



Family Handbook





Table of Contents

Welcome from the Executive and Associate Directors	4
Vision	4
Mission	4
Core Values	4
Guiding Principles	4
The Board of Directors	4
Not-For-Profit Society and Registered Charity	4
Programming	5
Renfrew Educational Services Program Strengths	6
Safe and Caring School	6
Our Programs	7
Early Childhood Services (ECS)	7
<i>Learning Through Play</i>	7
<i>Family Oriented Programming (In-home Programming)</i>	7
Specialized Services for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (SAS)	8
Integrated Services for Children with Motor Disabilities (ISMD)	8
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Diagnosis and Intervention Services	9
LIFE Skills Program	9
After School Fitness	9
Community Services	9
Elementary Education Grades 1 to 6	10
<i>Programming and Assessment</i>	10
<i>Junior Leaders</i>	10
<i>Six years at Renfrew Educational Services in the Elementary Education Program</i>	10
<i>Entrance of Students</i>	10
If Your Child Has Special Needs	11
Therapy Services	11
Individual Program Plan (IPP)	11
Teams	12
Family Support	12
Diversity	12
Transition	12
Keeping You Informed	13
Student Records	13
Literacy	14
Positive Behaviour Support	14
Policies and Procedures	15
<i>Appeal Process</i>	15
<i>Suspension/Expulsion - Grades 1 to 6</i>	15
Snack	16
Peanut-restricted School	16
Birthdays	16
What to Wear?	16

We Welcome You to Be Involved	17
Parent Advisory Council (PAC)	17
Summer Programs	17
Special Events	18
<i>ECS Programs</i>	18
<i>Elementary Education Program</i>	18
<i>SAS Program</i>	18
Fundraising	18
Bus Transportation	19
<i>Buses</i>	19
<i>Cancellation of Buses</i>	19
<i>Scheduling</i>	19
<i>Updating Files</i>	19
<i>Safety</i>	19
Parent Transportation	19
Pick-up from School	19
Field Trips, Classroom Visitors & Special Events	20
Library	20
Photo Permission	20
Keeping Us Informed	20
<i>Away today?</i>	20
<i>Newsletter?</i>	20
<i>Changes?</i>	20
<i>Ideas? Concerns?</i>	20
Safety and Health	21
First Aid & CPR	21
Injuries	21
Fire Drills	21
Medication	21
Illness	21
Security Checks	21
Equipment	21
Sun Safety	21
General Information	22
Fee Structure	22
<i>Payment Options</i>	22
Renfrew Locations	23
<i>Where Programs are Located</i>	23
School Days & Times	23
<i>Elementary Education Program</i>	23
<i>ECS Program</i>	23
<i>Classroom Schedules</i>	23
Staff Development - Supporting a Quality Program	23

Welcome

from the Executive and Associate Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors, management and staff of Renfrew Educational Services, we welcome you and your family. We are delighted that your child will be participating in our programs. We are committed to ensuring that every child who enters our doors has the opportunity to flourish.

We hope this handbook will help answer some of your questions. Please keep it as a handy reference.

At Renfrew, our doors are always open. We encourage families to ask questions and to stay in touch with staff. We recognize the vital role you play in your child's learning and development, and working together with you is a priority for us.

Thank you for entrusting your child to our care. Our goal is to help your child soar!



Janice McTighe
Executive Director



Kim LaCourse
Associate Executive Director

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A voluntary Board of Directors governs Renfrew Educational Services. Board members represent the interests of all people served by this organization. Their primary function is to create the policies that ensure that Renfrew is run effectively, legally and ethically. They are trustees for the organization, enabling us to deliver exemplary programs and services. The Board is responsible for long range plans and vision.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT SOCIETY AND REGISTERED CHARITY

Renfrew Educational Services is a not-for-profit society and registered charity. The program began in 1974 as a community Kindergarten class located in the Renfrew community. There are now 5 locations in Calgary.

Our Charitable Registration Number:
107886129 RR0001.

Vision

To create exceptional learning experiences, opening a world of possibilities for every child, while welcoming and supporting families.

Mission

We exist to serve children and families and to provide the best possible programs and services so that children can grow and work towards their potential.

Core Values

- Respect for each child and family
- Commitment to continual learning and innovation
- Dedication to safe and caring environments
- Commitment to meet the needs of children, families and staff
- Honouring our legacy into the future

Guiding Principles

- We believe that early intervention is crucial to the development of every child.
- We believe that children deserve the best intervention and program planning to reach their full potential.
- We believe that both the dignity and worth of the family must be respected and enhanced at all times.
- We believe in family-centred practice.
- We believe that individuals and families are unique, both culturally and economically. Our programs are flexible and responsive to these inherent differences.
- We are committed to supporting professional staff who possess the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to meet the needs of children and their families.

Programming

"Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand."

We follow Alberta Education's curriculum for our Elementary Education Program and the Alberta Education Kindergarten Program Statement for our ECS. Programs are adapted and modified to meet the needs of our very young children and to provide for the special education needs of individual children.

Renfrew Educational Services follows the philosophy of **Developmentally Appropriate Practice**. Twelve Principles of Developmentally Appropriate Education as established by the Griffin Center for Human Development (1993) are as follows:

1. A child seeks to learn as a whole person, constructing intellectual, physical, social and emotional understandings through interaction with the environment.
2. Learning is something a child does, not something that is done to the child.
3. A child learns through experimentation and social interaction.
4. Teaching strategies and classroom practices are based on authentic knowledge of the developing child.
5. Learning tasks are relevant and meaningful to the child.
6. Concrete and sensory materials are the natural learning media of children and are purposefully used in their education.
7. Individual learning styles and intelligences are nurtured through a variety of learning experiences and cooperative ventures.
8. Thinking, problem-solving, commitment, and self-discipline are promoted in an atmosphere of trust and structured freedom.
9. Each child is unique, lives in a unique environment, and will live a unique life. Teaching and grouping decisions reflect this diversity.
10. Learning is a life-long process to which schools contribute.
11. Educational outcomes are thoughtfully developed to reflect both the developmental needs of children and the changing nature of society.
12. The teacher is a reflective decision-maker who observes, analyzes, and facilitates children's learning while continually learning herself/himself.



