



# FAMILY HANDBOOK



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# Welcome

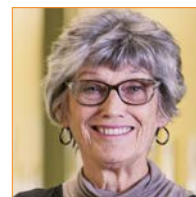
## from the Executive Team

On behalf of the Board of Directors, management and staff of Renfrew Educational Services, we welcome you and your family. We are delighted that your child will be participating in our programs. We are committed to ensuring that every child who enters our doors has the opportunity to flourish.

We hope this handbook will help answer some of your questions. Please keep it as a handy reference.

At Renfrew, our doors are always open. We encourage families to ask questions and to stay in touch with staff. We recognize the vital role you play in your child's learning and development, and working together with you is a priority for us.

Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. Our goal is to help your child soar!



**Janice McTighe**  
*Executive Director*



**Kim LaCourse**  
*Associate Executive Director*



**Terry Kirkham**  
*Chief Financial Officer*



**Nicki Wilson**  
*Associate Executive Director*

## The Board of Directors

A voluntary Board of Directors governs Renfrew Educational Services. Board members represent the interests of all people served by this organization. Their primary function is to create the policies that ensure that Renfrew is run effectively, legally and ethically. They are trustees for the organization, enabling us to deliver exemplary programs and services. The Board is responsible for long-range plans and vision.

## Not-For-Profit Society and Registered Charity

Renfrew Educational Services is a not-for-profit society and registered charity. The program began in 1974 as a community kindergarten class located in the Renfrew community. There are now five locations in Calgary.

## Vision

To create exceptional learning experiences, opening a world of possibilities for every child, while welcoming and supporting families.

## Mission

We exist to serve children and families and to provide the best possible programs and services so that children can grow and work towards their potential.

## Core Values

- Respect for each child and family
- Commitment to continual learning and innovation
- Dedication to safe and caring environments
- Commitment to meet the needs of children, families and staff
- Honouring our legacy into the future

## Guiding Principles

- We believe that early intervention is crucial to the development of every child.
- We believe that children deserve the best intervention and program planning to reach their full potential.
- We believe that both the dignity and worth of the family must be respected and enhanced at all times.
- We believe in family-centred practice.
- We believe that individuals and families are unique, both culturally and economically. Our programs are flexible and responsive to these inherent differences.
- We are committed to supporting professional staff who possess the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to support children and their families.

# Programming

*"Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand."*

We follow Alberta Education's curriculum for our Elementary Education Program and the Alberta Education Kindergarten Program Statement for our ECS program. Programs are adapted and modified to focus on areas for growth of our children and to provide for the special education needs of individual children.

Renfrew Educational Services follows the philosophy of **Developmentally Appropriate Practice**. Twelve Principles of Developmentally Appropriate Education as established by the Griffin Center for Human Development (1993) are as follows:

1. A child seeks to learn as a whole person, constructing intellectual, physical, social and emotional understandings through interaction with the environment.
2. Learning is something a child does, not something that is done to the child.
3. A child learns through experimentation and social interaction.
4. Teaching strategies and classroom practices are based on authentic knowledge of the developing child.
5. Learning tasks are relevant and meaningful to the child.
6. Concrete and sensory materials are the natural learning media of children and are purposefully used in their education.
7. Individual learning styles and intelligences are nurtured through a variety of learning experiences and cooperative ventures.
8. Thinking, problem-solving, commitment and self-discipline are promoted in an atmosphere of trust and structured freedom.
9. Each child is unique, lives in a unique environment, and will live a unique life. Teaching and grouping decisions reflect this diversity.
10. Learning is a life-long process to which schools contribute.
11. Educational outcomes are thoughtfully developed to reflect both the developmental needs of children and the changing nature of society.
12. The teacher is a reflective decision-maker who observes, analyzes, and facilitates children's learning while continually learning herself/himself.

# Program Strengths

- We believe that development cannot be rushed! Each child is unique. We provide children with a safe and caring environment in which to learn and develop.
- Knowledgeable teams guide children in the development of many skills including communication, socialization, gross motor and fine motor. Teachers lay the foundation for literacy and numeracy. Children are presented with thoughtful and engaging opportunities which promote learning, problem solving and skill development.
- Our environments are carefully designed to offer new and creative activities. We want children to experience joy and fun while sparking their innate curiosity to explore and discover.
- We believe children learn by doing and we emphasize hands-on learning.
- We value self-expression, social interaction and creativity. Through social interaction, we foster the growth of strong, positive self esteem.
- Our highly qualified teams provide exceptional programs for children and students. Our agency promotes high levels of professional development.
- We have modern, attractive buildings and the latest up-to-date resources for children and students of all ages and abilities.
- We recognize the importance of the family in each child's development and work together with the family to:
  - provide insight on solving problems
  - offer education
  - support and address individual family concerns



## Caring, Respectful and Safe Learning Environments

Alberta Education supports schools that are safe, caring, orderly, positive, productive, respectful and free from the fear of physical and emotional harm.

A safe and caring environment contributes to successful schools.

We engage in strategies and practices that are in keeping with the Alberta School Act.



## Our Programs

### Early Childhood Services (ECS) Classrooms

ECS includes programs for children who are 2 years 8 months to 4 years old, and kindergarten (the final ECS year before a child enters grade 1). Special care is taken to ensure that each year of ECS programming is unique.

