soon as possible.
- When an emergency occurs, all staff members will:
  - attend to immediate needs and address any continuing risks to health or safety (e.g., provide needed first aid and any other required assistance within their qualifications and capacity),
  - attempt to remain calm,
  - gather children in their care, then:
    - take attendance and inform the Owner/Operator and/or emergency services if any children or individuals are unaccounted for, remain inside an evacuated space, and/or have severe injuries that require immediate attention,
    - conduct ongoing visual checks and head counts,
    - maintain constant supervision of the children, keeping them away from dangerous areas and leaving Eunoia only once all children have been picked up by a parent/guardian or alternate emergency contact, and
    - maintain an accurate attendance log,
  - help children to be calm and comfortable, by:
    - engaging children in planned or diversionary activities and
    - offering water and snacks from the emergency kit,
  - instruct and guide children according to established procedures or further direction provided by the Owner/Operator or emergency services,
    - If it is safe to do so, staff and volunteers will wait for direction regarding any emergency not specified in this policy. If an immediate response is necessary, staff and volunteers will take steps based on reasonable judgement and a duty of care.

- contact colleagues and/or the Owner/Operator if they need assistance to maintain staff:child supervision ratios,
- and
- direct any media or public inquiries about the incident to the Owner/Operator.
- At the start of each season when Eunoia is in operation, the Owner/Operator will identify staff members and/or volunteers who will help individuals with special or medical needs during an emergency as necessary, according to the instructions in the person's IP and/or ISP (e.g., assisting the individual to evacuate or to return after an all-clear notification while following the instructions posted on special needs equipment or assistive devices).
  - If evacuation is not possible, the staff or volunteer will assist the individual to position themselves as safely as possible in the given circumstance (e.g., as near as possible to a safe exit). The staff or volunteer will ensure that the person has easy access to their required medication (if applicable), coordinating with the Owner/Operator as necessary and safe. Then, the staff or volunteer will exit and immediately notify emergency services and/or the Owner/Operator of the individual's exact location.
- When an emergency occurs, the Owner/Operator will:
  - immediately provide assistance to children, staff, volunteers, and any other affected individuals,
  - immediately inform emergency services if any individuals are unaccounted for, are inside an evacuated space, and/or have severe injuries that require immediate attention,
  - assess the situation, including by gathering information from the First Observer, to make informed decisions and provide direction,
  - coordinate with emergency services, providing needed resources and relaying relevant information to staff, volunteers, children, and parents/guardians,
  - determine if and/or when it is advisable for children to be picked up, for program to be cancelled, and/or for an evacuation to be implemented,
    - and coordinate with staff as necessary to ensure each family is notified as soon as possible via phone or, for the sake of expediency, an email
  - inform any staff or volunteers not on site of the incident as soon as possible and direct them to stay home or proceed directly to an evacuation site as appropriate,
  - respond to media inquiries honestly, confidentially, and only with facts, if appropriate (e.g., if responding balances rights to privacy and information sufficiently),
- and,
- after immediate health and safety needs are attended to, ensure Eunoia fulfills its obligations for reporting, debriefing, and resuming typical operations.
- Parents/guardians must monitor for communications from Eunoia and follow directions from the Owner/Operator and/or emergency services.
  - A parent/guardian may not take a child home until the Owner/Operator has provided clearance and until the child's Program Lead Mentor has taken attendance following an emergency.
- For each program site, Eunoia identifies the following before any staff members, volunteers, children, or parents/guardians attend the site:
  - the meeting place where children, staff, and volunteers initially gather when evacuated,
  - nearby safe spaces for outdoor short-term off-site evacuation in the case of emergency,
  - a long-term evacuation site, where Eunoia may be relocated if necessary and possible, and
  - a waterfront meeting place for each place where Eunoia engages in water-based activities.

- Staff must consult with Eunoia’s Waterfront Director or, if not on staff, the Owner/Operator before engaging in water-based activities at a site without a designated waterfront meeting place.
- If hazards are present at a meeting place or short-term evacuation site, the First Observer of the hazards will choose the nearest alternative safe location for evacuation and will ensure that the location is known (e.g., inform colleagues en route to the original evacuation site, the Owner/Operator, and emergency services). The long-term evacuation site will be inspected as per Eunoia’s Outdoor Play Supervision and Safety Policy and Procedures before Eunoia is relocated.
- After meeting the health and safety needs of all children, staff, volunteers, and visitors, if it is possible to take steps to minimize damage while maintaining adequate supervision, the Owner/Operator will take or delegate the steps.