Renfrew Educational Services

Program Strengths

- All children are given time. We believe that development cannot be rushed! Each child is unique. We provide children with a safe and caring environment in which to learn and develop.
- Knowledgeable teams guide children in the development of communication skills, socialization skills, gross motor skills and fine motor skills. Teachers lay the foundation for literacy and math skills. Children are presented with thoughtful, engaging, learning opportunities which promote learning, problem solving and skill development.
- Our environments are carefully designed to offer new and creative activities. We want children to experience joy and fun while sparking their innate curiosity to explore and discover.
- We believe children learn by doing and we emphasize hands-on learning.
- We value self-expression, social interaction and creativity. Through social interaction, we foster the growth of strong, positive self esteem.
- Our highly qualified teams provide exceptional programs for children and students. Our agency promotes high levels of professional development.
- We have modern attractive buildings and the latest up-to-date resources for children and students of all ages and abilities.
- We recognize the importance of the family in each child's development and we work together with the family to provide insight on solving problems, offer education, and support and address individual family concerns.

Safe and Caring School

Alberta Education supports schools that are safe, caring, orderly, positive, productive, respectful and free from the fear of physical and emotional harm.

A safe and caring environment contributes to successful schools.

We engage in strategies and practices that are in keeping with the Alberta School Act and the Safe and Caring Schools Initiative/Curriculum set out by Alberta Education.

SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF A SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL

- a respectful and caring school culture
- safety and security
- a focus on teaching and learning
- positive relationships among students and staff
- social and behavioural expectations
- community involvement



Our Programs

Early Childhood Services (ECS)

ECS includes programs for children who are 2.5 to 4 years old, and kindergarten (the final ECS year before a child enters grade 1). Special care is taken to ensure that each year of ECS programming is unique.

Renfrew's ECS programs help nurture learning and social skills that will last a lifetime.

We offer an inclusive environment that brings together children with special needs and children who are typically developing. Together, they grow to love learning and to value the differences in others. Our favourable child-to-staff ratios allow the individual needs of children to be met.

Early schooling is the critical time to maximize a child's potential and teach positive learning skills. Renfrew fosters an environment of enthusiasm, caring, respect and openness to new ideas.

As an independent school, Renfrew follows the curriculum set out by Alberta Education which has a strong focus on early literacy, early numeracy, citizenship, environment and community awareness, personal responsibility, physical well-being, and creative expression.

Renfrew strongly believes in nurturing a love of the arts. Music specialists develop programs to enhance children's musical skills and understanding. Teachers plan a wide variety of art projects such as drawing, painting, collage and play-dough creations for the children to develop their artistic creativity and problem solving abilities. Teachers also provide opportunities for children to experience drama through the use of puppets, role playing, dramatic story telling and other creative activities.

To enhance physical development and fitness, physical education and movement experiences are incorporated into our programs on a daily basis. Activities in the gym and on the playground provide opportunities to learn social games, to explore creative movement to music, and to develop physical skills in a play based manner. Daily physical activity also helps the child to focus and learn in classroom based activities. Early interest and participation in physical activity sets the stage for healthy lifestyles.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

At Renfrew Educational Services, we understand that play is vital to a child's development. We know that children learn best when they are engaged, interested and having fun. Play is a partner to learning, a companion to comprehension, and a friend to free expression. A growing child's brain is stimulated and challenged by the many aspects of play. When you play with children, it is an opportunity to push their thinking further and allow for natural problem solving. Playing with children is essential for healthy emotional, physical, spiritual, and mental growth.

The Purpose of Play

- We play to relax, to enjoy and to have fun. Play promotes healthy and normal development for both children and adults.



- We play to reconnect to the natural world. Although children can, and will, play with anything, their favourite activities are often found in the natural materials of sand, water, mud and clay - and, of course, messy play is best!
- We play to make sense of our world. A child might play to understand a life event such as the birth of a baby or the death of a pet. This play may help children understand their sometimes confusing emotions.
- We play to learn a new skill or strengthen an existing skill. A physical skill like skating may take a great deal of practice. Standing on skates is one thing; skating is indeed another.

"You can't have real learning with a child unless they are playing. Real playing is how real learning takes place."

Joseph Chilton Pearce

FAMILY ORIENTED PROGRAMMING

(IN-HOME PROGRAMMING)

In ECS, most children with special needs will receive extra programming outside of classroom hours. The Home Visit Coordinator will contact parents/caregivers to schedule these sessions. This extra time is used to work specifically on the child's Individual Program Plan (IPP) goals and to communicate with families. The site manager is always available to answer questions concerning Family Oriented Programming.

Specialized Services for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (SAS)

The SAS program is an in-home program for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder who qualify for funding through Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD). Services are intensive in nature with children receiving appropriate interventions from a multidisciplinary team.

The focus of the program is to support families and help children improve skills in all areas of daily living, including communication, socialization, self help, adaptive functioning and physical and motor development (this can include skills such as toileting, dressing, appropriate behaviours, safety, etc.)

Each child's program is individualized based on the needs and priorities of the family and child. Goals are worked on in an engaging and playful way that encourages the child to be active in the learning process and become an efficient and effective problem solver. Parent involvement is a key part of the program.