Renfrew's ECS programs help nurture learning and social skills that will last a lifetime. Children grow to love learning and to value the differences in others. Our favourable child-to-staff ratios allow staff to focus on individual areas of growth for each child.

Early schooling is the critical time to maximize a child's potential and teach positive learning skills. Renfrew fosters an environment of enthusiasm, caring, respect and openness to new ideas.

As an independent school, Renfrew follows the curriculum set out by Alberta Education which has a strong focus on early literacy, early numeracy, citizenship, environment and community awareness, personal responsibility, physical well-being, and creative expression.

Renfrew strongly believes in nurturing a love of the arts. Music specialists develop programs to enhance children's musical skills and understanding. Teachers plan a wide variety of art projects such as drawing, painting, collage and play-dough creations for the children to develop their artistic creativity and problem-solving abilities. Teachers also provide opportunities for children to experience drama through the use of puppets, role playing, dramatic story telling and other creative activities.

To enhance physical development and fitness, physical education and movement experiences are incorporated into our programs on a daily basis. Activities in the gym and on the playground provide opportunities to learn social games, to explore creative movement to music, and to develop physical skills in a play-based manner. Daily physical activity also helps the child to focus and learn in classroom-based activities. Early interest and participation in physical activity sets the stage for healthy lifestyles.



## Learning Through Play

At Renfrew Educational Services, we understand that play is vital to a child's development. We know that children learn best when they are engaged, interested and having fun. Play is a partner to learning, a companion to comprehension, and a friend to free expression. A growing child's brain is stimulated and challenged by the many aspects of play. When you play with children, it is an opportunity to push their thinking further and allow for natural problem solving. Playing with children is essential for healthy emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental growth.

### The Purpose of Play

- We play to relax, to enjoy and to have fun. Play promotes healthy and normal development for both children and adults.
- We play to reconnect to the natural world. Although children can, and will, play with anything, their favourite activities are often found in the natural materials of sand, water, mud and clay - and, of course, messy play is best!
- We play to make sense of our world. A child might play to understand a life event such as the birth of a baby or the death of a pet. This play may help children understand their sometimes confusing emotions.
- We play to learn a new skill or strengthen an existing skill.

*"You can't have real learning with a child unless they are playing. Real playing is how real learning takes place."*

*Joseph Chilton Pearce*

## Early Literacy

To enhance communication skills, Renfrew's focus on early literacy involves an awareness of sounds in the environment, playing with language in the form of stories, finger-plays and songs, and making marks on paper (scribbling and drawing). Communication skills and early literacy opportunities are crucial to a child's continued educational success.



## Specialized Services Program (SSP)

Renfrew offers specialized services for preschool aged children who have a diagnosis on the Autism or Pervasive Developmental Disorder Spectrum and meet the criteria for funding through Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD). Services are intensive in nature with children receiving appropriate interventions from a multidisciplinary therapy team in the home environment.

The goal of the Specialized Services Program (SSP) is to help children improve their skills in all areas of daily living, including communication, socialization, self help, adaptive functioning, and physical and motor development. All programming is individualized based on the needs of the child and the family. Goals are worked on in an engaging and playful way that encourages the child to be active in the learning process. Parent involvement is a key part of the program.

The multidisciplinary therapy team may include child development facilitators, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists.

Efforts are made to ease the family stress that is often associated with having a child who has special needs. Workshops are offered throughout the year to families to provide up-to-date knowledge about Autism Spectrum Disorders and the services available.

The team works to support families in creating positive and meaningful interactions with their child, both at home and in the community. Parents are supported as they take an active role working towards program goals and advocating for their child at school and in the community.



## Integrated Services for Children with Motor Disabilities (ISMD)

The ISMD program is for children diagnosed with motor disorders such as Cerebral Palsy and who meet the criteria for funding through Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD).

Developing the child's own internal motivation is a focus of the program. We do this by fostering confidence, self-esteem and independence, which encourages children to strive to reach their maximum potential.

Renfrew's team approach involves use of functional motor activities, integration of motor and sensory systems, development of daily

living skills and, when necessary, assistive technology devices. Along with the on-site program, ISMD also supports families in their home environment through scheduled home visits.

Each child's program is individualized based on the priorities of the family and areas of growth for the child.

The transdisciplinary team may include teachers, child development facilitators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists and a clinical service coordinator.

### Programs include

- **Toddler/ECS** ages 2 - 6 years  
(Janice McTighe Centre, Thomas W. Buchanan Centre)



## Assessment & Therapy Services

Renfrew offers a full range of assessment and therapy services for infants, children, adolescents and young adults in Calgary and area who may not be enrolled in our programs. These services are available with minimal wait time at any of our locations or in-home and include one-to-one and group therapy, consultation to families and educational settings, and parent groups and workshops. Multidisciplinary and individual services are available involving:

- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Psychology
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Child Development Facilitator
- Assistive Technology

To access these services, call **403.291.5038 ext. 1617** or email [therapy@renfreweducation.org](mailto:therapy@renfreweducation.org).

## Stepping Out on Saturdays (SOS) Respite Program

Renfrew offers respite for children with significant challenges. The program offers fun and engaging opportunities for the children while providing much-needed respite for caregivers.

