



Admission Policy Saplings Nature School June 2023

Rationale

Saplings believes that every student has the fundamental right to an education in the most appropriate setting for their needs. Classroom spaces will be provided for students that are conducive to interaction with age- and developmentally-similar peers.

Policy

Saplings believes that all students have unique educational needs and that each person can play an essential role in our school community. Saplings is committed to empowering students to reach their potential as unique learners. Through purposeful inclusion we encourage students to develop their gifts, become self-advocates, and gain independence as valued members of their communities.

The education of all students at Saplings is a shared commitment. The Ministry of Education, Saplings, parents, and community agencies each have prime responsibility for some areas of the students' development while sharing responsibility for other areas. Maximum benefit to students occurs where the efforts and expectations of those involved with them complement each other.

Admission

Every effort will be made to accommodate students in our school. There may be situations for which we are not equipped, experienced, or qualified to the degree necessary to admit every student who applies. Every new student will be given an intake meeting with the Program Director and/or Head of school to gauge the suitability of the program for that particular student.

Because we are a small school as a part of our learning program design, we may not have the economy of scale required to implement staffing, equipment, or programming needed to support all students adequately, even when eligible for supplemental funding from the Ministry of Education. Only in such cases would we ever deny a student enrollment.

Final decisions regarding levels of integration, staffing and the student's educational program rests with Saplings Nature School administration. The school will meet the needs of each student by employing Educational Assistants where necessary and consulting specialists where possible. Educational Assistants work with classroom teachers to determine the level of extra support a student needs, and support will be provided within the classroom when possible.

Re-enrollment

Current students will be given priority registration for the upcoming school year. Offers to new families will be made on an ongoing basis until spaces are filled.

The re-enrolment process for the following academic year will take place in the winter of each year. A certain percent of the following year's tuition fees is required at the time of re-enrolment. If re-enrolment tuition deposit fees are not received by the required date, it will be assumed the student is not returning. Consequently, the

student's place may, at the school's discretion, be offered to a child on the waitlist. Prior to this, every attempt will be made to accommodate the current family, within operational and financial reason. This process is completed by the spring of each year at which time available spaces are offered to prospective students.

It must be understood that the school makes commitments for each academic year based on re-enrolment numbers. The school's policy regarding notice of withdrawal is outlined in the tuition contract as well as stated in the fee schedule. Parents are expected to be familiar with this policy.

Procedures

- a) Parents will be asked to fill in their Intentions Form in early February.
- b) Parents will be asked to confirm their space and pay the non-refundable deposit by March 31.
- c) Parents will sign an enrolment contract no later than June 15.

Admission to the upcoming school year

Saplings Nature School reserves the right not to enroll or re-enroll students for any reason including but not limited to behavioural support, social needs and/or the school's capacity to meet those needs. Saplings may suggest that a specialized program or setting, such as are found in a public school district or in select home-school programs will be better suited to facilitate a student's support.

As a small school, we have capacity for only a certain number of students at any one time. Each learning pod (class) will be opened and filled based on student enrollment. Until the necessary number of students is reached which warrants opening a new pod, prospective students will be placed on a waitlist and will be contacted as soon as space becomes available.

Procedures

Registration is completed on a first come, first served basis. In order to be considered for admission to the following school year, it is recommended that the registration package be received no later than April 15. Applications received after that date may be placed on a waitlist until room becomes available.

a. Parents must complete the registration package online, including payment of the non-refundable deposit.
NOTE: The registration process will not proceed until all documentation is received by the school.

b. It is highly recommended that students, apart from those registering for kindergarten, attend a trial day.
NOTE: After the trial day, a recommendation will be made by the teacher/evaluator to the Program Director or Head of School.

- c. Parents will attend an intake meeting with the Program Director and/or Head of School. Student preferences, needs, and supports will be discussed. The Program Director/Head of School will determine if Saplings can meet the student's needs adequately.
- d. If a spot is offered, parents pay the non-refundable deposit within one week of the intake meeting.
- e. Parents provide admission documents no later than June 1.

Admission into the current year

Mid-year transfers will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. When registering at any point mid-year, the current program, which includes students and Education Assistants (EA's), will be taken into consideration. These students will be granted a trial period of 2 weeks during which they may attend the school as usual. After this time, the team will meet to assess the programs' suitability and ability to meet the needs of that particular student before a decision is made regarding admission into the program for the remainder of the year.

Procedures

In order to be considered for admission to the current school year, parents will first have a discussion with the Program Director and/or Head of School to discuss the transfer. This discussion may stand in lieu of an Intake meeting. Student preferences, needs, and supports will be discussed. The Program Director/Head of School will determine if Saplings can meet the student's needs adequately.

- a. Students will attend a trial day.

NOTE: After the trial day, a recommendation will be made by the teaching team to the Program Director or Head of School.

- b. Program Director and/or Head of School will discuss with the parents to decide if the classroom as it is currently set up can meet the needs of the student.

- c. If deemed a good fit with the current set up, student will attend the trial period.

NOTE: After the trial period, a recommendation will be made by the teaching team to the Program Director or Head of School.

- d. Parents must complete the registration package online.
- e. If a spot is offered, parents will sign a tuition agreement.

Withdrawals

A family's financial obligation to the school is for the full annual tuition as stated in the Tuition and Enrolment Agreement. In the event of withdrawal from the school (voluntary or requested), only a portion of the tuition fees will be refunded as per the School Fee Refund Policy. One month's notice should be given in writing to the school before a parent withdraws from the program after their application has been accepted and a spot has been assigned.

If the SAP Association ("the Board") chooses to withdraw a child for any reason, reimbursement will be made on a prorated basis, calculated on the next whole month after the withdrawal decision is made as per the School Refund Policy. For example, if a student is asked to withdraw on April 21, reimbursement will be made for 2 months (May and June) of a 10 month school year, or 20% of tuition, regardless of payment method.

Students with Special Rights

As per our Special Education Policy if a student is identified with special rights after being admitted, the school-based team, which might include administration, educational assistants, and the teacher(s), will strive to provide assistance to the student while taking into consideration the school's resource limitations.

Educational assistants will be assigned in consultation with the Head of School, teacher(s), and/or Program Director. Other support staff, such as speech/language pathologists, psychologists, counselors, and diverse education assistants will be provided within available resources. Financial arrangements for providing ongoing speech, physio and occupational therapy and Educational Assistance are the responsibility of the parents.

For more information and specifics regarding the integration of students with special rights, refer to our Special Education Policy. If support services are necessary and financially viable for our school, such as additional education assistants, computer equipment, transportation, and materials, they will be identified and in place prior to the integration of students into a classroom. The integration process will be monitored by the administrative, teaching and staff team in conjunction with the Head of School, and adjusted with respect to impact on the integrated student, as well as the effect on the teaching and learning situation in the classroom.

Parental Input

Parents have the right to be consulted in both the placement and program plans for their student. New parents will attend an Intake Meeting with the Program Director and/or Head of School as a part of the admission process. All parents are encouraged to have casual discussions with teaching staff as well as attend formal parent teacher conferences in order to discuss their student's needs, behaviours, supports, and goals.

When parents have an idea or concern relating to the educational needs of their student, they are to involve those listed in sequential order:

- The classroom teacher and/or staff member;
- The Head of School;
- The Program Director.

If the avenues suggested above have been explored and a concern has not yet been adequately addressed, parents may invoke the appeal process as per our Complaints and Appeals Policy.