

Whitecourt Central School

Junior Kindergarten Parent Handbook



2023 - 2024

**We believe students are Central. Exploring. Questioning.
Discovering and Acquiring Skills through Play-Based Learning.**

Contact Information:

JK Instructors: Mrs. Krystina St. Louis

Whitecourt Central Office: 780 778-2136

School Principal: Mrs. Tammy McKeever

Assistant Principal: Mrs. Megan Cote

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WELCOME TO CENTRAL SCHOOL JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

School Motto

Moving Forward, Reaching Upward - Students are Central

Administrator's Message

Welcome to Whitecourt Central School! We know that the first day of school for students, especially those starting Junior Kindergarten, parents and staff is an exciting one but can be overwhelming as a new journey begins. We are excited to welcome our new families and young students to Whitecourt Central School. Our focus is on ensuring that your child has a wonderful first experience with the school setting.

We understand that parents often have mixed feelings about this new milestone for their young children however we are here to support you through this exciting transition. We are committed to supporting your child's social, emotional and learning needs within a positive, warm and welcoming school environment. Parents are a child's first and foremost important teacher and we value your involvement in supporting them through positive and successful learning experiences as well as in those times of turmoil as they begin to learn how to solve problems and explore their newly acquired skills. We encourage your involvement through ongoing communication with your child's instructor as well as volunteer opportunities in the classroom.

Your child will be participating in many exciting learning opportunities this year. Children will experience learning through art projects, music, literature, play and discovery activities, as well as physical movement that allow them to engage and connect to the world around them.

You can expect ongoing information and communication from your child's instructor and the school regarding events and experiences about the classroom and school. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself or your child's instructor.

I look forward to getting to know you, your child and watching them as they begin their new adventure where their skills will blossom.

Tammy McKeever, Principal

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Whitecourt Central Junior Kindergarten Philosophy

Whitecourt Central Junior Kindergarten (JK) supports each child's individual emotional, social, intellectual, creative and physical growth and development. We encourage children to explore, question, discover and acquire skills of critical thinking and collaboration in a warm and stimulating play-based learning environment. Children express interests and ideas, research for further information, reflect on the experience and form conclusions. Staff observe and respond accordingly to develop engaging and rich learning experiences that are challenging and relevant for children. Through this process, children develop confidence and independence.

Play is an active, child-initiated process that supports children's learning through physical, social, emotional and creative domains. A learning environment stimulates play through activities that extend learning into the areas of math, science, language, and literacy. Children come together to share what they have been engaged in and to celebrate successes and challenges. Staff are actively observing, supporting, and extending their play by asking open-ended questions related to the concepts being explored.

We believe that learning should be an adventure. Your child's learning experience is bound only by their imagination. Our learning approach encourages young children to explore, question and discover in a stimulating environment. Children express interests and ideas, research for further information, reflect on the experience and form conclusions. Through this explorative process, children develop confidence and independence with encouragement from others.



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Whitecourt Central Junior Kindergarten Goals

Our instructors strive to:

- Encourage positive social interactions – sharing, communicating, cooperating, and caring
- Enhance children’s self-esteem, self-sufficiency, and confidence.
- Stimulate cognitive development. We challenge the mind and spark curiosity.
- Prepare children for success in Kindergarten and future learning.
- Foster creativity in art, language, music, and thinking. We are process, not product oriented; we value originality!
- Introduce a wide variety of activities to exercise both large and small body muscles.
- Provide a language-rich environment through written and spoken word while encouraging their writing and storytelling.
- Promote a safe inclusive environment that respects and celebrates each child as a unique individual.