## Additional Procedures in the Event of a Fire

### Fire

- If a fire occurs at Eunoia, the following procedures apply to all program groups, wherever they are:
  - The First Observer will follow these steps:
    1. Assist anyone in immediate danger.
    2. Try to isolate the burning area by closing any doors.
    3. Sound the alarm.
      - Indoors, use the available pull system or yell “FIRE! Exit now!” while pointing left arm in the direction of the fire and waving right arm in a slow fanning motion from shoulder to knee.
      - Outdoors, blow a whistle three times, while pointing left arm in the direction of the fire and waving right arm in a slow fanning motion from shoulder to knee. Yell, “FIRE! Gather now!”
    4. Dial 911.
  - Children will line up in front of, and facing, their Program Lead Mentor.
  - Each Program Lead Mentor:
    - guides all children in their group to the meeting place as safely and quickly as possible, using planned alternate routes as necessary
      - Volunteers, adult visitors, and available Assistant Mentors disperse throughout the line, with one adult at the end of the line.
  - and
    - takes attendance upon arrival at the meeting place.
  - Assistant Mentors search the premises, if it is safe to do so (e.g., search in washrooms, closets, and other hiding places if indoors).
  - Fire extinguishers are only used by those trained to use them, if they can do so safely after everyone else has left the vicinity of the fire.

### Forest Fire

- If a group is outdoors during a wildfire, each Program Lead Mentor guides all children in their group to crouch in a shallow body of water or, if unavailable, to go to a lower-level clearing and

breathe the air closest to the ground through a moist cloth (if available). No one should try to outrun the fire.

## Fire Drills

- Eunoia practices fire drills for outdoor fires. Staff and volunteers working at Eunoia’s administrative office also practice drills for indoor fires.
  - A fire drill is conducted once per program session (e.g., weekly in the summer and once in the fall and spring).
    - For supervisory staff, a total evacuation indoor fire drill is conducted at least once every 12 months.
    - Children learn “stop, drop, and roll” as part of fire drills.
    - As returning participants become familiar with Eunoia’s evacuation procedures, drills are conducted to practice alternate exit routes.
  - Water evacuation drills are conducted once per program session (e.g., weekly in the summer and once in fall and spring).
  - Drills start at varying locations and times.
  - All staff, volunteers, children, and individuals who are present at Eunoia during a drill participate in the drill.
- The Owner/Operator also keeps a record of each fire drill, including the following information:
  - date,
  - time,
  - groups that participated (and age range of each group),
  - number of children present,
  - number of each staff and volunteers present,
  - time taken to evacuate,
  - name of person who initiated the drill,
  - comments about whether written procedures were followed and, if not, why
  - additional observations (e.g., rationale for the time taken to evacuate, issues or concerns, children’s reactions [without names], and next steps for improvement),
  - and
  - the Owner/Operator’s name and signature.
    - Each record of a drill is retained for 12 months from the date of the drill.
    - Records are shared with all staff and volunteers via email.

## Additional Procedures if Evacuation Required

Eunoia responds as follows whenever an evacuation is indicated:

- Each Program Lead Mentor:
  - takes attendance if time allows (e.g., if not a fire),
  - ensures they have their staff duotang or clipboard,
  - leads all children in their group to the evacuation site using the nearest safe exit,
  - and
  - takes attendance upon arrival at the evacuation site.
- Each Assistant Mentor will gather as many of the following items as can be safely collected for their group:

- emergency survival kit,
  - first aid kit,  
and
  - outdoor clothing.
- Staff and volunteers engage children in activities.
- The Owner/Operator:
  - walks through the program area to ensure all individuals have evacuated,
  - gathers all medications, if it is possible to do so safely,
  - posts a note with information about the evacuation site at each entrance, if it is possible to do so safely,
  - coordinates communication with parents/guardians to ensure all families are aware of where to pick up their children,  
and
  - updates Eunoia's voicemail as soon as possible to indicate that Eunoia has been evacuated and to provide both the evacuation location and Eunoia contact information.

## Glossary

**Emergency** an urgent situation necessitating immediate action to ensure safety

**Emergency services personnel** first responders (e.g., ambulance, police, fire, rescue services)

**First Observer** the first person who becomes aware of an incident

**Hazardous material incident** examples include: downed power lines, gas leaks, detection of carbon monoxide, transformer fires, and catastrophic sewer malfunctions

**Water-based activities** any program occurrence that involves stepping into a natural or recreational body of water

**Waterfront Director** staff member appointed by the Owner/Operator to perform specific responsibilities detailed in Eunoia's Bodies of Water Policy and Procedures

**Waterfront Supervisor** the staff member responsible for supervising the water-based activity

## REFERENCES

The following sources had significant influence on the creation of this document:

Child and Nature Alliance of Canada

Child care regulations and licensing resources from Ontario's Ministry of Education

Durham Region Health Department

Leave No Trace Canada

Outside Play

Policy and procedure resources for publicly-funded schools from Ontario's Ministry of Education

Resources from Ontario Camps Association

Regulations for recreational (overnight) camps in Ontario