Each child is assigned a therapy team which may include a child development facilitator, psychologist, behaviour specialist, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, physical therapist and family support worker.

There are limited spaces in the SAS program. Please contact the Manager at your child's location if you are interested in this program for your child.

The program offers unique and interactive opportunities for families, such as:

- **Facilitated Play Dates and Play Groups** - staff support the SAS child to play with a peer or peers to practise social skills, sharing and turn taking. Play can be facilitated in a child's home, out in the community or at one of Renfrew's locations. Individual goals are worked on with 1 to 1 support.
- **Community Outings** - staff provide support and strategies for parents by preparing the parent and child prior to the outing and practising the skills during the outing. Outings may include trips for doctor or dentist appointments, getting haircuts, going to the grocery store, recreational activities or eating out at restaurants.
- **Parent Education** - workshops, articles and resources are available for parents to learn about Autism Spectrum Disorders. Parents have many opportunities to learn about and connect with community resources and to meet other parents whose children have ASD.



Integrated Services for Children with Motor Disabilities (ISMD)

ISMD is a program for children diagnosed with motor disorders such as Cerebral Palsy and who meet the criteria for funding through Family Support for Children with Disabilities (FSCD).

Using a multi-disciplinary model, Renfrew brings together a wide range of professionals who work with parents to develop programs based on the needs and goals of the child.

Renfrew's team approach involves use of motor activities, integration of motor and sensory systems and, when necessary, assistive technology devices.

Developing the child's own internal motivation is a focus of the program. We do this by fostering confidence, self-

esteem and independence, which encourages children to strive to reach their maximum potential.

The multidisciplinary team may include rehabilitation specialists, child development facilitators, psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, assistive technology specialists and family support.

PROGRAMS INCLUDE

- **Toddler/ECS** - toddler to age 8 years (Janice McTighe Centre and Sundance Centre)
- **After School** - children from 6 to 18 years (Janice McTighe Centre)

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Diagnosis and Intervention Services

Renfrew's FASD programs provide a variety of services to children in the age range of birth to eighteen (and to their families) who are challenged by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. Our programs include:

- **A Diagnostic, Consultation and Intervention Clinic**

The FASD Clinic conducts assessments for diagnostic purposes. Assessments are comprehensive and multi-disciplinary, and provide critical information for developing supports and strategies. Team members include a psychologist, a speech-language pathologist and an occupational therapist with consultation from a community developmental paediatrician. Fees apply.

- **Early Intervention and Consultation Program**

The early interventionists work with children, ages birth through 12 years, with FASD, and with their families and caregivers. Services provided include in-home intervention, behavioural consultation, assistance with identifying and accessing community resources, advocating for the child and family, and support with transitions into the school system.

- **Stepping Out on Saturdays (SOS) Respite Camp**

Renfrew offers a respite camp for children diagnosed with FASD. The camp offers fun and therapeutic opportunities for the children while providing much-needed respite for caregivers. It is open to children aged three to twelve and runs on Saturdays.

- **Early Elementary Education**

Renfrew offers grades 1, 2 and 3 at our Sundance location for children who have confirmed prenatal alcohol exposure and demonstrate risk factors which may affect future learning and development. By offering small class sizes and a specialized environment, students with attention, sensory and behavioural issues are given opportunities to increase their learning potential.

- **FASD Travelling Clinic**

Renfrew conducts travelling clinics in rural communities in southern Alberta for children with FASD from ages 3 to 18. The services offered include assessments, diagnoses, consultation, and workshops for professionals and caregivers.

- **FASD Workshops**

Renfrew FASD offers a variety of workshops.

- **FASD Toy Lending Library**

This service is available to families participating in any of Renfrew's FASD programs. Families may borrow toys, books, videos, equipment, and materials as needed.

LIFE Skills Program

The Learning Independent Functional Everyday (LIFE) Skills program is offered to students with special needs from age 6 and up, and to adults with physical or learning challenges. The program aims to enhance the abilities of individuals to function in their environment in the areas of domestic and family life, personal and social development and job readiness. The program is individualized to meet the needs of the client and is continually adapted as needs change. To inquire about this program, please speak to the manager at your child's site. *Fees apply.*

After School Fitness

After School Fitness classes are offered to students from Renfrew Educational Services as well as those from other area schools who are ages 6 and up. The goal of the classes is to promote an active lifestyle through fun and motivating activities in a non-competitive setting. For more information, please speak to the manager at your child's site. *Fees apply and spaces are limited.*

Community Services

Renfrew's Community Services program provides therapeutic services to students and children attending schools in and around Calgary through contracts with school boards and private schools.

Community Services also provides educational and professional development opportunities to partners, parents, staff and to professionals through the "Helping Kids Soar" workshops.

Complete workshop information is available on our website.

Elementary Education Grades 1 to 6

A child's successful experience in elementary school creates a strong foundation for learning and interaction.

Renfrew's Elementary Education program offers children with mild, moderate or severe needs a safe environment in which to grow and to continue to develop their excitement for learning. We follow the Alberta Education Program of Studies. Our teachers modify the curriculum to meet the individual needs of the students.

Renfrew is an acknowledged leader in North America for its programs. Certified teachers work in collaboration with child development facilitators, on-site therapists, resource team and parents to develop individual programs for each student.

Students learn to problem solve, to persevere, and to access, acquire and process information in ways that promote resourcefulness and self-confidence. Students also learn to listen and relate to others with respect, cooperation and compassion.

We have two specialized Elementary Plus classrooms that are designed to meet the needs of children with significant challenges. These classrooms provide a lower child-to-staff ratio. The classroom environment is sensory based, providing hands-on learning opportunities.