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Program Options

Program	Hours/Days	Eligibility Criteria	Fee Schedule
3 year old 2 day / week	9:10 am - 11:40 am Monday / Wednesday OR Tuesday / Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child must be 3 years of age in order to enter the program - Child must be toilet trained 	\$28/month
3 & 4 yr old 2 day / week	12:20 pm - 2:50 pm Monday / Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child must be 3 years of age in order to enter the program - Child must be toilet trained 	\$28/month
4 year old 2 day / week	12:20 pm - 2:50 pm Tuesday / Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child must be 4 years of age by December 31 of the current school year - Child must be toilet trained 	\$28/month
4 year old 4 day / week	9:10 am - 11:40 am OR 12:20 pm - 2:50 pm Monday - Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Child must be 4 years of age by December 31 of the current school year - Child must be toilet trained 	\$79.50/month

Payment Options

Parents may choose to:

1. Pay the full annual fee upon registration.
2. Have the payment equalized over eight separate cheques.
 - Cheques should be dated the 1st of each month for September, October, November, December, January, February, March, & April.
3. Create an account through School Cash Online in order to use debit or credit. Monthly reminders will be sent via e-mail to complete payments. For more information on school cash, visit <https://www.whitecourtcentral.ca/>, call the school at 780-778-2136 or e-mail central@ngps.ca



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Fee Requirements

- A first non-refundable payment of \$78 (2 day program) or \$129.50 (4 day program) is due at registration.
- NSF cheques will be charged the bank fee and cash must be used to replace funds within 2 weeks.
- A second NSF cheque will result in the child being removed from the program (unless there are extenuating circumstances).

Government Subsidy

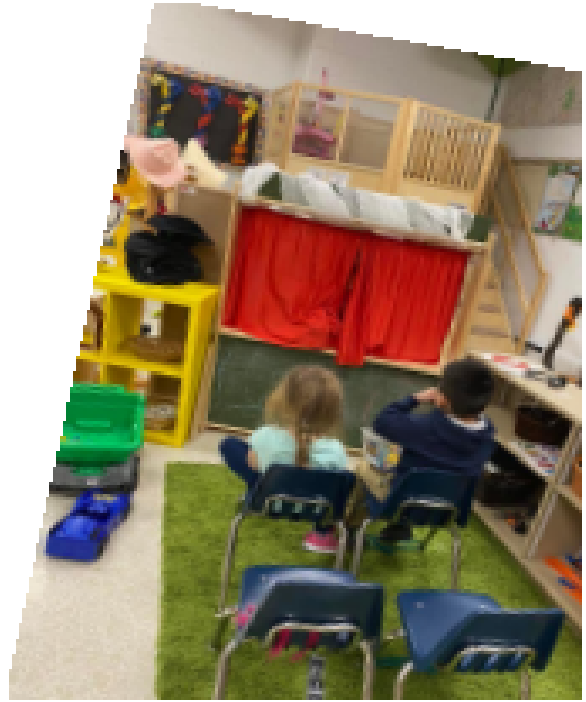
A child care subsidy is available through the Government of Alberta that may cover the cost of all or part of preschool fees. For more information or to apply visit [Child care subsidy | Alberta.ca](https://www.alberta.ca/child-care-subsidy)

Withdrawal / Late Registration Requirements

- One month's notice in writing is required to withdraw from the

program during the school year.

- Mid-year registrations will be accepted if:
 - the child meets the age requirements, and
 - there is program space available



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Parent/Guardian Involvement

Parents are an integral part of the JK Program, and their presence is welcomed and encouraged. There are many ways to volunteer in Junior Kindergarten such as joining the class for a community walk, sharing a hidden talent (play a musical instrument, puppeteer, etc.), cultural exploration (dances, songs, food, crafts), cutting out or prepping classroom materials, or helping out on special days/parties. Classroom instructors will begin welcoming parent helpers into the classroom in October, once students have settled into the classroom routine.

NGPS Parent Volunteer Guidelines

NGPS Administrative Procedure 390 supports a meaningful volunteer experience for parents. Volunteers are required to complete an [Annual Volunteer Registration Form](#) and be under the direct supervision of instructional staff or teachers at all times (unless a vulnerable sector check is submitted to the school).



