



Langley Environmental Awareness Program



Parent Handbook



School Contact List

Teachers

Kindergarten: Marlee St. Pierre — mastpierre@sd35.bc.ca

Grade 1/2: Ashley Harder — asharder@sd35.bc.ca

Grade 2/3: Alexis Taleon — ataleon@sd35.bc.ca

Grade 4/5: Adam Knowlson — aknowlson@sd35.bc.ca

Principal: Colleen Harvie — charvie@sd35.bc.ca

Important Phone Numbers

Fort Langley Elementary: 604.888.2111

Outdoor Teacher's Cellphone: 778.875.8192

School Website

fortlangley.sd35.bc.ca

Parents are responsible for arranging transportation to and from the learning location each day. A calendar of each month's locations will be provided with a minimum of 2 weeks notice. To cover the possibility of carpooling with other families, we ask each driver to fill out the Volunteer Driver paperwork at the school office at the beginning of the year and keep it up to date as needed. In case of late arrivals or early departures, parents will need to notify the teachers ahead of time, and be prepared to walk to meet the class where they are learning. For your child to have the best chance of success at school, regular attendance and prompt arrival is important even on outside days.



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Acknowledgements

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LEAP Principles and Values

LEAP (Langley Environmental Awareness Program) seeks to nurture healthy practices of learning and teaching. That includes a significant portion of the school year spent in meaningful, outdoor place-based settings throughout Langley.

Learning will be cultivated in local places close to LEAP schools and in other parts of Langley. Natural settings will be the place in which the cycle of seasons will be observed. The knowledge of ecosystems will be observed carefully so that diversity, complexity, and sustainability become part of our understanding of the world.

The aim will be to provide young children with large amounts of time in frequently visited natural outdoor settings, where they can play, explore and experience natural systems and materials found there. In all types of weather, children and educators will investigate natural phenomenon and learn about the place in which they live. Curricular outcomes will be skillfully woven together through engaging and meaningful experiences.

The District is honoured to operate on the unceded traditional territories of the Katzie, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo and Matsqui First Nations. Local First Nation's people and places will be respected and valued. Through open communication and authentic resources, LEAP seeks to gain understanding and learning through traditional approaches.





General Safety Procedures



In partnership with Metro Vancouver Parks and the Township of Langley, students will spend a variety of time exploring local parks. The safety procedures in this handbook are designed to keep the program participants safe while allowing them the freedom to explore and interact with the environment around them.

One of the roles of the facilitator, parents, and/or community volunteers is to ensure that all safety measures are in place and are followed daily.

We work to create an environment that is as safe as possible by being proactive and by using sensible, simple guidelines that the children and adults can remember. Our safety principles include:

- Constantly assess risk as conditions change (dynamic risk assessment).
- Set up a safe space with boundaries and safety guidelines.
- Observe the children's interactions with each other and with nature.
- Spot the children during more challenging physical activity.
- Gently guide the children to safer activities if required.

If we feel that the children's play is becoming dangerous, we will redirect the children and remind them that it is important to stay safe outdoors.



Site Risk Assessment

If the site as a whole is deemed too risky due to high winds or weather such as a thunderstorm, the facilitator will communicate with all families to let them know that the program has been moved for the day. We will make this decision at 7:30am and all families will be contacted. You will only receive communication if the program is moved for the day. Contact will not be made for good weather. If the program must be moved/changed and families are already on their way, the facilitator will go to the location to meet families and let them know.

Every effort will be made to post a notification of change of location on the front page of the website.

In case of early dismissal due to unsafe conditions, we will attempt to contact each child's parent or caregiver. If we cannot contact a parent or caregiver, we will contact the next person listed on the family's emergency contact list.

The Role of the Adult

All of the adults present each day have a role to play in ensuring the safety of the children.

Face Counting

Each adult is responsible for face to face counting. Face counts take place every 10 minutes when the group is in one area. Each time the group transitions from one place to another, faces are counted again.

Interactions Between Children

The children will participate in adult-led and child-led activities and will also have time for free play. Sometimes children will have interactions between them that are challenging for both the children involved and for the adults around them. If conflict resolution seems necessary, an adult may step in to mediate. Discipline methods used by facilitators and volunteers will focus on gentle discipline.

Adults will make every effort to do the following when challenging interactions occur:

- Be proactive. Take note of the social interactions between the children.
- Be physically close to a child or children if concerned about a social or safety situation.
- Remind the children to use gentle (kind, respectful) words



to ask for what they need.

- Remind the children that hands are for working and playing, not hitting.
- Redirect the children to different activities or have them chat with an adult who will help them calm down.
- When the children are calm, discuss the situation with the children involved. Encourage discussion of any differences so that the children can work on communicating their needs to each other.
- Acknowledge children's feelings and encourage them to express their feelings about a situation (i.e. "I felt sad when..."), help them to identify/name feelings if needed.
- Encourage the child(ren) to consider alternative actions that they could take in the future.