This program runs on Saturdays and is open to children aged five to twelve years. The program is available to Renfrew families and to the outside community. Please contact the manager/principal at your child's site for registration information.



## Community Services

Renfrew's Community Services program provides intervention services to students and children attending schools in and around Calgary through contracts with school boards and other independent schools.

Renfrew's team of speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and therapy assistants work in collaboration with teachers within the schools to support the children's learning.



# Elementary Education

A child's successful experience in elementary school creates a strong foundation for learning and interaction.

Renfrew's Elementary Education Program offers children with mild, moderate or severe needs a safe environment in which to grow and develop their excitement for learning. Our teachers modify program expectations to meet the individual areas for growth of the students. Following best practices, they utilize a variety of resources and materials.

Renfrew is an acknowledged leader for its programs. Certified teachers work in collaboration with child development facilitators, on-site therapists and parents to develop individual programs for each student. Music, art and physical fitness and life skills are vital components of our overall programming.

Students learn to problem solve, to persevere, and to access, acquire and process information in ways that promote resourcefulness and self-confidence. Students also learn to listen and relate to others with respect, cooperation and compassion.

## Literacy

Literacy is the ability to acquire knowledge and meaning through listening and reading and to express knowledge and meaning through speaking and writing.

At Renfrew, by creating environments rich in spoken and written language, and using a variety of programs, we provide opportunities for meaningful communication and the development of literacy skills.

## Programming

Therapists are involved in planning and implementation of programming, working as a transdisciplinary team with classroom staff.

## Junior Leaders

The older students are encouraged to participate in the Junior Leader program. They participate in ongoing school projects throughout the year and serve as leaders and role models for all students.

## Six Years in the Elementary Education Program

Students and families are offered a maximum of six school terms. Students must be six years of age as of **September 1** of that school year in order to start in the Elementary Education Program.

As we individualize programs for all children, and as research does not support the retention of students, Renfrew has a no-retention policy.



## Entrance of Students

There are limited spaces available in our Elementary Education Program. In your child's kindergarten year, please indicate your interest in Renfrew's program on the *Consent to Refer* form sent in late fall, and speak to your manager. Thomas W. Buchanan Centre families are referred to our Thomas W. Buchanan Centre elementary program. All other locations are referred to our Janice McTighe Centre elementary program.

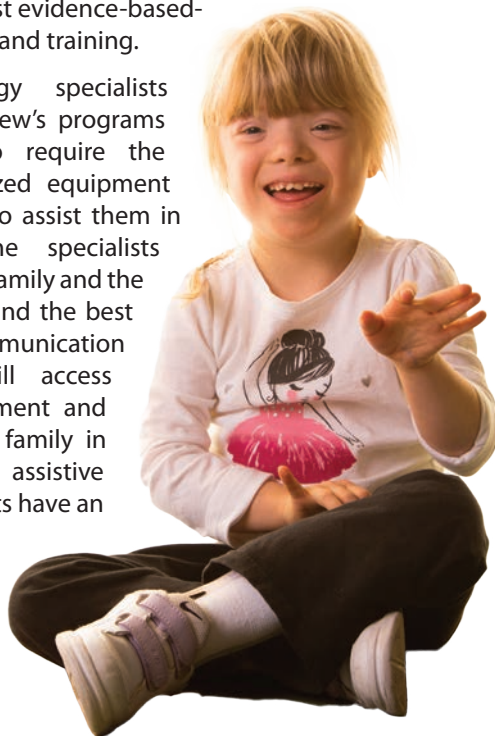
# Transdisciplinary Team

Each classroom has a transdisciplinary team, including physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, psychologists and teachers. Therapists work as part of a transdisciplinary team with classroom staff and parents as an integral part of the child's program. They support the teacher in developing goals and implementing strategies so that each individual child will thrive in the educational environment.

Throughout the school year, therapists play an integral role in helping children achieve their goals. Therapists work with classroom teams to incorporate intervention into play and other classroom activities. Therapists work directly with the children in the classrooms, in small groups and, occasionally, on an individual basis outside the classroom. Renfrew's multi-sensory rooms and sensory integration rooms are used by therapists in conjunction with classroom teams.

Renfrew takes pride in the high level of training of our therapists and we continually support them in staying current with the latest evidence-based-practice approaches and training.

Assistive technology specialists work in all of Renfrew's programs with children who require the support of specialized equipment and/or technology to assist them in communicating. The specialists work with the child, family and the classroom team to find the best solutions to communication difficulties and will access the required equipment and train the team and family in its use. Renfrew's assistive technology specialists have an extensive inventory of equipment and technology in order to provide families with the optimal alternatives for each child.



## Individual Program Plan (IPP)

Each child with special needs will have an IPP. The IPP includes input from the family and team members. Families receive their child's IPP in the fall of their school year. The IPP is a working document, and the review and revision of goals is an ongoing process.

## Individual Service Program Plan (ISPP)

Children who are involved in the "Common Approach" will have an ISPP (Individual Service Program Plan). Families will develop their child's ISPP with the transdisciplinary team. The ISPP is a working document, and the review and revising of goals is an ongoing process.

