

# Onoway Elementary

# Kindergarten

# Handbook

2025-26

*“Let the Journey  
Begin”*



Northern Gateway  
Public Schools

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## WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN AT ONOWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Entering school for the first time is a pivotal point in a child's life. We are pleased to be sharing this exciting experience with you and will do our best to help this be a happy and productive transition for you and your child. Our goal throughout your child's school experience will be to meet their educational needs in a supportive setting. This handbook provides some basic information about kindergarten and the school in general. We hope this will be helpful to you as you prepare your child for this new adventure. We look forward to working with you in the years ahead as we pursue our common goal, the best possible education and environment for your child.

### OES MOTTO

#### TOUCHING TOMORROW TODAY

We are a community minded school with a strong and active School Council. The Onoway Elementary School Council has a valuable role to play in the operation of our school activities. New parents are encouraged to join. See website for more information and meeting dates.

At OES we aim to nurture the potential of all students in an environment that values self-worth, relationships and resilience.

Students are given opportunities to develop at their own pace and challenge themselves in a safe and supportive environment.

### STAGGERED ENTRY

At OES we will be doing a staggered entry for our kindergarten students. You will be contacted closer to the start date to determine your child's first day of school. This information will be emailed to you so keep a lookout for it. The benefits of a staggered entry is to learn the classroom routines and explore the school and classroom with a reduced class size.



### SCHOOL SUPPLIES

If you have ordered from Write-On Stationery, your child's supplies will be delivered directly to the classroom in August.



WRITE-ON STATIONERY

If you are purchasing them yourself, please send them to school with your child on their first half day.

**Students will NOT be sharing crayons, pencils, etc so please label all of their personal items.**



## COMMUNICATION

Communication is crucial for us to be able to build relationships. We will do everything we can to keep you informed about what is happening at school and to address your questions and concerns.

Email, text, and instant messaging through an app called Remind will be the primary communication tools used. More information on Remind will be provided at the beginning of the school year. Please ensure your teacher has the email account you plan on checking everyday.

A plastic pouch that the school has purchased will be used as a 'mailbag' for student work/correspondence/information. It will be sent home daily in your child's backpack. **Please check their "mailbag" and return it to school in their backpack everyday.** Be sure to update the office and your teacher when you have a change of address, email, phone number or your child will be absent.

## STUDENT SAFETY

All doors are locked during the day, except for the Front Entrance. All visitors must report to the office. Classroom doors lock when shut. Safe playground procedures are in place.

Supervisors are diligent and always visible with their yellow striped vests. Safety measures are in place for regular Fire Drills and Hour Zero Lock Down Procedures.



Onoway Elementary is an **APPLE ALLY SCHOOL**. We empower students to make healthy choices and we work with them to create positive experiences. All healthy initiatives reflect our school's specific needs. Initiatives can include:

- Monthly campaigns
- Wellness challenges
- Movement breaks
- Non-food rewards
- Mental health education
- Healthy classroom celebrations
- Health-focused student leadership opportunities



APPLE Schools is a health promotion project with the vision of healthy kids in healthy schools. The project is student-centered, evidence-based, and unique in Canada. It improves thousands of students lives annually by supporting healthy eating, physical activity, and mental health habits. APPLE Schools does not dictate policy. Each province/territory and school district has its own guidelines and policies that support wellness. APPLE Schools staff work with our school using these existing guidelines and policies to support healthy school environments. Learn more about APPLE Schools at [appleschools.ca](http://appleschools.ca)

## KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT PLAN

We will be developing a classroom community where students feel accepted and can take ownership and pride in themselves and their classroom. Students are encouraged to be responsible, respectful, safe, helpful and courteous to each other. They are also encouraged to challenge themselves and appreciate their gifts, talents and accomplishments. Our school embraces the Seven Sacred Teachings which are based on traditional Indigenous teachings of love, respect, humility, courage, honesty, wisdom and truth. These teachings help students understand important character traits and how upholding these values helps them grow as individuals while positively contributing to their community. Other Basic Kindergarten expectations are as follows:

1. Listen and follow directions
2. Keep your hands and feet in your own space
3. Raise your hand to talk so not to interrupt others
4. Move safely from place to place
5. Clean up and take care of personal and school belongings



## OVERARCHING KINDERGARTEN THEMES

The Kindergarten program aims to develop independence, awareness, and self esteem in a fun and stimulating environment. The program provides routines and activities to stimulate children's thinking, promote both literacy and numeracy development, fine and gross motor skills, social interactions, relationships and independent behaviour. Kindergarten students are provided with opportunities to:

- Explore in a fun environment
- Grow and develop at their own pace
- Challenge themselves in a safe and supportive environment
- Develop knowledge and skills and attitudes in a variety of areas
- Demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills
- Practice Self- Regulation Skills
- Develop desirable personal characteristics and decision-making skills
- Know how to learn and work independently and as part of a team
- Demonstrate competence in using information technologies
- Demonstrate initiative, leadership, flexibility and persistence
- Have the desire to be a lifelong learner

## LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

### Everyday students will:

Work on using effective communication skills.