Music, art and physical fitness are vital components of our overall programming.

PROGRAMMING AND ASSESSMENT

Therapists are involved in planning and implementation of programming, as well as consulting to the classroom team. Students are assessed by a therapist on an as-needed basis to further facilitate their educational programming. The resource team is available to complete educational assessments and assist teachers in the development of program plans. The resource team works with students one-on-one and in small groups.

JUNIOR LEADERS

The grade six students are encouraged to participate in the Junior Leader program. They participate in ongoing school projects throughout the year and serve as leaders and role models for all students

SIX YEARS AT RENFREW EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Students and families are offered a maximum of six school terms. Students must be six years of age **before** March 1 of the following year in order to start grade one (e.g. A child starting grade one in September 2010, must be six years of age **before** March 1, 2011). This policy also applies to the Elementary Plus classroom. Students who enter the Elementary Education Program in a classroom other than grade one or Elementary Plus, may continue to the end of Grade six.

As we individualize programs for all children, and as research does not support the retention of students, Renfrew has a no-retention policy.

ENTRANCE OF STUDENTS

There are limited spaces available in our Elementary Education Program. Please ask your manager to send a referral to the Elementary Education principal in January of your child's final ECS year. As these referrals come from all Renfrew locations, we unfortunately cannot accommodate all interested families. Factors taken into consideration when selecting students include:

- representation from all Renfrew school sites
- proportionate representation of girls and boys
- staff/student ratios required for children to experience success
- families who have supported Renfrew
- if busing is required, the pick-up and drop-off address must be within Renfrew's transportation boundaries



If Your Child Has Special Needs

Therapy Services

Each of our classrooms has a multi-disciplinary group of therapists, including physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists and psychologists. Therapists work on a consultative basis with classroom staff and parents as an integral part of the child's team. They support the teacher in developing goals and implementing strategies so that each individual child will thrive in the educational environment.

The therapists' involvement with each child starts at the beginning of the school year. They participate in classroom activities in order to get to know the children in the context of their school environment, and begin developing a rapport with each child. If needed, in the first few months of the school year, assessments may be conducted in order to assist the teacher, classroom teams and parents with identifying the child's areas of need. Teachers and therapists work collaboratively to develop meaningful goals that can be easily incorporated into classroom activities.

Throughout the school year, therapists play an integral role in helping children achieve their goals. Therapists work with classroom teams to incorporate therapeutic intervention into play and other classroom activities. Therapists may, as well, work directly with the children in the classrooms, in small groups and, occasionally, on an individual basis outside the classroom. Renfrew's multi-sensory rooms and sensory integration rooms are used by therapists in conjunction with classroom teams.

Renfrew takes pride in the high level of training of our therapists and we continually support them in staying current with the latest evidence-based practice approaches and training.

Assistive technology specialists work in all of Renfrew's programs with children who require the support of specialized equipment and/or technology to assist them in communicating. The specialists work with the child, family and the classroom team to find the best solutions to communication difficulties and will access the required equipment and train the team and family in its use. Renfrew's assistive technology specialists have an extensive inventory of equipment and technology in order to provide families with the optimal alternatives for each child.

- **Therapy Services in the SAS Program** - Therapists in the SAS Program provide direct treatment in the home for the child, working closely with the family and team. This treatment focuses on functional skills and goals developed by the parents and therapists based on the needs of the child. The team works together by sharing strategies and information to ensure cohesiveness and progress for each child's program.



Individual Program Plan (IPP)

Each child with special needs will have an IPP (Individual Program Plan). The IPP includes input from the family and team members. Families receive their child's IPP in the fall of their school year. The IPP is a working document, and the review and revision of goals is an ongoing process. An overview of this process will formally occur in February/March and then again at the end of the school year.

SAS families will also receive a copy of their child's SAS IPP in the fall of each year. Program review meetings take place three times per year, typically in November, March and June.

ISMD families will also receive a copy of their child's SPPP (Specialized Program Provider Plan) in the fall of each year. Program review meetings take place in February/March and June.



Teams

Each location is staffed with a manager or principal, Alberta Education certified teachers, child development facilitators, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, psychologists, therapy assistants, home visit coordinators, behaviour specialists, other specialists and support staff. Of course, bus drivers cannot be forgotten - the children often give them top billing!

All of our programs at Renfrew are supervised by Alberta Education certified teachers. It is the responsibility of our teachers to lead the team of child development facilitators in their classrooms.

Management, administration and maintenance staff also support the goals of Renfrew.



Family Support

Renfrew believes that the family unit is the foundation of a child's learning, and as such, is dedicated to the well-being of the families and children we serve. Family Support offers a range of services to families:

- information sessions and workshops
- short-term support counselling
- referral to community resources

The Family Support team members are available at all Renfrew sites.

Diversity

To make services easier to use for the range of culturally diverse families at Renfrew, we have set up a process for providing interpreters when needed. We also have regular cultural awareness training for Renfrew staff.



Transition

Alberta Education and the Alberta School Act state that all information in a student's file that has been used to develop or implement program plans will be sent, upon request, to the child's next school placement.

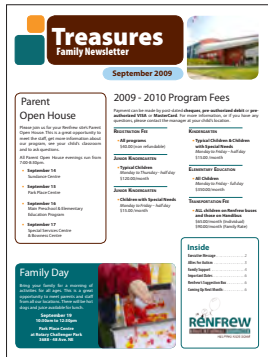
Kindergarten - The transition from ECS into the elementary grades is often a challenging time for parents. RES strives to support families during these transitions by helping them make informed decisions and by encouraging parents and guardians to become advocates for their children. In addition, the learning team is dedicated to helping ease this transition for children and parents by offering suggestions and tangible strategies to accommodate difficult transitions.