## Common Approach

The Common Approach is designed for families of children who qualify for both Program Unit Funding and Family Supports for Children with Disabilities Specialized Services. These families will experience the right supports, at the right time to help build their capacity to promote their child's development and reach their full potential in their home, community and in early learning settings.

## Teams

Each location is staffed with a manager or principal, Alberta Education certified teachers, child development facilitators, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, psychologists, early learning specialists, family support workers, other specialists and support staff. Of course, bus drivers cannot be forgotten - the children often give them top billing!

# Family Support

Renfrew's Family Support Program is dedicated to the wellbeing of the families and children we serve. Our program offers a variety of family-centred services to facilitate connections and support in the home, neighbourhood and community.

## We Can Help With

- **Social Connections and Support**
  - *facilitating connections with new people and groups to support your lifestyle.*
- **Transitions to Other Schools**
  - *information sessions*
- **Information and Resources**  
Available at Renfrew and in the community
  - *Counseling*
  - *Behaviour Support*
  - *Parenting*
  - *Camps*
  - *Recreation Activities*
  - *Educational Support*
  - *Financial Support*
  - *Clothing*
  - *Housing*
  - *Transportation*
  - *Respite Care*
  - *Disability Tax Information*
  - *Life-long Planning*
  - *Interpretation*

## How Do We Do Our Work?

We can talk to you on the phone or meet with you in your home or at the school. We offer information sessions and parenting groups. We can assist you in finding resources and connecting with other families. There are many ways Family Support can meet your unique family needs. This service is available to all Renfrew families. Every Renfrew school location has a Family Support Worker.

## Coffee & Chat Groups

Family Support offers a variety of Coffee & Chat groups for family members of children attending a Renfrew program. These free events provide an opportunity for parents and guardians to meet one another as they get together for a fun activity or informative presentation.

## Parenting Program

The Parenting Program is a seven week program that runs every fall and spring. This is a chance for you to meet other parents and to learn from each other in a supportive facilitated group. Topics covered include:

- *Positive Parenting*
- *Coping and Supports*
- *Facing Family Challenges*
- *Advocacy*

Information is shared to help parents learn how to support their child as they change and grow. We also explore different resources that are available to parents of children with special needs and look at what is best for you.

# Transition

Alberta Education and the Alberta School Act state that all information in a student's file that has been used to develop or implement program plans will be sent, upon written request, to the child's next school placement.

## Kindergarten

The transition from ECS into the elementary grades is often a challenging time for parents. Renfrew strives to support families during these transitions by helping them make informed decisions and by encouraging parents and guardians to become advocates for their children. In addition, the learning team is dedicated to helping ease this transition for children and parents by offering suggestions and tangible strategies to accommodate difficult changes.

## The Process

Parents receive a form in late fall to indicate which board, independent school or program they would like their child to attend. Representatives from the Calgary Public Board and Calgary Catholic Board consult with families once referrals have been made. Parents seeking independent school placements must contact those schools directly. Managers and family support workers are available for more information and to support families during this process.



## Diversity

To make services easier to use and understand for the range of culturally-diverse families at Renfrew, we can provide interpreters when needed. We also have cultural awareness and sensitivity training for Renfrew staff on a regular basis.

# Keeping You Informed

Renfrew's website, **[www.renfreweducation.org](http://www.renfreweducation.org)**, has up-to-date information about all of our programs and services. There are links to Renfrew's social media: **Facebook** (search "Renfrew Educational Services" ), **Instagram** (RenfrewEducationalServices), **Twitter** (@RESCalgary) and **Linkedin** (search "Renfrew Educational Services").

To keep you up-to-date on general school activities, agency news will be posted on our website on the "Treasures" page. If you do not have access to the internet and would prefer to receive a print copy of the newsletter, please contact the manager at your child's location.

Weekly updates and information will be shared by teachers through email.

**Early Childhood Services:** Teachers will email weekly updates. In the fall and spring, parents have an opportunity to be involved in parent-teacher conferences. Families will receive two written progress reports during the school year.

**Elementary Education Program:** Teachers will email weekly updates to inform parents of special events and learning areas. Three times per year, students will receive written report cards:

- In the first and second reporting periods, parent teacher conferences will be scheduled.
- The final report card will be sent home at the end of the school year.

## Management

Our Executive Team is always available for parent/guardian input.

- **Janice McTighe**, Executive Director  
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# Student Records

The *Alberta School Act* requires schools to manage and maintain student records. This includes information to develop or implement program plans, as well as other student information that is kept on file at each school site. Parents and students may review the student record, however they are not permitted to modify or delete the information contained in it. Renfrew follows the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* to ensure each individual's privacy.

## Positive Behaviour Support Skills for Optimizing Approaches & Responses (SOAR)

At Renfrew, we endorse the principle of respect for the dignity of children and their families. Our aim is to promote learning in an environment which is nurturing and safe, while encouraging the development of self-control and a positive self-concept.

Positive behaviour support is facilitated when a positive relationship has been established between adults and children. With a positive relationship, staff members are able to assist children in the development of participation, cooperation, negotiation and problem-solving skills. The modification of a child's program may be considered in order to encourage the development of new skills or positive behavioural alternatives to problematic behaviours and will be determined based on the goals, abilities and interests of individual children.

