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Thickwood Heights Preschool Association

2023-2024

Handbook

780-791-7979

[www.thickwoodheightspreschool.com](http://www.thickwoodheightspreschool.com)

thickwoodheightspreschool@hotmail.com

Facebook: Thickwood Heights Preschool

## FORWARD

* Thickwood Heights Preschool has been operating since 1980. The Preschool was formed as a cooperative by concerned parents seeking an exceptional Preschool Curriculum.
* Thickwood Heights Preschool Association is a **NON-PROFIT** cooperative of parents and interested supporters.
* An Executive of volunteer members is elected annually to operate the Preschool.
* The Preschool is licensed through Provincial Law and strictly adheres to the established operating criteria set forth by the Licensing Agency.
* The following information should answer any questions you may have regarding the Preschool. If you require additional information, you can call or email the Preschool.

## MISSION STATEMENT

* The philosophy of Thickwood Heights Preschool Association is learning through play and encourages mighty learners. The image of a child as citizens of our classroom practices.
* Under the supervision of qualified teachers and helping parents, the children can have enriching experiences with others their own age.
* We encourage the growth of the whole child; socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and culturally.
* The children can work and play as freely as they like with respect for the rights and feelings of others.

## PROGRAM

* The program is based on Flight, which is Alberta’s Early Learning and Care framework.
* The classroom is designed to allow freedom of movement.
* As preschoolers mature at different rates it is important to cultivate the child’s natural desire to learn by allowing the child to learn through choices and perfecting the utilization of the learning tools available.
* Children learn more progressively by working together and this is encouraged at our Preschool.
* Our goal is to promote the growth of the whole child; socially, emotionally, physically, intellectually and culturally.
* With our awareness of our responsive environments of time, space, materials and participation
* Fine and gross motor activities are included.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

* **Location:** Centerfire Place
* **Teachers:**

 Deanne Morris

 Mandy Skaronek

 Dianne McCarthy

**Executive:**

The Executive consists of volunteer parents elected at our Annual General Meeting.

This year our 2023-2024 Executive Members are:

President - Theresa Van Warmerdam

Vice President – Megan King

Secretary – Jen Anstey

3day Class Rep – Renee White

4day Class Rep - TBA

Lead Fundraiser –TBA

Social Media Promoter – Terrin LeClair & Jennifer Raiche

 Treasurer/Registrar - Dianne McCarthy

**Age of Children:**

* To enter the 3Day Program, children must be 3 before September 30th of that year.
* To enter the 4Day Program, children must be 3 ½ before September 30th of that year.
* Children must be potty trained and able to tend to their own toileting needs.
* **(No Pull-ups allowed) We have a 3-strike policy when it comes to potty training accidents**.

**Probation Period:**

* Each child is subject to a six-week probation period to determine his or her suitability for the program; the same holds true for the parents’ determining suitability of the program for their child(ren).

**School Days and Times:**

* 4 AM CLASS 4 morning classes (Mon., Tues., Wed., Thur.) 9:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.
* 3 PM CLASS 3 afternoon classes (Tues., Wed., Thurs.) 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Please arrive as close as you can to the start and finish times. The classroom doors are closed until the teachers are ready for arrival and dismissal.

**School Year:**

* The Preschool runs from mid September to the end of May unless otherwise determined by the Executive.
* The Preschool follows the Public-School Board Calendar and will notoperate during the weeks of Christmas Break, Teacher’s Convention and Spring Break.

**Orientation Days:**

* Orientation day will be set up through Sign up Genius and parents must attend the full class that day with their child. Siblings are not allowed during orientation day.

**Late Registrations:**

* Parents wishing to enroll their child(ren) during the school year will be required to spend the first class with their child(ren) for orientation.

**Parent volunteer responsibilities:**

* Volunteers will be needed for special events during the school year. We will give parent advance notice for when these events will be happening. Volunteers will be under the supervision of certified child development assistants and workers of the program to help with various small tasks assigned to them.

**Cleaning Night and Casino Shift:**

**Parents are required to complete 2 Cleaning Nights and 1 Casino Shift throughout the year. Cleaning nights take place every 3 weeks. Our casino will be during the first quarter (Jan., Feb., or March) of 2024. As soon as we are notified by AGLC with the dates of the Casino, we will communicate with families.**

Cleaning Night and Casino Shift dates will be available for sign up on-line at SignupGenius.com.