Making Ice Cream

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PARENTS AS PARTNERS

Preparing Children for School

JK is an opportunity to teach children independence. A child who is independent is confident in themselves and in their relationships with others.

Parents can help prepare children for JK by:

- Speaking positively and enthusiastically about school.
 - Visit the school prior to the first day. Get familiar with the playground and front door entrance.
- Play school together at home.
 - Practice fastening buttons & zippers; hanging a coat on a hook; putting on shoes & coats.
 - Have a special routine that will help comfort your child, such as a special handshake or signal to say good-bye.
- Saying goodbye is easy for some children; for others there is apprehension. It is often best to leave promptly at the door and allow the

staff to handle the situation. The staff is experienced in handling separation anxiety and will be happy to discuss coping strategies.

- Dropping off and picking children up at the end of the program on time. To be the only child late or left at school after pick-up can be upsetting.



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Parent Communication

As a parent, you play the most important role in your child's life! We welcome open communication with our JK staff. Please share your child's moods, fears, likes and dislikes, sleeping, eating habits, illnesses, traumatic and joyful events.

This information will help us gain a better understanding of your child to enable us to make his or her experience a positive one.

Parents can expect the following communication from JK instructors:

- A monthly calendar outlines the class schedules, important events, and the Parent Volunteer Roster.
- A monthly email will be sent by instructors
- The school's website, <https://www.whitecourtcentral.ca/>, provides

general information about the school and current updates on events. The school newsletter is available monthly on the school website.

Parent Newsletters - Facebook page

All newsletters and classroom information will be e-mailed to parents and a physical copy will be sent home. Classroom photos will also be shared on the private Junior Kindergarten facebook page, following all FOIP guidelines.

Home-School Communication

Communication is strongly encouraged. Parents are asked to direct concerns directly to the JK instructors, JK supervisor or school administrators.

Role	Name	Email	Telephone
JK Instructor	Mrs. Krystina St. Louis	krystina.stlouis@ngps.ca - please use for all JK communication (email will be checked before and after classes)	780-778-2136 Call for urgent messages

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Arrival/ Exit Procedures

Please arrive at the front foyer (office), 5 minutes prior to class time. Please sign your child in on the class checklist provided while waiting for an Instructor to let the class inside. The students will walk down to the classroom together as a group.

When picking up your child, please wait at the front foyer (office). You must use the clipboard at the door to sign your child out and a staff member will bring your child out to meet you! Please ensure that your child is picked up promptly at the end of class. Staff will be at the front door and will dismiss children when we see their parent or caregiver.

JK Class	Drop-off / Sign-In Time	Pick-Up Time
AM classes	9:10 am	11:40 am
PM classes	12:20 pm	2:50 pm

Attendance

Parents should send an email to krystina.stlouis@ngps.ca or call the school office at 780-778-2136 if their child will not be attending. Please let us know the reason your child is not attending to help us monitor the number of students who are ill each day.

Alternate Transportation Plans

To ensure the safety of all children we ask that the school is notified if there is a change in your child's transportation arrangements from school. Please notify your child's instructor, indicating alternate plans via a written note, email or call the school office. In situations where custody agreements are in place, we ask that you contact the school office as soon as possible.

Snack Program

Nutrition breaks are a necessity for children. JK students will need to bring a healthy snack and drink. Snack suggestions include:

- raw fruit or vegetables
- crackers and cheese
- muffins or granola bars
- natural fruit juices or water

Parents are asked not to send candy, gum, or soft drinks to school.

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Food Restrictions

Due to severe allergies, class treats (ie: birthday, Halloween, Easter) are not permitted to be shared with students. Parents will be informed of any other potential classroom food restrictions for snack items.

Outdoor Guidelines

Outdoor activities are an opportunity for children to run and jump, roll and throw, skip and hop, developing large motor skills. It is also a time to share, develop relationships with their peers and 'feel' the weather. The class will often go outside for about 15 minutes unless it is colder than -15 degrees Celsius, wind chill considered. Parents will be informed in advance for outdoor activities. We ask that children are dressed appropriately, including snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens in the winter months.