Renfrew's positive behaviour support practice helps children acquire new skills and places the emphasis on proactive strategies in order to be successful, and it minimizes the need for reactive strategies.

Our teams always ensure the psychological well-being and physical safety of the child.



# Policies and Procedures

Renfrew's 'Policy Manuals' are available for families to review. Copies are kept in the administrative office at each location.

Teachers will adhere to the *Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standard: Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation*.

## Appeal Process

Alberta Education determines that all private and independent schools establish their own individual policies and procedures concerning the appeal process. All decisions made by the Renfrew Educational Services Board of Directors will be the final decision. According to Alberta Education Policy, parents cannot appeal to the Minister of Education.

### Policy:

**Renfrew will ensure that parents have a fair and open process to address differences of opinion in child/student placement and programming.**

### Procedure:

- Parent concerns will be addressed as follows:
  - **Step One:** *Parents/guardians ask for a meeting with the classroom teacher and manager/principal. The meeting will be organized by Renfrew staff within one week of the request.*
  - **Step Two:** *If unresolved, parents/guardians may request a meeting with the Executive Director or an Associate Executive Director. Renfrew staff will submit a written rationale. Parents may do likewise. The meeting will be arranged within one week of receiving the submissions.*
  - **Step Three:** *If still unresolved, parents/guardians may request a meeting with the Renfrew Board of Directors. This meeting will be arranged within two weeks of receiving the request. The Board's decision is final.*
- An exception to this process is for children in ECS. Parents have the right to formally appeal decisions that significantly affect the education of their children to the Director, Inclusive Learning Supports Branch, Alberta Education, in the event that the local dispute-resolution mechanism fails.

## Suspension/Expulsion

### Elementary Education Program

#### Policy:

**A student may be suspended from attending classes or expelled from the school if his/her behaviour endangers the safety of him/herself or others.**

#### Procedure:

- The team will meet and make a decision with the parents for the length of time appropriate (one or two days is recommended).
- A student may be expelled from Renfrew Educational Services if the student continues to be a danger to him/herself or others. The team would make this decision after all other methods have been tried.
- A student would not be expelled unless we have secured a more appropriate placement in another school, so that the student has access to education for the remainder of the year. If another placement were not available, Renfrew Educational Services would continue to be responsible for the student's education for the remainder of the year.
- Expulsion is not an acceptable practice at Renfrew and would be used only in the most extreme circumstances.





## Snack

A nutritious snack is provided on a daily basis for all of our ECS classes. Snack is offered as a choice during learning centre time. Staff encourage each and every child to participate. Our staff prepare snack for all the children, as many children are on restricted diets or have severe allergies. We ask parents not to bring or send foods due to allergies and religious/ethnic food customs. Eating time is important for working on a variety of skills including oral-motor, fine-motor, speech, socialization and daily living.

- Elementary students bring a daily snack and their lunch.
- ECS children in the ISMD program bring their lunch.

We ask parents **not** to send food with peanuts or tree nuts to school in lunches or snacks. *(See Nut-restricted School below.)*

## Nut-restricted School

Renfrew Educational Services is a nut-restricted school. This means we do our best to ensure products with peanuts, traces of peanuts, peanut products, tree nuts, traces of tree nuts or tree nut products are not purchased for, or consumed in, our schools.

## Birthdays

We will celebrate your child's special day in the classroom. Unfortunately, due to many allergies, and other safety-related reasons (recalls, choking hazards, etc.) we ask that you PLEASE DO NOT SEND FOOD or TOYS as part of your child's celebration. If you do not celebrate birthdays, please advise your child's teacher so your beliefs and traditions can be honoured at school.

## What to Wear?

Please send your child to school dressed in comfortable clothing that allows for movement and exploration. Sometimes we have extremely messy (but fun) projects! Children will be spending time outside. Please send winter boots, snowpants, mittens, hats and rain gear when appropriate.

All children must have:

- a pair of sturdy running shoes that can be left at the school and are suitable for running and climbing.
- a bag or backpack to bring to and from school.
- an extra set of clothes in their backpack - just in case!

Please ensure that everything is labelled, including shoes and boots!

# We Welcome You to Be Involved

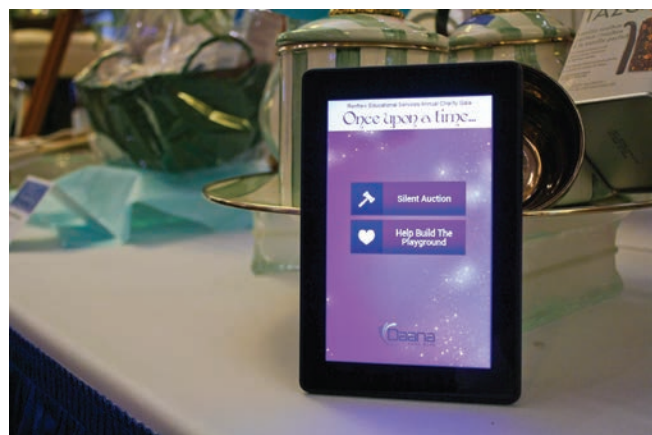
We know that families are experts about their children, care about their children and are part of their children's learning experience. We want to be partners with families. We have an open door policy.