Listen to and join in the reading of stories, songs, and poems.

Respond to stories through discussion, art, drama, music and movement.

Explore letters, sounds, words and experiment with writing

Participate in reading activities (individual, small and large group).

## PHYSICAL SKILLS & WELLBEING

### Students will:

Develop muscular control and coordination

Develop a sense of rhythm

Learn and practice safety rules

Learn to care for their body and value physical health and nutrition

Learn about diversity and discover their unique traits and talents

Develop sportsmanship, fair play and perseverance skills

## CREATIVE EXPRESSION

### Your child will have the opportunity to:

Explore through movement

Learn about various instruments and sounds

Explore different art media- paint, clay crayons, etc.

Express themselves creatively through music, movement, art and drama.

Experience joy and satisfaction from self-expression and success

## MATH

### Children have the opportunity to:

Develop number concepts

Count and match numerals

Sort, classify, measure & pattern

Recognize and describe properties on 2D shapes and 3D objects

## SCIENCE

### Children have the opportunity to:

Examine the properties of different objects.

Explore how objects, humans, and animals move.

Interpret instructions in various environments.



## SOCIAL STUDIES

### Children will have the opportunity to:

Understand place and time

Explore the relationships between people, places and time periods.

Distinguish between needs and wants

Investigate different leadership roles in communities.

Explore self, others, and history through traditions and cultures.

Learn about organizations and how decisions are made.

Learn how cooperation helps groups achieve goals.

Explore how people can work together effectively.

# ABC's of KINDERGARTEN

**A** **ABSENCES:** If your child will be absent or late please call the office or send an email through the attendance notification tab on the Onoway Elementary School Website. Regular attendance in Kindergarten is essential.

**ARRIVAL:** School doors open at 8:40 a.m. School starts and attendance will be taken at 8:57 a.m. If your child arrives after 8:57 am they will enter through the front entrance and report to the office to get a welcome slip to provide to their teacher. The Kindergarten door locks automatically at preset times. Training will take place so students know what to do if they arrive and the Kindergarten door is already locked.

**ASSEMBLIES:** Whole school assemblies are usually held during the last week of each month. Updates about assemblies will be sent to parents on a monthly basis.

## **ASSESSMENT**

Assessment is a natural, ongoing and important part of daily learning. By questioning and talking to the students, listening to the language they use, and observing their behavior, we gain information about your child's level of skill and understanding. Assessment in Kindergarten is based on observation during learning activities, centers, projects, independent work and informal and formal interviews with students. Students will be assessed according to their individual progress. Notes and checklists are used to record observations. Sample work and informal assessment tools are collected and gathered in a student file. Some formal testing will also be used to assess each child's progress. Assessments will directly reflect student's progress and learning in relation to the curricular outcomes.

**B** **BATHROOMS:** The students are free to go to the bathroom as the need arises. We have our own separate bathroom located in between our two classrooms, as well as access to the washrooms directly across from our classrooms in the atrium.

**BIRTHDAYS:** Birthdays will be recognized in class by the teacher and birthday children will receive a book from the school on their birthday. Please try and make personal birthday party arrangements outside of school, if possible.

**BUS NOTES:** If your child will not be on the bus at the end of the day, make sure you have notified your bus driver of this change. If it is an emergency you can notify the office early in the day and they will get a note to your bus driver.

**BUSSING:** For the first few weeks of school, Kindergarten students will be met at the buses in the morning and taken to their bus at the end of the day. Parents are to notify your child's teacher or/and the office of bussing changes as soon as possible to avoid confusion at the end of the day.

Students will not be given permission to ride home on a different bus other than their own. If your child will not be on the bus at the end of the day, make sure you have notified your bus driver of this change. If it is an emergency, you can notify the office early in the day and they will get a note to your child's bus driver.