Elementary Education - Parent information sessions are scheduled throughout the school year for parents of children who are transitioning from RES to another program or school. These sessions include guests from other private schools and school boards, and former RES parents who share their personal experiences.

Parents receive a form in late fall to indicate which board, private school or program they would like their child to attend. Program specialists from the Calgary Public Board and Calgary Catholic Board visit children and consult with families once referrals have been made. Parents seeking private school placements must contact those schools directly. Managers and family support workers are available for more information and to support families during this process.

Keeping You Informed

Renfrew's website, www.renfreweducation.org, has up-to-date information about all our programs and services. There is also a link to our [facebook™](#) page.



To keep you up-to-date on general school activities, our agency's monthly family newsletter, "Treasures", will be posted on our website. If you do not have access to the internet and would prefer to receive a print copy of the newsletter, please contact the manager at your child's location.

At the start of the school year, each child will be given an agenda book to carry between home and school. Staff use the agenda to send messages home, and parents are encouraged to use the book to communicate with the classroom staff.

Early Childhood Services: In the fall and spring, parents have an opportunity to be involved in parent-teacher conferences. Families will receive two written progress reports during the school year.

SAS Program: SAS families will be visited by members of the team on a daily, weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis depending on the child's FSCD contract. Families also have the opportunity to meet and discuss their child's progress throughout the year at program-review meetings.

Elementary Education Program: Teachers send home weekly updates in each child's agenda book to inform parents of special events and topics of study. Three times per year, students will receive written report cards:

- In the first reporting period, teacher meetings will be held.
- In the second reporting period, student-led conferences will be offered.
- The final report card will be sent home at the end of the school year.

ISMD Program: Program staff meet with families three times per year to develop goals, review programs and address equipment needs. Regular communication also occurs throughout the year as needed.

Management: Our Executive Director and Associate Executive Director are always available for parent/guardian input.

- **Janice McTighe**, Executive Director
T 403.219.5388
janicemctighe@renfreweducation.org
- **Kim LaCourse**, Associate Executive Director
T 403.219.5386
kimlcourse@renfreweducation.org

Student Records

The *Alberta School Act* requires schools to manage and maintain student records. This includes information to develop or implement program plans, as well as other student information that is kept on file at each school site. Parents and students may review the student record, however they are not permitted to modify or delete the information contained in it. Renfrew follows the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)* to ensure each individual's privacy.



Literacy

Literacy is the ability to acquire knowledge and meaning through listening and reading, and to express knowledge and meaning through speaking and writing.

A key foundation for literacy is early and ongoing exposure to language. At Renfrew, by creating environments rich in spoken and written language, we lay the groundwork for meaningful communication and the development of literacy skills.

In the diverse population of children that we serve, communication takes place through many avenues such as oral language, sign language, picture symbols, written language, or the use of communication devices. Meaningful communication builds on the experiences and knowledge that a child already has, and it is our task to enrich and expand those experiences through activities that are developmentally appropriate for each child.

There are many steps and stages in the journey through literacy. Early stages include awareness of sounds in the environment, playing with language (through such things as nursery rhymes and songs), demonstrating interest in books, identifying objects in pictures and making marks (for example through scribbling and drawing).

Children generally move through stages as follows:

- A beginning awareness of written language in the environment (recognizing their printed name, signs and logos, letters or words on the pages of favourite books).
- The rote learning of letter names.
- The beginning stages of connecting sounds to letters and recognizing common words.

As basic skills develop, children can then use these skills to further their understanding and appreciation of literature and their ability to express themselves through writing. Activities that support each of these stages will reflect developmentally appropriate practices in ECS and in the elementary classes.

Parents/families can also provide opportunities for literacy development through many everyday activities in the home environment. Our teachers are always available to provide a variety of ideas and strategies for parents upon request.

Positive Behaviour Support

At Renfrew, we endorse the principle of respect for the dignity of children and their families. Our aim is to promote learning in an environment which is nurturing and safe, while encouraging the development of self-control and a positive self-concept.

Positive behaviour support is facilitated when a positive relationship has been established between adults and children. With a positive relationship, staff members are able to assist children in the development of participation, cooperation, negotiation and problem solving skills. The modification of a child's program may be considered in order to encourage the development of new skills or positive behavioural alternatives to problematic behaviours and will be determined based on the needs, goals, abilities and interests of individual children.

Renfrew's Positive Behaviour Support practice helps children acquire new skills and places the emphasis on proactive strategies in order to be successful, and it minimizes the need for reactive strategies.

Our teams always ensure the psychological well-being and physical safety of the child.



Policies and Procedures

Renfrew's 'Policy Manuals' are available for families to review. Copies are kept in the administrative office at each location.

Teachers will adhere to the *Alberta Education Teaching Quality Standard: Teacher Growth, Supervision and Evaluation*.

APPEAL PROCESS

Alberta Education determines that all private and independent schools establish their own individual policies and procedures concerning the appeal process. All decisions made by the Renfrew Educational Services Board of Directors will be the final decision. According to Alberta Education Policy, parents cannot appeal to the Minister of Education.

Policy:

Renfrew will ensure that parents have a fair and open process to address differences of opinion in child/student placement and programming.