We are pleased to have parents visit our classrooms on a drop-in basis, to volunteer, to accompany children on field trips, or to help in some other way related to the children's learning. Parents offer a richness to our programs with their unique talents and perspectives, and they assist teachers with special projects. Most importantly, parents provide us with a deeper understanding of their children's unique qualities.

- Parents can be involved in their child's classroom on a drop-in basis by contacting their child's teacher to set up a schedule.
- If you want to volunteer on a regular basis, you will need to have a Police Information Check (including Vulnerable Sector Check) and Intervention Record Check (with Alberta Children's Services) completed. More information is available from the classroom teacher or manager.
- Watch for notices to be sent home inviting you to join field trips as they are scheduled during the year. **Siblings cannot be accommodated in our classrooms or on field trips. Please arrange for childcare.**

## Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

We value your participation on our Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Each centre has a PAC. The PAC sets its own direction each year, with support from the teaching staff and the manager or principal. Most often the PAC plays an important role directing resources for special school learning experiences, such as field trips, special classroom visitors, after school activities and unique equipment. The PAC at each centre meets monthly and all parents are invited to be involved.



## Fundraising

Fundraising is very important to Renfrew Educational Services. We rely on and require parent support for our major fundraising projects in order to keep our school fees as low as possible. These major events require many volunteers and financial support. Charitable donation receipts are issued for cash donations. You will receive information on these events in the Treasures newsletter, Facebook, Twitter and through special flyers. Your support is essential and extremely appreciated! Renfrew has talented staff who coordinate exciting ideas into our fundraising efforts. Do you have any ideas for fundraising ventures? If so, please talk to the manager at your child's location.

# Special Events

## ECS Programs

**Family Nights** - Family nights offer an opportunity for the entire family to enjoy an evening of games, storytelling and art activities. All families are encouraged to participate. This is an excellent opportunity to visit the school for those who are not able to do so during the day and to involve siblings.

**Family Days** - Renfrew may plan one or two Saturday events each year. These events offer fun activities for the whole family.



## Elementary Education Program

**Assemblies** - Parents are invited to attend school assemblies, usually held at the end of each month. During assemblies, each class takes a turn presenting to the school, and awards are presented to students. Teachers will notify parents by email of assembly dates and times.

**Family Days** - Renfrew may plan one or two Saturday events each year. These events offer fun activities for the whole family.

**Family Night** - Families are invited to attend a special evening either at the school or a community recreational facility. This is an excellent way for families to connect with each other and for children to enjoy a fun evening with friends, school staff, parents and siblings.

**Winter Festival Celebration** - In December, families are invited to join the students during the school day for a variety of special activities and events to celebrate the holiday season as a school community.

**Farewell Celebration** - In late June, there is a celebration for students who are in their final year and for their families. We celebrate the students' accomplishments and wish them a fond farewell. Light refreshments are served.



# Bus Transportation

Transportation by Renfrew buses is arranged before the start of the school year. If your child is registered and you require busing after the start of the school year, contact the transportation department and we will try to accommodate your child. Our buses fill up quickly and we cannot always accommodate every request. There is an additional charge for our transportation. If you have arranged for busing, please follow our guidelines in the transportation pamphlet.

## Buses

Bus drivers have a professional licence and all vehicles are regularly safety inspected. Driver training and evaluation is ongoing and regularly updated. We have special four-point seat-belt systems installed in our buses for the children. This system buckles over both shoulders and across the middle, holding the child securely and safely in his/her seat. Children between 10kg and 18kg will be provided with a car seat for their safety. We have strict policies regarding loading and unloading of children.

## Transporting in Wheelchairs

If your child will be transported to and from school in their wheelchair, our transportation department will contact you to discuss details.

## Cancellation of Buses

If, at 6:00am, the temperature is equal to, or lower than, -40°C, or if driving conditions are extreme, our buses will NOT be on the road. Our concern is the well being of the children in the event of a bus breakdown or minor collision. Parents/caregivers will be contacted by the bus driver if the busing service is cancelled. Schools will remain open on all scheduled school dates, regardless of weather conditions.

## Scheduling

If there is a change in residence, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to accommodate your child on another bus, or guarantee the same pick-up and drop-off times. Please give the Transportation Department at least two weeks notice so that they can try to make the necessary arrangements.

If there are any changes to your child's daily bus schedule, please call **403.291.5038 ext. 1377** and leave your child's first and last name - spelled out in full, the bus driver's name or bus number and your name and phone number. Please speak clearly and slowly to avoid any confusion with names. For permanent cancellations or address changes, please call and speak to the manager at your child's school.

## Updating Files

Please keep us informed of any changes to home or work phone number, alternate drop-off locations or emergency contact information. Call **403.291.5038 ext. 1720**.

## Safety

If your child has medical conditions such as seizures or extreme allergies that require special care, or if there is medication in his/her backpack (e.g. epi-pen, inhaler), the backpack will be tagged and kept out of the reach of the children. Information about medication and any special care requirements and procedures will be noted in the driver's information binder for that bus route. (See "Medication" page 20.)