**C** CALENDAR: Please check the school calendar/website on a regular basis.

Occasionally, changes and updates are made to the year's schedule. \* The Friday rotations may not always alternate evenly. Check carefully!

CELEBRATIONS: Special celebrations, such as Halloween, will be recognized in the classroom by doing theme-related activities. Notifications will be sent to parents prior to each event.

CELEBRATION OF LEARNING: Students and their parents will participate in "Student-Led Conferences" in March. During this time students will demonstrate their abilities in various curricular tasks.

CLOTHING/ EXTRA CLOTHING: Please ensure your child has appropriate clothing for the weather. Sometimes Kindergarten children require a change in clothing during the day, due to accidents. Please send a set of dry clothes in a labeled zip lock bag that we can keep at school in case of an emergency.

**D** DIFFERENTIATION: Because all children are unique they may be at varied instructional levels. Instruction will be administered so the individual needs of all students can be met.

**E** EMAIL will be the primary form of communication. Please check it regularly.

**F** FIELD TRIPS: Physical field trips off the school property are great opportunities to enrich student learning. You will be notified with a letter and permission form when necessary.

FOOTWEAR: Students need inside running shoes that will stay at school. They should be good for doing physical activities. Students **MUST** be able to put shoes on and take them off independently. If your child cannot tie their shoes on their own, please send velcro shoes.

**G** **GROWTH MINDSET:** We work to train our brains to have a growth mindset.

This means we understand that it's okay to make mistakes, that we learn best by doing hard things, and that effort is more important than perfection. Look for more information throughout the year to help foster your child's growth mindset.

**H** **HOMEWORK:** Students are encouraged to participate in nightly learning activities (about 10 minutes each night) by going over work their child brings home, reading to them, listening to them "read" or retell the stories in their own words, review letter sounds, practice writing (their name, letters, numbers, words, sentences, stories), practice sight words and number concepts.

**HOT LUNCH:** Students will have the opportunity to purchase a hot lunch once every other month. You will be notified when your child's class has an opportunity to order. School Council takes this project on and local businesses usually provide the food.

**HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS:** It is a fact that we learn best when we make connections to our everyday lives, and a holiday is often the most important thing happening in a kindergartner's world. In our classroom, we use that to our advantage! We use the excitement of holidays and seasons to make learning more fun, so we do many holiday-themed games and activities. We also have class parties for Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day.

**I** **INDEPENDENCE** is a goal for students because it builds self-esteem and self-confidence. Kindergarten students are very capable of doing many things on their own and they are encouraged to do as much as they can for themselves. Please work on the following skills with your child: putting on outside coats and boots, zipping their coat and packing and zipping their own backpacks.

**ILLNESS:** Being in a classroom and school, surrounded by a lot of children, can lead to germs spreading rather quickly. Unfortunately, no matter how much we ask that the students wash their hands...kids get sick. If your child is sick, call or email the school or your child's teacher to let them know the situation and keep your child home.

**J** **JUICE BAR:** The school has a juice bar which provides snacks that can be purchased with cash by students at their lunch break. More information on the juice bar will be available in the fall.



**K** **KEEP CONNECTED:** Read your emails, check the Remind app, check the OES and Northern Gateway websites and follow OES on Facebook. Check your child's mailbag and backpack each night. Talk to your child about their day.

**L** **LIBRARY:** Your child will meet with the Learning Commons Teacher and have access to a variety of library books. They will be able to sign one book out per week.

**LUNCH/SNACKS/MICROWAVE:** Students will be given time to eat a morning snack, and an afternoon snack, in addition to their midday lunch. Please send choices such as yogurt, cheese, fruit, and veggies that are nutrient rich and provide greater stamina for learning. Please ensure food items do not require boiled water. To avoid unnecessary contamination, it is important that students are able to open their own food packages and containers. Please practice with them at home. Ability to use a microwave in class will be determined at a later date.

**M** **MAILBAGS:** Student work/correspondence/information will be sent home daily in your child's "mailbag". **Please check your child's "mailbag" and return it to school in their backpack everyday.**

**MEDICINE:** Medications shall not be distributed to any students by the classroom teacher. In exceptional circumstances, prescription medication may be administered by the principal or designate. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide sufficient reason, in writing, for special consideration. Please do not send medication to school with your Kindergarten child.

**MONEY:** Please ensure any money sent to school with your child for any reason needs to be placed in their mailbag, in an envelope or zip-lock bag, labeled with their name. Be sure to send a note along stating what the money is for. Use the School Cash Online system whenever possible.

