Parent Handbook



Our Learning Philosophy

PINES is a blended, alternative schooling program designed with emergent, child-led learning philosophies in mind. We believe that children learn best when they are intrinsically motivated and inspired by their desire to explore, create and connect. Our program is designed with a focus on the child as a whole and as part of a vibrant learning community where the child, educator and parent are all partners on the education journey. Our learning environment is both a reflection of the children in our classroom and a source of inspiration for them. It is rich, flexible and respectful as well as aesthetically pleasing and calming. In a small group setting, we as educators are able to develop close relationships with each child allowing us to guide their process of discovery collaboratively. Children learn best when their well-being is cared for and therefore it is our priority to create a space that is nurturing and uplifting while using positive guidance strategies to facilitate and manage behaviors and classroom situations.

Program Overarching Themes

Our program is designed with a focus on Intercultural, Place-based learning and so as part of our curriculum we will be exploring local cultures, landscapes, environments and experiences as well as incorporating relevant cultures of the families and children as part of valuing the unique identity every individual student brings forth with them. The learning cycles will focus on language and culture, arts, sciences and nature learning. The BC schooling curriculum will also be used as a guide when designing learning materials and activities.



What is Blended Learning?

Blended learning is a model that allows families and educators to work collaboratively on facilitating their own learning communities. In this model, students spend time learning both in-person, alongside their peers and educators as well as at home with their parents. In-person learning will happen at PINES where we will explore different learning cycles 4 days of the week as part of a small multi-age student group.

What are Learning Cycles?

As an emergent, child-led program our content and curriculum are open-ended and adaptive. We will be exploring a diverse selection of topics that are relevant to the children's interests and our overarching program themes alongside The BC curriculum learning outcomes. Every week we will be exploring different topics as part of our cycle rotation as follows:

Mon: Quran and Arabic Language Arts
Tue: Nature and Science Learning
Wed: Place-based Social and Inter-cultural Learning
Thur: Islamic Studies and Community Learning



Daily Flow

9:00 - 9:30 Morning Welcome and Drop off / Indoor Free Exploration

9:30 - 10:45 Morning Academic Work Block (Math and English)

10:45 - 11:15 Lunch

11:15 - 12:15 Outdoor Play and Exploration

12:15 - 12:45 Daily Learning Cycle. (Rotates between Language Arts/Nature Science/Social and Cultural Studies)

12:45 - 1:15 Learning Activity Related to the Learning Cycle (Art, Science, Crafts)

1:15- 1:30 Afternoon Snack

1:30 - 2:00 Outdoor Free Play / Pick-up Time

*Please note that drop off is no later than 9:30 am and pick up is no later than 2:00 pm



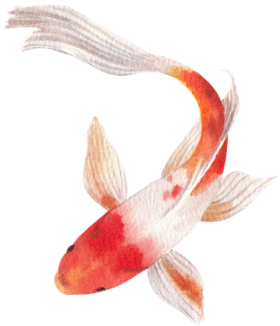
Our Learning Spaces

The Koi Pond and The Tree House: These 2 rooms are our primary learning spaces where our academic block and learning cycles take place. Our classrooms are designed to be calming and intuitive; reflective of the beautiful nature around us. Our students' learning takes place both as a group on our gathering rugs and independently on their tables and chairs to ensure that they have a comfortable rotation of activity based learning and focused desk work time.

The Cloud Room: This is our cozy reading room set up as a calming space for the children to learn and unwind. Our library will have a variety of books reflecting the children's interests and what we are currently exploring in our learning cycles. A reading room isn't complete without a cozy tent to sit under and wander into the many worlds a storybook has within its covers.

Outdoor Play Space: At PINES, we truly believe in the importance of outdoor nature play for the overall well-being of children and as a significant extension to their in-class learning. With that in mind, we have set-up our outdoor space to allow for a variety of play opportunities that encourage large motor movements, imaginative play and nature exploration. A dynamic play-structure, large sandbox, mud kitchen and a rotation of different play setups are an example of what our space has to offer.

Outdoor Deck: This space is where the children enjoy their lunch and snack in the beautiful outdoors! We use the deck for our afternoon emergent activity and as an open play space in the morning. We also have a collection of engaging materials set up around for the children to use during their free exploration time. Those include a sensory table, legos, magnatiles, a car-track, puzzles and a rotation of different invitations relating to the children's interests and our current learning cycles.



What to bring to PINES?

- Weather appropriate clothing and shoes (we are outside rain or shine)
- A full change of clothes (to be kept at PINES)
- Inside shoes or slippers (to be kept at PINES)
- A water bottle
- A lunch box including a healthy morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack . (Any food that needs to be warmed up must be sent in a microwave-safe container that students can use independently.)

Also please note that PINES has a “no toys from home” policy, except if they are for show and tell. If toys are brought to school, the student will be required to keep them in his/her backpack until home time.



Program fees

The monthly cost to attend PINES is $400 per month due on the 1st of each month.
A 30 day notice is required before withdrawing from PINES to be given on or before the first of the previous month. Monthly fees will be due unless proper notice is given. To hold your child’s spot, monthly fees will continue to be due during any months taken off.