For Cleaning Nights please wear old clothes, as we will be working with bleach.

Casinos provide the greatest source of funding to our preschool for both replacing and updating equipment and supplies, as well as maintaining our current student fees. ***It is critical that parents or their designate attend their scheduled shift, as the casino will not open if all scheduled volunteers do not show up.***

If you are unable to attend your scheduled date, it will be your responsibility to find a replacement. A $500 deposit is required for this item and will be returned upon performance of requirements. The $500 deposit will be cashed if the above cleanings and casino are not fulfilled.

**Signup Genius:**

* Signupgenius.com is our on-line sign up tool that coordinates all of our volunteer requirements, special volunteer days, Casino, and Cleaning Nights.
* Instructions: Go to www.signupgenius.com, select login and create an account. The email address that was provided to the preschool at registration will be entered into the system and once you have set up your login you will be able to view “signup”.

**Telephones:**

The Preschool phone number is **780-791-7979. If it is an emergency please email thickwoodheightspreschool@hotmail.com or message in messenger.** Messages will be checked on the phone before and after class but not during. The Centerfire Place Main Office does nottake messages for the Preschool.

**Transportation:**

* Parents are responsible for getting their child(ren) to and from Preschool.
* If someone other than yourself will be picking your child up please notify the staff of this at the beginning of class to avoid any mix-ups.

**Weather Policy:**

The Preschool will be closed at the teacher’s discretion if the weather seems unfit for transporting children. The Class Rep /Teachers will call parents by 8:00 am on the morning of school.

**Clothing:**

* Please dress your child(ren) appropriately for play activity.
* Children will be doing “messy” work with paint and paste and although we try to ensure that they are wearing a paint smock, accidents are all too common.
* Please also consider the ease with which your child can use the washroom facilities (while tights on girls and belts on boys may look nice, they often have difficulty manipulating them.)
* **Children also require a pair of non-marking indoor running shoes with Velcro fasteners only.** These shoes must be brought to class each day due to a lack of storage.

**Backpack:**

* Your child’s backpack should be **large enough** to hold their shoes, lunch bag, and large pages of artwork.
* Please remember to check the mailbox after each class to see what surprises are waiting to be brought home for you. Your child’s work will be in the slot **UNDER** their name.
* Include a change of clothing in a plastic bag inside the backpack for emergencies.

**Lunch Bag:**

* Your child requires a lunch bag, which is separate from their big backpack. Please ensure that their **name** is on the lunch bag as well as on any plastic containers that you send in.

**CLEARLY MARK ALL OF YOUR CHILD(REN)’S BELONGINGS TO AVOID MIX-UPS!!!**

**Snacks:**

* Parents must provide their child(ren) with snacks that are **small and nutritious.**
* Please keep in mind that this is only a snack and the size of portions should be appropriate for snack time, which will take place approximately 1.5 hours after start of class.
* Snacks are to be **nutritious:** fruit, veggies, cheese, crackers, milk or juice.
* Snacks that are high in sugar such as chocolate snack bars, simulated fruit snacks or fruit roll ups, cookies, puddings etc. will be sent home with the child.

Due to life threatening allergies and choking hazards: peanut butter products and products which may contain traces of nuts ARE STRICTLY PROHIBITED. Grapes and small tomatoes must be cut in half, length ways and other snacks that are choking hazards such as popcorn and small fruit snacks are prohibited.

**Party Days:**

* Healthy snacks are still required.
* Parents will be asked to contribute to the party by signing up on Signup Genius.
* Licensing requires us to have all the ingredients used listed on the food that is brought in for party days.
* Please label all of your containers so they may be returned to you.
* Parents of children with **severe food allergies** will be required to send in a special snack for their child.

**Birthdays**:

* We love to celebrate your child’s special day at preschool! The program has a NO FOOD POLICY in regards to special treats being brought in from home.

**Immunization Policy:**

All children enrolled in our programs must have up to date immunizations (this does not include the Covid-19 vaccine).

**Illness Policy:**

The program will require parents to pick up their sick child from the program premises immediately after being contacted by a staff member. It is very important that you have an emergency contact person listed on your child(ren)’s registration form that can be contacted in the event you cannot be reached. A Staff member will remove the child from the program as soon as possible when staff knows or have reason to believe that a child may be suffering from a disease or illness. The staff member will assess the child with a thermometer (in their ear) for a fever and talk to the child about how he/she is feeling. That child does not return to the program until the license holder/ staff member is satisfied that the child no longer poses a health risk. Acceptable evidence may include a child is symptom free for at least 24 hours or a parent has a physicians note.