The Children in the Forest

Every day, we practice dynamic risk assessment as we visit the site and determine whether it is suitable to use. The following guidelines are written with phrases that you can use with the children as you guide them toward safe behavior in the forest.

Hiking

When we walk through the forest, we are in a sandwich. An adult will be in the front and at the back. The children do not need to be in a line, but they do need to be inside the sandwich.

Sticks

Sticks for play will be the length of the child's arm or shorter except at the facilitator's discretion. Sticks are for building, digging, and imaginative play. They are not for hitting. When we walk and run, we put the sticks down. It is important to be able to use your own hands for holding and for balance.

Rocks

When we are near the water, we may throw rocks. When we throw rocks, we look around and check to make sure that no one is close to us, in our personal bubble (the area a few meters around our body). We may throw rocks that are as large as the palms of our hands.

Climbing

We may climb as high as we are tall. We only climb as high as we can climb on our own. We only climb when an adult can safely spot us (watch us and keep us safe). The adult will be present to spot a child, not to assist them to get higher. If the adult cannot be present or cannot safely spot the child, the child will not be able to climb that high.

Digging

Ask the facilitator if you would like to dig a hole that is larger than your hand. When we dig a hole, we will fill it back in when we are finished so that we disturb the forest as little as possible.

Plants

We ask an adult before eating a plant to make sure it is the right kind. We keep green leaves on the plants so that they can help the plant grow.

Fire

We may have an opportunity to use a propane fire or fire pit on one of the days. When we are around the fire, we sit. We keep our bodies away from the fire as it is very hot. We also keep things out of the fire.

Water

We often access water bodies such as rivers, creeks, and ponds. Before we visit a body of water, the facilitator will give instructions to the children about the appropriate behavior around this water body. Children must be within established boundaries and may not stand in the water without permission from the facilitator.



Emergency Procedures

At least once per week, the facilitator will practice with the children what to do when they are lost or separated from the group:

- Stop. Hug a tree. Blow your whistle (or scream). Step back from any bodies of water or cliff edges.
- Sit by a tree in the open if possible.
- Call out or use the whistle on your jacket or pack to whistle for help.
- Respond to any noise with a noise.
- Use your jacket to cover your body and your head if you get cold.

If a child is not present when we do a face count, we will:

- Stay on the site.
- Ask others to do a face count.
- Call the group together to stay in one spot.
- Determine who saw the child last, where and when.
- Call for the child who is lost.
- Have one adult search around the boundaries of the site to find the child who is lost.
- Call the park ranger and/or police to inform them that a child is lost.



Emergency Procedures

Please ensure that you have signed the medical release form so that we have permission to perform the required first aid or transfer your child to a hospital if necessary.

Minor Emergency

If a child falls and gets a cut, the facilitator does first aid while the other teacher observes the group. If a child gets a bump, scratch, or bruise, we will let the parent (or other pick-up person) know at the end of the session.

Minor emergency requiring parents to be called

If a child is ill, one teacher does first aid as required. The other teacher manages the group. The facilitator calls the parent or other emergency contacts. The group arranges to meet the parent in the drop-off and pick-up location. After that, the group will continue with the day's program.

Emergency requiring external medical care

In a serious emergency, one facilitator does first aid while another facilitator calls 911. The group will always be supervised and managed by a facilitator. The facilitators will arrange with emergency staff what procedures work best for the transfer to medical care.

Animal Awareness



Dogs

It is very possible that the group may encounter dogs (leashed or unleashed) while in the parks. While dogs are supposed to be “under control,” even if off leash, some dogs are more excitable or aggressive than others. Games and discussions to stay safe around dogs will be practiced regularly.

To help prevent children from being bitten by dogs, the following safety tips will be reviewed regularly:

- Do not approach an unfamiliar dog.
- Do not run from a dog or scream.
- Remain motionless (e.g., “be still like a tree”) when approached by an unfamiliar dog.
- If knocked over by a dog, roll into a ball and lie still (e.g., “be still like a log”).
- Do not play with a dog unless supervised by an adult.
- Immediately report stray dogs or dogs displaying unusual behavior to an adult.
- Avoid direct eye contact with a dog.
- Do not disturb a dog that is sleeping, eating, or caring for puppies.
- Do not pet a dog without allowing it to see and sniff you first (and without getting permission from the dog’s owner).
- If bitten, immediately report the bite to an adult.

***Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2009. Dog Bite Prevention.
www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/dog-bites/biteprevention***



Bears and Cougars

While we are in the parks it is very unlikely that we will encounter a bear or cougar. However, to be prepared for such an encounter we will practice the following safety protocols with the children.

Bears

In the event that we see a bear, here are the procedures we will follow:

If the bear has seen us, we will:

STOP

- Make ourselves big
- Back away slowly
- Speak in low tone and normal volume and say, "Hello bear, we won't run away. You can stay and play; we'll come back another day."
- Let an adult know that there is a bear in the area and they will contact the Park staff.