## Parent Transportation

If you drive your child to school, please park in the designated parking areas. You must always accompany your child to the classroom and ensure a staff member has received your child, and you must always come into the school at pick up time to get your child. We will not allow a child to leave unaccompanied. If someone other than the parent/legal guardian is transporting the child, the school must be notified.

To ensure that staff are always available to look after your child, please be sure that they are never dropped off earlier than five minutes before classes start, and make certain that your child is picked up promptly at dismissal time. If you need to make other arrangements due to unusual circumstances, please speak to the teacher or manager/principal.

At the Janice McTighe Centre, please do not use the school parking lot or the parking lot of the neighbouring businesses for parking or turning around. Your cooperation helps us to maintain good relations with our neighbours.

## Pick-up from School

This is carefully controlled and any changes must come, in writing, directly from the parent or guardian.

# Field Trips, Classroom Visitors & Special Events

Children will participate in field trips and outings. Volunteers for special events and field trips are usually needed. A sign-up sheet will be sent home with your child that can be filled out and returned to the school to indicate if you are able to volunteer for, or attend, a special event. Teachers may also include special visitors and guests in the classroom to enhance areas of learning.

## Companion Dog



Interacting with a friendly pet can have many benefits for children. Renfrew has our own companion dog who travels from site to site. Dog visits have a positive impact on the children, often encouraging more communication and increased socialization. Information will be sent home to let you know when a dog visit is scheduled.

## Library

Each location has a 'mini library' for use in the classrooms, as well as access to the main library at the Janice McTighe Centre. Our family support team will be able to assist families with resource books and written materials.

## Keeping Us Informed

403.291.5038

### Away today?

Whether or not your child is bused, always call your child's classroom or the administration office if your child will not be attending school.

SAS families need to contact the school secretary if a session needs to be cancelled. The secretary will contact your child's team members to inform them of the changes.

### Changes?

Please inform your school location or the administration office of any changes that have occurred with home or work phone numbers, email address, home address, emergency contacts and family doctors. If an emergency should occur, we need to know where to find you quickly! Be assured that we will never release this information to a third party without your express consent.

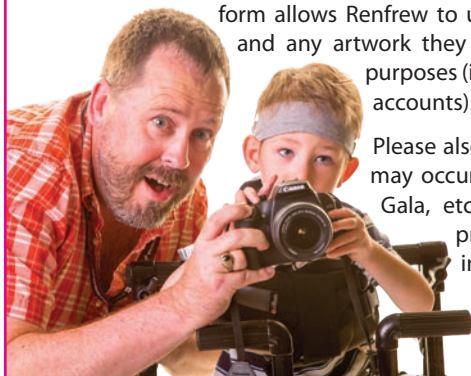
### Ideas? Concerns?

If you have any ideas or concerns about what is happening at school, please contact us immediately so we can work together.

## Photo Permissions for Marketing and Communications Purposes

We're always excited to share news, updates and information about what's going around Renfrew, but want to do it in such a way that protects the privacy of our children and families.

At the beginning of the school year, a photo/video waiver form will be sent home with children for parents/guardians to review and sign. The completed and signed photo/video waiver form allows Renfrew to use any photos, videos, recordings of children, and any artwork they produce, for marketing and communications purposes (including on Renfrew's website and social media accounts).



Please also be aware that photography and videography may occur at events (e.g. Family Days, Renfrew's Charity Gala, etc.) where parents/guardians and children are present. Crowd waiver signs will be set up with information about the use of any photography and videography Renfrew captures, and we encourage parents/guardians to review the information prior to entering the area.

### Photos for Personal Use

Throughout the year, Renfrew has many events parents/guardians are invited to attend (Family Days, Parent Appreciation Teas etc.). We understand that you'll likely want to take photos and videos, and may want to share them with family and friends. Privacy is important to our families, and we kindly remind parents/guardians to refrain from taking and sharing photos publicly (i.e. online etc.) that include children other than your own. Unfortunately Renfrew cannot control this content or what usage can occur if these photos are posted publicly, and kindly asks that confidentiality of our children be respected.

# Safety and Health

## First Aid & CPR

Each site has staff trained in First Aid and CPR, as do all of our bus drivers. The training is updated regularly.

## Injuries

Renfrew has procedures in place that ensure all injuries are documented, investigated and reported to administration and to a parent or guardian.

## Fire Evacuation & Lockdown Drills

Renfrew buildings are regularly inspected for fire safety. Evacuation and lockdown drills are practiced on a regular basis.

## Equipment

Renfrew has purchasing procedures in place to ensure our equipment, toys and supplies meet all safety standards. Our playgrounds meet CSA playground standards. We inspect all of our sites and equipment on a regular basis.

## Security Checks

To ensure that all of our staff have impeccable records of childcare, each new staff member consents to a police information check and Intervention Record Check through the Government of Alberta. A three to five year follow-up is also completed by all Renfrew staff.

## Sun Safety

Renfrew highly encourages outdoor activities and the use of sunscreen and hats. During the warmer months, if you choose to use sunscreen, please apply it to your child's exposed skin before sending them to school - even on cloudy days. We are only able to apply sunscreen sent to school with written permission from a parent or guardian. We will ensure that children wear their hats when going outside.