**Health Policy:**

If your child (ren) is showing signs of illness we ask you to keep him/her at home:

**A sick child is defined as a child who is unable to participate in the childcare program because he/she has any of the following symptoms:**

**Vomiting**

**A fever (38 degree Celsius)**

**Diarrhea or and**

**New unexplained rash**

**New unexplained cough**

**If a child requires greater attention than can be provided without compromising the care of other children in the program; or displays any other illness of symptom that a staff member knows or believes may indicate the child poses a health risk to persons on the program’s premises they will be sent home.**

**In the event a child becomes sick or injured while school is in session the child will be cared for in a separate room on a sick bed with the teacher/assistant teacher available to care for the child. Staff member will be record all the sick child’s information on our illness form. Parents will need to read and sign the illness form before taking the child home. The form will include the name of the child and date, the date the child was observed to be ill, name of the staff member who identified the child that was ill, time the parent was initially contacted, name of staff person who contacted the parent, time the child was removed from the program and the date the child returned to the program, symptom of the child illness, temperature reading taken and outcome. We will keep the illness files at the preschool for further reference.**

**Accident policy:**

Accident forms are filled out by a staff member and then discussed with parents when the parent(s) arrives to pick up the child. If child must be removed from the program for further medical attention a parent will be contacted immediately and 911 will be called. We will care for the child in a separate room on a sick bed (if we are able to do so)until parents or medical attention arrive directly supervised by a primary staff the following information child’s name, birthday date, what happened, was first aide needed, a description of how the teacher handled the accident, teacher and parents must sign and date each form. They forms are kept on file at the preschool site for further reference.

**Administration of Medicine:**

A health form signed by the parent and doctor accompanies medicine (epi-pens) and is kept in the storage area labelled “First Aid”, not accessible to children. The form includes what symptoms to look for before administering and directions to follow as to how to administer epi-pens. The epi-pen is labelled with child’s name and dosage directions. With both of our programs we do not administer any medicine other than for emergency situations. If any exceptions occur, then all medicine needs to be labelled with child’s name and dosage; and stored in a locked cabinet, not accessible to children. Where administration must be administered to a child, the name of the medication, the time of administration, the amount administered and the initials of the person who administered the medication must be recorded.

**Health Care:**

The license holder may provide or allow for the provision of health care to a child only if the written consent of the child’s parent has been obtained, or the health care is provided in the nature of first aid.

**Smoking/Vaping:**

No smoking or vaping around children, on site, during field trips, etc. No staff member or other person will smoke or vape on or around the premises at any time. Signs are posted inside and outside of the building. We are in a no smoking/vaping **building.**

**Arrival and Dismissal:**

* Children may enter the classroom when the preschool door has been opened.
* Children are dismissed one at a time after the class is all ready for home. Parents are asked to wait in the foyer at arrival and dismissal to ensure that all children are safe and accounted for.
* Parents of 3day class will come inside classroom and assist children to get ready for home.

**Discipline:**

* The teachers will set specific guidelines at the beginning of the year so children are aware of their limits.
* The preferred method of discipline is redirection, removal and discussion.
* There will be no physical discipline. Disciplinary action will be reasonable in the circumstances.
* Physical punishment, verbal or physical degradation or emotional deprivation is not allowed.
* We will not deny or threaten to deny any basic necessity. We will not use or permit the use of any form of physical restraint, confinement or isolation.

Inappropriate behavior and its resulting consequences will be dealt with at the discretion of the teacher(s). Discipline will be discussed with parents directly and parents will be expected to support the teacher(s)’ actions/decisions.

* The preschool does have a three strikes policy with regards to hitting other children, teachers or parent volunteers.
* First hitting incident results in a warning and parents will be told at dismissal time.
* Second hitting incident results in student being sent home with a note from the board.
* Third hitting incident results in being expelled from the program.

**Field Trips:**

* The program includes some outings and field trips during the school year. Parents will be asked to sign a consent form.
* Portable records and epi-pens will be taken to all off-site activities.
* For many of these trips we require extra parents to assist with supervision and/or transportation.
* The preschool is not insured for carpooling and as a note to parents, be aware of your own personal coverage for carpooling insurance.

