

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.

Students will follow the B.C curriculum with the guidance of their teacher and their parents as part of a learning plan designed to meet their unique learning needs. Parents will also plan activities for their children to do that meet their child's interests and learning outcomes and will share those activities with the program teacher on a regular basis.

Student assessments will happen both in-person and online.

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: Academic Learning (Math and English)

Tue: Nature and Science Learning

Wed: Place-based Inter-cultural Learning

Thur: Community Learning (shared values, stories and life skills)



Daily Flow

9:00 - 9:30 Morning welcome and drop off

9:30 - 10:00: Open indoor free play/open snack

10:00 - 10:30 Gathering time to learn about the current learning cycle

10:30 to 11:00: Learning activity related to the learning cycle

11:00-11:15 Lunch

11:15 - 12:00 Outdoor free play / walk to the park

12:00 - 12:30 Afternoon work period (Math and English)

12:30 - 1:00 Afternoon emergent activity (Art, Science, Building)

1:00 - 1:15 Closing circle and story time

1:15 - 1:30 Afternoon snack

1:30 - 2:00 Outdoor free play while waiting for pick up

*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: This room is our primary learning space where our learning cycles will take place. Reflecting a serene koi pond, we will start our learning by gathering around our koi rug and exploring our topic for the day. We will then transition to our tables and chairs to complete an activity relevant to the learning that took place for the day.

The Tree House: This is our play and sensory room where exploration, imagination and adventure takes place! There is an actual tree house set up in this space to allow for imaginative and collaborative play between the children as well as a sensory table and a rotation of different invitations relating to the children's interests and our current learning cycles. A variety of fun and engaging materials such as legos, magnetiles, a car-track and lots more are also available in the room for the children to use and play with.

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.



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



Program fees

The monthly cost to attend PINES is \$350 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.