Procedure:

- Parent concerns will be addressed as follows:
 - **Step One:** Parents/guardians ask for a meeting with the classroom teacher and manager. The meeting will be organized by Renfrew staff within one week of the request.
 - **Step Two:** If unresolved, parents/guardians may request a meeting with the Executive Director or Associate Executive Director. Renfrew staff will submit a written rationale. Parents may do likewise. The meeting will be arranged within one week of receiving the submissions.
 - **Step Three:** If still unresolved, parents/guardians may request a meeting with the Renfrew Board of Directors. This meeting will be arranged within two weeks of receiving the request. The Board's decision is final.
- An exception to this process is for children in ECS. Parents have the right to formally appeal decisions that significantly affect the education of their children to the Director, Early Learning Branch, Alberta Education, in the event that the local dispute-resolution mechanism fails.

SUSPENSION/EXPULSION - GRADES 1 TO 6

Policy:

A student may be suspended from attending classes or expelled from the school if his/her behaviour endangers the safety of him/herself or others.

Procedure:

- The team will meet and make a decision with the parents for the length of time appropriate (one or two days is recommended).
- A student may be expelled from Renfrew Educational Services if the student continues to be a danger to him/herself or others. The team would make this decision after all other methods have been tried.
- A student would not be expelled unless we have secured a more appropriate placement in another school, so that the student has access to education for the remainder of the year. If another placement were not available, Renfrew Educational Services would continue to be responsible for the student's education for the remainder of the year.
- Expulsion is not an acceptable practice at Renfrew and would be used only in the most extreme circumstances.





Snack

A nutritious snack is provided on a daily basis for all of our ECS and ISMD classes. Snack is offered as a choice during learning centre time. Staff encourage each and every child to participate. Our staff prepare snack for all the children, as many children are on restricted diets or have severe allergies. Eating time is important for working on a variety of skills including oral-motor, fine-motor, speech, socialization and daily living.

Elementary students bring a daily snack and their lunch.

ECS children in the ISMD program bring their lunch.

Peanut-restricted School

Renfrew Educational Services is a peanut-restricted school. This means we do our best to ensure products with peanuts or traces of peanuts are not purchased for, or consumed in, our schools. We ask parents not to send food with peanuts or traces of peanuts.

Birthdays

We will celebrate your child's special day in the classroom. Unfortunately, due to many allergies, we ask that you PLEASE DO NOT SEND FOOD. If you do not celebrate birthdays, please advise your child's teacher so your beliefs and traditions can be honoured at school.

What to Wear?

Please send your child to school dressed in comfortable clothing that allows for movement and exploration. Sometimes we have extremely messy (but fun) projects! Children will be spending time outside. Please send winter boots, snowpants, mittens, hats and rain gear when appropriate.

All children must have:

- a pair of sturdy running shoes that can be left at the school and are suitable for running and climbing.
- a bag or backpack to bring to and from school

Please ensure that everything is labelled, including shoes and boots!

We Welcome You to Be Involved

We know that families are experts about their children, care about their children and are part of their children's learning experience. We want to be partners with families. We have an open door policy.

We are pleased to have parents visit our classrooms on a drop-in basis, to volunteer, to accompany children on field trips, or to help in some other way related to the children's learning. Parents offer a richness to our programs with their unique talents and perspectives and they assist teachers with special projects. Most importantly, parents provide us with a deeper understanding of their children's unique needs and qualities.

Parents can be involved on a drop-in basis, or on regularly scheduled days. If you would like to help out on a regular basis, please contact your child's teacher to set up a schedule. Watch for notices to be sent home inviting you to join field trips as they are scheduled during the year. **Siblings cannot be accommodated in our classrooms or on field trips. Please arrange for childcare.**

Parent Advisory Council (PAC)

We value your participation on our Parent Advisory Council (PAC). Each centre has a PAC. The PAC sets direction each year, with support from the teaching staff and managers. Most often the PAC plays an important role directing resources for special school learning experiences, such as field trips, special classroom visitors, after school activities and unique equipment. The PAC at each centre meets monthly and all parents are invited to be involved.

Summer Programs

Renfrew offers a variety of summer programs for children with special needs and for typically developing children. In the spring, information about the summer programs being offered will be posted on the website and in our Treasures newsletter. Brochures will be available from managers.



Special Events

ECS PROGRAMS

Parent Open House - Parents are invited to come and meet the classroom teacher, CDFs and therapists as well as to see their child's classroom.

Family Nights - Family nights offer an opportunity for the entire family to enjoy an evening of games, storytelling and art activities. All families are encouraged to participate. This is an excellent opportunity to visit the school for those who are not able to do so during the day and to involve siblings.

Family Days - Renfrew may plan one or two Saturday events each year. These events offer fun activities for the whole family.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Parent Open House - Parents are invited to come and meet the classroom teacher, CDFs and therapists as well as to see their child's classroom.

Assemblies - Parents are invited to attend school assemblies, usually held at the end of each month. During assemblies, each class takes a turn presenting to the school, and awards are presented to students. Teachers will notify parents of assembly dates and times in the weekly classroom newsletter or communication agenda books.

Family Days - Renfrew may plan one or two Saturday events each year. These events offer fun activities for the whole family.

Family Night - Families are invited to attend a special evening either at the school or a community recreational facility. Renfrew staff organize and facilitate this event while parents supervise their children. This is an excellent way for families to connect with each other and for children to enjoy a fun evening with friends, school staff, parents and siblings.

Winter Festival Concert - Late December (evening). Families are invited to attend a performance by all the students in the Elementary Education program.

Graduation - Late June (afternoon). This is a celebration for students who are in grade six and their families. This ceremony is to celebrate the students' accomplishments and wish them a fond farewell. Light refreshments are served following the ceremony.

SAS PROGRAM

The SAS program offers several **Family Nights** throughout the year. These evenings are theme based and can consist of art, sensory, music and social activities with a focus on teaching family members skills to assist their child in different situations. Strategies on how to promote turn-taking and communication between siblings and how to manage holiday stress are examples from past events. Hand-outs and hands-on coaching are available at these events.