Note: Be aware that we are unable to accommodate requests for students to remain indoors due to supervisory requirements. All students must go outside, weather permitting.

Field Trips

Staff will inform parents of walking field trips to local parks or around the neighborhood.

Clothing

- Clearly label all clothing, shoes, scarves, mittens, hats, etc. with your child's name.
- For safety, avoid clothing with drawstrings or hood strings which may catch on playground equipment. Neck warmers are also recommended instead of scarves.
- Send a spare set of clothing in your child's backpack daily.

Footwear

- Suitable footwear for weather conditions is needed.
- All children are asked to remove their outdoor footwear upon entry to the school.
- Children require indoor shoes that can also be worn in the school gym. These shoes will not be stored in the classroom but will go home daily.

School Advisory Council

In the fall, parents are invited to join the School Council. At that time, the group selects/votes in a new executive. The role of the Council is to advise and consult with the school administration on matters relating to the school. Please visit <https://www.whitecourtcentral.ca/> for more information.

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Administrative Information

Incidents/Accidents

The Principal will be advised of any problems, accidents, unusual incidents or unsafe situations. The Principal will immediately report serious injuries, illnesses or incidents to the Superintendent of Schools and the Regional Child Care office.

Program Unit Funding (PUF)

Students with special needs may qualify for Program Unit Funding. Please contact the office to discuss this program.

Records:

Upon registration of a child for a JK program, the parent will complete a registration form providing the following information:

- The child's name, date of birth and home address,
- The parent's name, home address, and telephone number
- The name, address and telephone number of an emergency contact person

- If medication is administered (See Medication in Health and Safety section), particulars regarding health care provided to the child including written consent of the child's parent.
- Other relevant health information including immunizations and allergies.

Staff

Child development staff will have Government of Alberta Child Care Certification. Staff have a verification of a criminal record check, updated every three years. Two or more staff members will have a Standard First Aid certificate.

Supervision

- During classroom and outdoor play/activities, the primary staff observes carefully and acts responsively to develop engaging and rich learning experiences that are challenging and relevant for children.
- Staff ensure the physical environments are safe and orderly, reporting deficiencies to the Principal.
- JK staff actively supervise children to ensure their safety and well-being. All children are accounted for both on and off the school premises at all times.

Health & Safety

Behaviour Management Policy

Young students like playing and being with other children as they learn how to get along with others. In early years, children often see things from their own point of view. They think that everyone else sees things the same as they do and while they can follow the rules of simple games, will often change the rules. They need guidance to learn ways to sort out disagreements appropriately. Over time, they will show an increasing ability to understand the feelings of others.

Play is a tool for developing social and problem solving skills in the preschool setting. Behavior management and modeling supports appropriate and positive interactions between children and between children and adults. The instructor will model, praise, guide and redirect to achieve appropriate behaviors. Any child disciplinary action will be reasonable in the circumstance.

In JK we use **positive behaviour management methods** in order to assist children with self-control and emotional regulation. Child behavioural situations are handled with empathy and redirection, through modeling and encouragement of appropriate behaviour, and with the use of visual supports.

If a student exhibits persistent inappropriate behavior, a meeting will take place between the JK staff, program supervisor and parents in order to create a positive behavior plan for the child. This plan may encourage all parties to access community resources. JK staff will work diligently to create an environment and plan that encourages the development of skills necessary for success in school. Every opportunity will be explored to assist the child in maintaining their placement. Whitecourt Central School reserves the right to suspend or remove a child from the program if persistent unmanageable behaviors continue.