**N** **Newsletter** will be emailed and posted on the OES website.

**O** **OUTSIDE RECESSES:** We have 60 minutes of outdoor recess every day, unless it's raining or the wind chill is below -25 degrees. Please make sure your child has the appropriate outdoor gear for the weather. Kindergarten children are new to the school environment so extra care is taken to ensure their personal safety while on the playground. Children will be supervised during all outside breaks by OES staff and safe play is encouraged.

**P** PICK UP/DROP OFF: Students are dismissed at 3:25 p.m. All Kindergarten students exit from the outside Kindergarten door. If someone different will be picking your child up after school you must let your child's teacher know by sending a note or calling the office. \*All students are picked up or dropped off in the Parent Pick Up Loop.

**Q** QUESTIONS: If you have any questions or concerns about anything that's happening in the classroom, please email or call your child's teacher.

**R** REPORTING OF STUDENT PROGRESS: OES uses PowerSchool, an online reporting system. Additional information regarding this system will be forwarded to you at a later date. In-person Parent-Student-Teacher Interviews are normally held once in the fall and then again in the spring. Dates and details regarding Interviews will be sent out prior to the scheduled dates. Informal communication about your child's progress and behaviours will be ongoing throughout the year via PowerSchool, email, phone calls, notes and written reports. Formal report cards will be distributed late fall, mid winter and end of June.

READ, READ, READ: The most important thing you can do to help your child be successful in school is to read aloud with him/her at least 10 minutes a day! Research shows that the more that kids are read to, the bigger their vocabulary... when they have a bigger vocabulary, it's easier for them to recognize and comprehend words as they begin reading on their own. When reading is easier, school work is easier!

**S** SCHOOL CANCELLATION: The school is always open for students when buses are canceled but you are responsible for transporting your child to and from school. If your child is a bus student and buses are canceled due to weather or road conditions, you will be notified by your bus driver. It will also be updated on the Northern Gateway Public Schools website.

SCHOOL COUNCIL: The Onoway Elementary School Council meets monthly. All parents with children attending Kindergarten to grade 7 are invited to attend these meetings. See school website for meeting dates.

SIGN-OUT POLICY: A sign-out book is kept in the office at the school. Any parent, guardian, or designated person taking a student from school is required to contact the office in advance to arrange for the child to leave. You have to let the office know when you will be arriving in the Pick Up Loop. You are also responsible for letting your bus driver know.

**SKATING:** TBA

**T** **TECHNOLOGY:** The Kindergarten class has a set of iPads that will be used for various learning activities throughout the year. The Kindergarten Technology fee is due by September 30. Payment can be made with School Cash Online in September.

**U** **UNITED** students progress better when parents and school are united and work together to ensure positive growth and progress in students.

**V** **VOLUNTEERING** Parents play a central role in the lives of their children and your support of school activities makes your child feel important and sends a message that you value school. A volunteer form will be sent home at the beginning of the year. If you are unable to volunteer in the classroom, you can still support your child in the following ways.

**Home support**

- reading to your child everyday
- prepping materials at home
- providing nutritious lunches
- checking backpack for notes
- reinforcing proper pencil grasp
- establishing regular routines
- helping your child print their name (only first letter capitalized)
- donating materials for class projects

**W** **WEBSITE:** The Onoway Elementary website is an important source of information. The website address for the school is: <http://onowayelementary.ca/>

**WEATHER ANNOUNCEMENTS** Bus cancellations and school closure decisions are made by division office. They will also be posted on the Northern Gateway Public School's website.

**WATER BOTTLES** Students are required to bring their own personal water bottle - labeled with their name.

**X** **EXTRA:** Send an extra set of clothes with your child. They will be kept at school in case of an emergency.

**EXIT:** Kindergarten students always enter and exit through the outside Kindergarten door next to the parent pick up loop. If your child is arriving late, they will enter through the front entrance.

**Y** **YOU:** Remember that **YOU** are your child's first and most important teacher. You can help to make your child feel successful this year by discussing your child's school day with them. When talking to your child about their day, question them using words such as who, what, where and when. Ask them specific questions about their day (who did you play with at recess, what letter did you learn today, which center did you play at today, what did you enjoy most or find most difficult about your day, what are you getting better at). These questions cause children to reflect on their learning which in turn helps them remember new information. Don't let them say "nothing". Show enthusiasm for their learning.

**Z** **ZZZZ:** Kindergarten is fun, but it's also very demanding. In order for students to be able to do their best learning it is important that they get plenty of rest.