Fundraising

Fundraising is very important to Renfrew Educational Services. We rely on, and require, parent support for our major fundraising projects in order to keep our school fees as low as possible. These major events require many volunteers and financial support. Charitable donation receipts are issued for cash donations. You will receive information on these events in the Treasures newsletter and through special flyers. Your support is essential and extremely appreciated! Renfrew has talented staff who coordinate exciting ideas into our fundraising efforts. Do you have any ideas for fundraising ventures? If so, please talk to the manager at your child's location.



Bus Transportation

Transportation by Renfrew buses is arranged before the start of the school year. If your child is registered and you require busing after the start of the school year, contact the transportation department and we will try to accommodate your child. Our buses fill up quickly and we cannot always accommodate every request. There is an additional charge for our transportation. If you have arranged for busing, please follow our guidelines in the transportation pamphlet.

All children who are bused are picked up at their home, day-home or daycare. An adult must accompany the child to the bus and be there to meet the child upon returning home.

BUSES

Bus drivers have Class 4 licences and all vehicles are regularly safety inspected. Driver training and evaluation is ongoing and regularly updated. We have special 4-point seat belt systems installed in our buses for the children. This system buckles over both shoulders and across the middle, holding the child securely and safely in his/her seat. All children less than forty pounds will be provided with a car seat for their safety. We have strict policies regarding loading and unloading of children.

CANCELLATION OF BUSES

Schools will remain open on all scheduled school dates, regardless of weather conditions.

If, at 6:00am, the temperature is equal to, or lower than, -40°C , or if driving conditions are extreme, our buses will NOT be on the road. Our concern is the well being of the children in the event of a bus breakdown or minor collision.

Parents/Caregivers will be contacted by the bus driver if the busing service is cancelled.

SCHEDULING

We do our best to accommodate scheduling requests, but cannot guarantee specific pick-up and drop-off times.

If there are any changes to your child's daily bus schedule, please call with the details of the change including whether it is the pick-up and/or return trip and leave your name, your child's name, the Renfrew location he or she attends and the driver's name or bus number.

UPDATING FILES

If you change residence, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to accommodate your child on another bus, or guarantee the same pick-up and drop-off times. Please give the Transportation Department at least 2 weeks notice so that they can try to make the necessary arrangements.

For all transportation enquiries, contact **403.291.5038 ext 1377**.

SAFETY

If your child has medical conditions such as seizures or extreme allergies that require special care, or if there is medication in his/her backpack (e.g. epi-pen, inhaler, etc.), the backpack will be tagged and kept out of the reach of the children. Information about medication and any special care requirements and procedures will be noted in the driver's information binder for that bus route. (See "Medication", page 21.)

Parent Transportation

If you drive your child to school, please park in the designated parking areas. You must always accompany your child to the classroom and ensure a staff member has received your child, and you must always come into the school at pick up time to get your child. We will not allow a child to leave unaccompanied. If someone other than the parent/legal guardian is transporting the child, the school must be notified.

To ensure that staff are always available to look after your child, please be sure that they are never dropped off earlier than five minutes before classes start, and make certain that your child is picked up promptly at dismissal time. If you need to make other arrangements due to unusual circumstances, please speak to the teacher or manager.

At the Janice McTighe Centre, please do not use the school parking lot or the parking lot of the neighbouring businesses for parking or turning around. Your cooperation helps us to maintain good relations with our neighbours.

Pick-up from School

This is carefully controlled and any changes must come, in writing, directly from the parent or guardian.



Field Trips, Classroom Visitors & Special Events

Children will participate in field trips and outings. Volunteers for special events and field trips are usually needed. To indicate that you are volunteering or attending any of our special events, a sign-up sheet will be sent home with your child. Teachers may also include special visitors and guests in the classroom to enhance areas of learning.

Library

Each location has a 'mini library' for use in the classrooms, as well as access to the main library at the Janice McTighe Centre. Our family support team will be able to assist families with resource books and written materials.

Photo Permission

Our registration package contains information on the use of children's photographs, artwork, videos, etc. Please sign for permission in the appropriate areas. Please be aware that we have large group functions (Family Day, Volunteer Teas, etc.) where families may be taking pictures of all children. Unfortunately, Renfrew has no control over the content or usage of such material.



Keeping Us Informed

AWAY TODAY?

Whether or not your child is bused, always call your child's classroom or the administration office if your child will not be attending school.

SAS families need to contact the SAS administrative assistant if a session needs to be cancelled. The administrative assistant will contact your child's team members to inform them of any changes.

CHANGES?

Please inform your school location or the administration office of any changes that have occurred with home or work phone numbers, email address, home address, emergency contacts and family doctors. If an emergency should occur, we need to know where to find you quickly! Be assured that we will never release this information to a third party without your express consent.

IDEAS? CONCERNS?

If you have any ideas or concerns about what is happening at school, please contact us immediately so we can work together.

Safety and Health

First Aid & CPR

Each site has staff trained in emergency First Aid and CPR, as do all of our bus drivers. The training is updated regularly.

Injuries

In the event of an injury involving a child, parents and families will be notified, as will the administration. Responsible, immediate care for your child is always our first priority!

Fire Drills

Renfrew buildings are regularly inspected for fire safety. Fire drills are held on a regular basis for all classrooms.

Medication

Medication may only be administered by designated Renfrew staff with written consent from a parent/guardian. Parents/guardians must use the **Renfrew Medication Form** available from your classroom teacher, manager or on our website (www.renfreweducation.org).