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Medical Considerations

<p>1. General Illness</p>	<p>Children, staff and any adult visitors to the school should be feeling well and symptom-free before entering the space.</p>
<p>The home will be contacted if any symptoms of illness are observed at school or if the child complains of illness. Parents will arrange for immediate pick-up of their child from the school. The child will be brought to the Medical Room in the office and will be closely supervised until pick-up arrives.</p>	
<p>2. Communicable Disease</p>	<p>Parents should advise the school and the Health Unit if their child has a communicable disease (ie. pink eye, measles, mumps, chicken pox, tuberculosis). Children with illnesses that pose a health risk to others are not permitted at school until the contagious period is over. Parents must seek the advice of their doctor to determine when their child can return.</p>

<p>If a child is suspected of having a communicable disease, the parent will be asked to pick up their child. The child will wait in the Medical Room in the office under the supervision of a primary staff member. The Health Unit will be requested to provide guidance to ensure the health and safety of the other children. A note will advise all parents if children have had contact with a communicable disease.</p>	
3. Head Lice	<p>Parents with a child with head lice and/or nits must pick up their child from school when notified to do so. The child may return to school after treatment.</p>
<p>A letter will inform all parents that head lice are present in the classroom.</p>	
4. Allergies	<p>Parents are to advise the school on the registration form of any allergies and symptoms. A medical information form should be completed and returned to the school.</p>
5. <i>First Aid</i>	<p>Parents must give written consent at the time of registration for staff to provide First Aid.</p>
<p>Staff members have a 'Standard First Aid for Children Certificate'. Staff will complete an Accident Report, a copy of which will be provided to the parent, any time First Aid is used.</p>	
6. <i>Supervision for Sick Children</i>	<p>Parents of children who become ill during class will be contacted and requested to pick up their child.</p>
<p>The sick child will be escorted to the Medical Room in the office and a primary staff member will provide supervision until the parent signs their child out.</p>	

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Medical Assistance

The instructors will adhere to [NGPS Administrative Procedure 703](#) and the [Child Care Licensing Regulation](#) to ensure the health and safety of the students.

Severe Injury

As per [NGPS Administrative Procedure 706](#), an assessment and appropriate medical response to the situation and extent of injuries will be conducted by staff.

Medication

Junior Kindergarten staff will adhere to [NGPS Administrative Procedure 714](#) regarding the administration of medication. No drugs can be administered in the classroom with the exception of anaphylactic cases.

Anaphylaxis

As outlined in [NGPS Administrative Procedure 716](#), while schools cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, we will take every reasonable step to ensure a safe environment for students with life-threatening allergies.

- It is the responsibility of parent with an anaphylactic child to identify their child to the Principal and to ensure their child wears an allergy alert bracelet.
- The school will require from the parent written information regarding:
 - The foods that trigger an anaphylactic reaction.
 - A treatment protocol, signed by the student's doctor.
 - Any changes in the student's condition.
 - Permission to post photographs and medical information in key locations; classroom, school bus, staff room, etc.

School Evacuation/Sheltering For Protection (Lock Down) Procedures

As per [NGPS Administrative Procedure 740](#), throughout the year students may be involved in practice drills for fire or threat. It is important for parents to understand the following differences in school security procedures in the event of an emergency.

Lockdown: A lockdown response is initiated by the Site Supervisor when imminent danger is present on the site and the safety of students and staff is threatened. External and internal doors are locked and the movement of persons in a building is restricted: there is no entry or departure from rooms or the building.

Hold and Secure: A hold and secure response is usually initiated by law enforcement when there is a situation taking place in the community that is not

related to the site. External doors are locked and monitored and the movement of persons within the building continues as normal, although there is no entry or departure in or out of the building.

Shelter in Place: A shelter in place response is initiated by the Site Supervisor or first responders when there is an environmental or weather-related situation. External doors are locked and monitored, intake/exhaust systems may be turned off and the movement of persons within the building is adjusted according to the situation.

Evacuation: An evacuation response is initiated by the Site Supervisor or first responders when it is safer to be outside of the building than inside the site. External and internal doors are unlocked and the movement of persons is directed to outside of the building at the designated meeting place.