If the bear has not seen us, we will:

- Leave the area quietly and go to a more public place and an adult will let the park staff know that there is a bear in the area.

Cougars

In the event that we see a cougar, here are the procedures we will follow:

STOP

Make ourselves big and back away

If the cougar does not go away, keep eye contact with the cougar, show your teeth and make loud noises.

Arm yourself with sticks and rocks.

If the cougar does attack, fight back:

Focus on the nose and face area. Use sticks and rocks as weapons.

Coyotes

If a coyote appears and acts unafraid or aggressive, we will take the following action as soon as we notice the animal:

- Do not allow the coyote to approach any closer than 100 metres.
- Raise your arms and wave them in the air to make yourself appear larger.

When in a group, act in unison to send a clear message to the coyotes they are not welcome:

- Back away slowly, do not turn your back on the coyote.
- Make noise, throw sticks, rocks and sand at the coyote.

We will also remind children of the importance of staying with the group to help avoid these encounters.

Wasps

If a wasp lands on you wait for it to fly off or brush gently off with object like a mitten (do not brush it with your hand).

If you are faced with a wasp don't challenge it - it is far better for you to leave the area until the wasp has gone. Do not run or thrash or swat. If there is only one wasp, then keep still and, when safe, move to shade or away from what is attracting the wasp. If stinging seems inevitable, then cover your face with hands or clothing or get face-down on the ground. If there are multiple wasps then your removal to safety is urgent.

If you find what appears to be an old and seemingly inactive wasp nest do not disturb it, there may still be living wasps inside.

Collecting Critters

Children will often want to collect small creatures as part of their play and learning outdoors. As LEAP values responsible and respectful interactions with nature, children will be taught safe, gentle collection and observation techniques and to replace living things where they were found after a short time.



Program Necessities



Gear List for LEAP

Child-size fitted backpack

(worth investing in good quality)

Winter Boots

(warmth, comfort, fit)

Rain Pants

(must go over boots)

Rain Shell

(light, big enough to fit over jacket)

Base Layers

(long johns, shirts, fleece)

Sunhat/Rainhat

Mittens or Gloves

(several inexpensive pairs at best)

Sunglasses/Sunscreen/ Bug Spray

(optional)

Waterbottle

(sturdy, not glass, lightweight)

Lunch Kit

*(all food in containers,
no food requiring heating)*

Kleenex, hand towel or wipes

Emergency Poncho

Gumboots

(must be waterproof)

Indoor Shoes

(running shoes that lace up)

Snow Pants

(warm, easy to pull on and off)

Winter Jacket

(warm, waterproof - not nylon)

Tuque/Hat

(warm, covers ears)

Whistle

Necktube

(fleece, better than scarf)

Change of Clothes in a ziplock bag

(in backpack)

Extra Non-Cotton Socks

(when cotton gets wet, it stays wet)

Medications*

*(we cannot administer medica-
tion unless proper paperwork is
completed. Everything must be
labelled.)*



Shrinking our Footprint

As part of our environmental awareness, we will be teaching the students daily about respect and our impact on the environment and world around us. We strive to greatly reduce or eliminate the waste we create. The lunches we pack can have a big effect. Please try to avoid single use packaging. Reusable containers are a great substitute.

Labelling

You would think that children can recognize their own things. Sometimes yes, often no. Also, many items are identical to others. Please, please, please label all your child's belongings. Absolutely everything! It will save us hours of time trying to sort out belongings!



Examples of what to bring daily

Please send your child with:

- A small backpack that your child can carry comfortably
- A lunch and snack in reusable containers.
- A whistle attached to your child's jacket
- A reusable cup or bottle for water.
- Extra clothing, such as extra gloves, socks and a hat.
- Anything that the teacher has asked you to bring that day.

When it is rainy, please send your child in layers. We recommend:

- As an inner layer, fleece or natural fabrics such as wool or silk. The fabric should wick moisture away from the skin and provide a warm, breathable layer.
- Middle layer of insulation made of wool or fleece
- Outer shell of waterproof, windproof clothing, including a rain jacket and rain pants.
- Your child can wear waterproof boots that are one size too large with two pairs of socks.
- Make sure that your child has a warm, waterproof tuque or hat that covers the ears.
- Several pairs of gloves to swap out when wet.

When it is cold, please add:

- Warm and waterproof gloves that slip on and off easily.
- Long underwear
- An extra pair of warm gloves and warm socks in your child's bag.

When it is warm, please wear:

- A light cotton, silk or hemp long-sleeved shirt.
- Durable pants
- A sun hat
- Running or hiking shoes.
- Sun protection.

Schedule

LEAP follows the Fort Langley Elementary bell schedule and calendar, even on outside days.

First Bell

8:49 AM

Class Begins

8:54 AM

Dismissal

2:35 PM