## Illness

Please keep your child at home and notify the school if your child has: diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, fever higher than 37.56°C, sore throat, unusual rash, discharge from the eyes or ears, or is showing symptoms of any contagious illness. It is also recommended that you keep your child at home for 24 hours following the start of antibiotics and following any episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. We follow Alberta Health Services guidelines regarding communicable diseases. Please check with your health nurse or the manager at your location if you are unsure whether to keep your child at home. We urge you to consider the other children in the class when making the decision to have a sick child attend school.

## Medication

Medication may only be administered by Renfrew staff with written consent from a parent/guardian. Parents/guardians must use the **Renfrew Medication Form** available from your classroom teacher, manager or on our website ([www.renfreweducation.org](http://www.renfreweducation.org)).

We require written orders from the physician detailing drug dosage, time interval and reasons. All medication must be in the original container. Backpacks containing medication will be tagged indicating that they contain medication, and must be handed directly from the primary care giver to a Renfrew staff member. Tagged backpacks are kept at the front of the bus. (See "Safety" page 19.) **Backpacks containing medication are NOT to be carried by the child.** At Renfrew sites, medication will be put in locked storage out of the reach of children.

Please keep us informed of any medication changes.



# General Information

## Renfrew Locations

### **Janice McTighe Centre**

2050 - 21 St. NE

**T** 403.291.5038 ext 1300

**F** 403.291.2499

**E** renfrew@renfreweducation.org

**www.renfreweducation.org**

### **Bowness Centre**

8620 - 48 Ave. NW

**T** 403.291.5038 ext 1800

### **Child Development Centre**

University of Calgary

3820 - 24 Ave. NW

**T** 403.291.5038 ext 1211

### **Thomas W. Buchanan Centre**

75 Sunpark Dr. SE

**T** 403.291.5038 ext 1600

## Where Programs are Located

- **Children with Diverse Special Needs**
  - All locations
- **Specialized Services Program (SSP)**
  - All locations
- **Integrated Services for Children with Motor Disabilities (ISMD)**
  - Janice McTighe Centre
  - Thomas W. Buchanan Centre
- **Elementary Education Program**
  - Janice McTighe Centre
  - Thomas W. Buchanan Centre

## School Days & Times

### **Elementary Education Program**

- All students attend:
  - Monday through Friday  
8:20 to 3:55pm

### **ECS Program**

- ALL children, including those in the ISMD program, attend:
  - Monday through Friday  
8:20 to 11:35am **or** 12:40 to 3:55pm

### **Classroom Schedules**

Daily and weekly schedules vary from classroom to classroom depending on gym times, field trips, special events and music days. Each classroom's schedule of special days and events will be emailed to you.



## Emergency School Cancellations

The decision to cancel programs or busing is generally made as a result of unforeseen circumstances such as power failure, blizzard, or unsafe road conditions. Families should monitor Renfrew's website ([www.renfreweducation.org](http://www.renfreweducation.org)), Facebook page or Twitter feed for cancellation information.

Additionally, when severe weather alerts or other major events/disasters are announced through the media, information on the status of Renfrew programs may be found through the following media outlets.

- Global Television
- CTV Television
- CityTV
- Radio 103.1 CFXL-FM
- CBC Radio One 99.1 FM
- CKRY Country 105 FM

In the event of emergencies occurring during school hours, care of children/students continues until they are reunited with their families, including overnight during extreme conditions. Parents will be informed of the closure.



## Fee Structure

We receive operational funding for all children and transportation funding for our ECS children from Alberta Education. However, funding for our education programs and busing system does not cover all of our expenses, so program fees are necessary.

- **ECS:** monthly general fee
- **Elementary Education Program:** monthly fees
- **All in-house programs:** monthly transportation fee for children/students on our buses

## Payment Options

All fees are due on the first of each month.

**Option 1:** Pay the entire year's fees in one payment in September.

**Option 2:** Monthly withdrawals by electronic fund transfers, credit card or post-dated cheques.

- Payments can be made by VISA, MasterCard, post-dated cheques, electronic fund transfer or in cash.
- If you are paying by post-dated cheques they must be to your child's location by September 15 and dated for the first of each month.
- If you are paying by VISA or MasterCard, your card number will be recorded and charges will be applied on a monthly basis.
- Monthly pre-authorized deduction directly from your bank account can also be arranged by contacting the accounting department at ext 1389.

## Staff Development

### *Supporting a Quality Program*

Ongoing training and development of staff is essential for us in providing exemplary programs and services. Dates for school closures are noted on our website. This day may be used for staff meetings, in-services or training. Staff attend conferences and workshops periodically throughout the year. Renfrew is dedicated to exceptionally well-trained professional staff.

Charitable Registration No.107886129 RR0001

**Funded by:** Alberta Education, Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority,  
City of Calgary – Family and Community Support Services and United Way of Calgary,  
Foundations and Private Donors.

# ***HELPING KIDS SOAR***

We create exceptional learning experiences for every child.

**Renfrew Educational Services**  
**P 403.291.5038 F 403.291.2499**

**Janice McTighe Centre**  
**2050 – 21 St. NE, Calgary, AB T2E 6S5**

Thomas W. Buchanan Centre  
75 Sunpark Dr SE

Bowness Centre  
8620-48 Ave. NW

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**[www.renfreweducation.org](http://www.renfreweducation.org)**