**Fundraising Commitment:**

**Parents/Families are REQUIRED to sell raffle tickets throughout the year, up to our target amount of $20,000.** We encourage families to participate in additional fundraising activities brought forward by the fundraising team. Without fundraising the preschool would not be able to keep fees low and provided such a wide variety of activities to the children.

**FINANCIAL POLICIES**

**Registration Fees:**

* The registration fee includes an administration fee plus the first month’s fees, payable at the AGM. **This complete amount is NON- REFUNDABLE**. (i.e., $425 is Non-Refundable for the 3-day program and $475 is Non-Refundable for the 4-day program).

**Fees:**

* Fees are payable by post-dated cheque or pre-authorized debit. Fees will be collected on Orientation Day. Cheques are payable to Thickwood Heights Preschool Association and must be dated for the first of each month (no exceptions.) **After March 1st NO REFUNDS will be processed.**

**Cleaning/Casino Night Deposit:**

* A$500 deposit is required for each child and is payable at Orientation. This will not be deposited and the cheque will be returned following completion of this requirement. Two Cleaning Nights or One Casino shift is required per year per child.

**Fundraising Commitment:**

* **Parents/Families are required to sell raffle tickets (up to our goal of $20,000) throughout the year.**

**Cancellations:**

* One month’s written notice is required to cancel your child’s enrollment. Cancellation before the 1st day of school (Orientation Day) must be received in writing before September 1st and your monthly fees from October to May will be returned.

**This refund does not include the registration fees (as stated previously).**

**NSF Cheques:**

* Standard bank charges will be levied on any and all offenses. If after notification of an NSF cheque the Executive does not receive a new payment plus NSF fee within fifteen (15) days the Executive may consider expulsion of the child from the program until payment is received.

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| Monthly Payment of Fees:3 Day Program | **4 Day Program** |
| **Payment Scheme A:** One Time payment of $1800 payable by cash, cheque or EMT.**Payment Scheme B:** Monthly payments by Cheque. 8 cheques ($225 each) dated for the 1st of each month from October 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024.**Payment Scheme C:** Pre-Authorized Debit. $225 to be debited from your bank account on the first of each month from October 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024. | **Payment Scheme A:** One time payment of $2200 payable by cash, cheque or EMT.**Payment Scheme B**: Monthly payments by Cheque. 8 cheques ($275 each) dated for the first of each month from October 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024.**Payment Scheme C**: Pre-Authorized Debit. $275 to be debited from your bank account on the first of each month from October 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024. |

**YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL**

Preschool is usually a child’s first regular experience away from home unless your child has been in Day Care. You should expect that he/she will need some time to adjust to his/her new surroundings. Your child’s age and individual needs will be the measure as to how long the adjustment will take. Your awareness of the following may make the transition easier for your child.

1. Prepare your child for this new experience by talking to him/her and explaining what different activities he/she can expect. Explain about the staff (teachers), the duty parents, the other children, the toys, and the activities such as painting, crafts, circle time, etc.
2. Be prepared to stay with your child until he/she is comfortable enough for you to leave. Depending on your child’s needs you can discuss the duration of your stay with staff**. Usually a hug and kiss and a promise to be back soon is better than long lingering farewells. You can rest assured that if a teacher is unable to comfort your child that you will be called.**
3. Do not expect your child to adapt to new children without any apprehension. It is perfectly okay to have your child ease into the situation by sitting back and observing the interactions of the class.
4. Do not expect your child to jump into each and every activity. He/she may first want to observe the other children and when your child is ready he/she will participate. The teachers will encourage each child to attempt new things as they appear to be ready to meet the challenge.
5. When your child comes home from school show an interest in the day’s activities. Encourage your child to discuss the day’s events. If your child doesn’t have much to say that is okay as well.
6. When your child brings home a piece of “ART” refrain from asking what it is. It is better to ask your child if he/she would like to tell you about the picture. Quite often it is the process and not the “product” that your child has been learning from.
7. Do not become alarmed if your child acts up on special day. This is normal as the child feels much more secure and may feel that any and all actions are appropriate. He/She will outgrow this attitude and will adapt to sharing you with the other children. Above all, it is good to let your child know that when you have a special day that you are there to help the teachers and the other children so that your child doesn’t expect you to play with him/her.
8. Do not hesitate to discuss any concerns regarding the class, your child, or anything related to your Duty Days with the staff.
9. Please discourage your child from bringing toys or objects from home to Preschool. The Teachers will let you know what their specific policies are on this.