We require written orders from the physician detailing drug dosage, time interval and reasons. All medication must be in the original container. Backpacks containing medication will be tagged indicating that they contain medication, and must be handed directly from the primary care giver to a Renfrew staff member. Tagged backpacks are kept at the front of the bus. (See "Safety" page 19.) **Backpacks containing medication are NOT to be carried by the child.** At Renfrew sites, medication will be put in locked storage out of the reach of children. Only designated staff will administer medication.

Please keep us informed of any medication changes.

Illness

Please keep your child at home and notify the school if your child has: diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting, fever higher than 37.56°C, sore throat, unusual rash, discharge from the eyes or ears, or is showing symptoms of any contagious illness. It is also recommended that you keep your child at home for 24 hours following the start of antibiotics and following any episode of vomiting or diarrhoea. We follow Calgary Community Health Resources guidelines regarding quarantine for various illnesses. Please check with your health nurse or the manager at your location if you are unsure whether to keep your child at home. We urge you to consider the other children in the class when making the decision to have a sick child attend school.

Security Checks

To ensure that all of our staff have impeccable records of childcare, each new staff member consents to a Search and Disclosure of Personal Information through the Calgary Police Service, and a Child Intervention Record Check through Rocky View Child and Family Services.

Equipment

All toys, equipment and activities are selected with safety in mind. We provide safety approved helmets for children engaged in many gross-motor activities.

Sun Safety

Renfrew highly encourages outdoor activities. During the warmer months, if you choose to use sunscreen, please apply sunscreen to any exposed skin before coming to school, even on cloudy days. We will only apply sunscreen sent to school with a note from the parent or guardian. We will ensure that children wear their hats when going outside.



General Information

Fee Structure

We receive funding from Alberta Education for basic instruction and special education for our classrooms. We also receive funding for transportation. However, funding for our in-house education programs and busing system does not cover all of our expenses, so program fees are necessary.

- **ECS (Kindergarten):** monthly general fee
- **ECS (3 and 4 year olds):** monthly tuition for typically developing children (*there is no government funding*)
- **ECS (3 and 4 year olds):** monthly general fee for children with special needs
- **Elementary Education Program:** monthly tuition fees
- **All in-house programs:** monthly transportation fee for children/students on our buses

PAYMENT OPTIONS

All fees are due on the first of each month.

Option 1:

Pay the entire year's fees in one payment in September.

Option 2:

Monthly withdrawals by electronic fund transfers, credit card or post-dated cheques.

Payments can be made by VISA, MasterCard, post-dated cheques, electronic fund transfer or in cash.

If you are paying by post-dated cheques they must be to your child's location by September 15 and dated for the first of each month.

If you are paying by VISA or MasterCard, your card number will be recorded and charges will be applied on a monthly basis.

Monthly pre-authorized deduction directly from your bank account can also be arranged by contacting the accounting assistant at ext 1389.



Renfrew Locations

Janice McTighe Centre

2050 - 21 St. NE

T 403.291.5038 ext 1300 **F** 403.291.2499

E renfrew@renfreweducation.org

www.renfreweducation.org

Bowness Centre

8620 - 48 Ave. NW

T 403.291.5038 ext 1800

Child Development Centre

3820 - 24 Ave. NW

T 403.291.5038 ext 1211

Park Place Centre

3688 - 48 Ave. NE

T 403.291.5038 ext 1500

Sundance Centre

75 Sunpark Dr. SE

T 403.291.5038 ext 1600

Silverwood Centre

#100, 8604 - 48 Ave. NW

T 403.291.5038 ext 1700

WHERE PROGRAMS ARE LOCATED

- **Children with Diverse Special Needs**
Programs are offered at all locations.
- **Integrated Services for Children with Motor Disabilities (ISMD)**
Programs are offered at the Janice McTighe Centre and Sundance Centre.
- **Children on the Autism Spectrum (SAS)**
Programs are offered at all locations.
- **Children with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD)**
Programs are offered within all of our classrooms, plus an Elementary Education program at Sundance Centre.
- **Community Services**
Staff in our Community Services Department work out of the Child Development Centre and Sundance Centre.

School Days & Times

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

Students attend school Monday to Friday. Hours are established on a yearly basis. Please call the principal at 403.291.5038 ext 1381 for details.

ECS PROGRAM

Typically developing 3 & 4 year olds attend:

Monday through Thursday
8:40 to 11:25am **or** 12:50 to 3:35pm

Typically developing children in their Kindergarten year attend:

Monday through Friday
8:40 to 11:25am **or** 12:50 to 3:35pm

ALL children with special needs attend:

Monday through Friday
8:40 to 11:25am **or** 12:50 to 3:35pm

CLASSROOM SCHEDULES

Daily and weekly schedules vary from classroom to classroom depending on gym times, field trips, special events and music days. Each classroom's schedule of special days and events will be sent home in your child's agenda book.

Staff Development - Supporting a Quality Program

Ongoing training and development of staff is essential for us in providing exemplary programs and services. Dates for school closures are noted in your child's agenda. This day may be used for staff meetings, in-services or training. Staff attend conferences and workshops periodically throughout the year. Renfrew is dedicated to exceptionally well-trained professional staff.



Janice McTighe Centre

T 403.291.5038 **F** 403.291.2499

2050 – 21 St. NE, Calgary, AB T2E 6S5

www.renfreweducation.org

Child Development Centre

3820-24 Ave. NW

Bowness Centre

8620-48 Ave. NW

Park Place Centre

3688-48 Ave. NE

Sundance Centre

75 Sunpark Dr. SE

Silverwood Centre

#100, 8604-48 Ave. NW

Charitable Registration No. 107886129 RR0001

Funded by: Alberta Education, Calgary and Area Child and Family Services Authority, City of Calgary - Family and Community Support Services and United Way of Calgary, Foundations and Private donors.

