

Kindergarten Handbook

RODEN PUBLIC SCHOOL



We acknowledge we are hosted on the lands of the
Mississaugas of the Anishinaabe,
the Haudenosaunee Confederacy,
and the Wendat.

We also recognize the enduring presence
of all First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples.



Dear Roden Parents and Caregivers,

Welcome to Roden Public School! We are excited for you and your child to join our vibrant and caring community and we want you to know that our school is a place where everyone is supported to learn and grow together.

We know how exciting and stressful it can be to start at a new school, especially for the first time. That is why we have put together this booklet—as a way to gather the information we wish we had known at the beginning. We hope that this handbook full of helpful tips, insights, and advice from fellow parents and caregivers whose children have attended Roden Public School (P.S.) will ease your transition to this new adventure. There is even a section at the end about moving up into Grade School at Roden P.S.

Should you have any questions that are not answered here, please feel free to contact us at any time. You can find us online at www.roden.ca, through our social media channels (Facebook: @rodensc; Instagram: @rodenschoolcouncil), or by emailing us directly at chair@roden.ca.

If you are interested in joining the Roden School Council, elections are held in September and volunteers are always needed! Reach out for more information about how to get involved.

We look forward to meeting you and your child!

Roden School Council

For Urdu or Chinese translation of this guide, please visit our website at www.roden.ca.

اس گائیڈ کے اردو ترجمہ کے لیے، براہ کرم ہماری ویب پر جائیں۔ www.roden.ca سائٹ

如需本指南的中文翻译，请访问我们的网站 www.roden.ca



Table of Contents

5	About Our School	24	Getting To School
6	A Note About COVID-19	25	A Few Rules
7	Starting Kindergarten	27	Stay In Touch
7	Drop-off and Pick-up	28	If Issues Arise
7	Making Alternate Arrangements for Pick-up	29	School Cash Online
8	Lateness or Absence	29	School Council
9	Skills for Success	30	Volunteering
10	First-Day Tips		
11	A Day In Kindergarten	31	Moving On Up
12	The School Year	31	Coming and Going
13	Curriculum	32	The Grade School Day
13	Social Skills	32	Curriculum
13	Reading	33	Eating and Drinking
14	Math	34	Extra-Curricular Activities
14	Dexterity / Writing	35	Final Notes
15	Confidence and Responsibility		
15	The World Around Us		
16	Music		
16	Self-Restraint and Self-Care		
17	Eating and Drinking		
17	Breakfast Club		
17	Snacks		
18	Lunch		
18	What to Pack?		
18	After-School Challenges		
19	The Rest of the Building		
19	Finding Your Way Around		
21	Lost and Found		
22	Equinox Holistic Alternative School		
22	Roden Child Care Centre		
23	EarlyON Child and Family		





About Our School

Roden Public School (Roden P.S.) is a neighbourhood school, and the vast majority of our students live within just a few blocks of our building, located at 151 Hiawatha Road. Many students and families walk or cycle to school.

We share the building with Equinox Alternative School.

The main entrance to the school is located on the west side of the building, on Hiawatha Road. We also have a second entrance (primary entrance for Equinox) located on the east side, on Ashdale Avenue. Both entrances have a buzzer at the door for reaching the office.

The fenced yard on the north side of the building (along Fairford Avenue) is the dedicated Kindergarten yard. There are multiple entrances into the Kindergarten classrooms from the Kindergarten yard.

The main school yard is located to the south of the building and is the area used for Grades 1 to 8.

A Note about COVID-19

The pandemic has had a significant impact on school programs and procedures since 2020. While this handbook provides an overview of what a typical year might look like outside of the pandemic, we recognize that the transition to Kindergarten is made more challenging by the safety measures that have been put into place to keep everyone healthy.

We also recognize that policies and recommendations around COVID-19 are ever-changing. To support health and safety during in-person learning, students are screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms and all staff and students are encouraged to wear masks while on school property (this includes Kindergarten students). The school is equipped with institutional-grade HEPA filters and staff follow enhanced cleaning measures.

Students are encouraged to be vaccinated against COVID-19, although we do recognize that children younger than 5 years are not eligible for vaccination at the time of writing this handbook.

If you would like more information about the measures that the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) has implemented to keep students and staff safe, please visit the TDSB website: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/>.



Starting Kindergarten

The first step is to register for Kindergarten through the TDSB. Registrations are accepted beginning in February for Kindergarten classes starting in September. To register, please visit the TDSB website at www.tdsb.on.ca.

A full list of required documentation is listed on their website, which includes proof of age, proof of address, and proof of immunization. For children not born in Canada, verification of date of arrival is also required.

Once you are registered, and before the first day of school, you will receive a letter in the mail that identifies the name of your child's teacher, their area number, and where to go on the first day.

Drop-off and Pick-up

Kindergarten drop-off is in the dedicated area along Fairford Avenue on the north side of our school. Once you are comfortable, you can leave your child in this area from 8:45 a.m., when supervision begins. Parents say goodbye to their children at the gate. If your child needs extra support, please discuss this with the teacher.

After school pick-up takes place in the same area at 3:00 p.m. Teachers will release children individually, only when they have seen an appropriate adult ready to receive them. This process can take a few minutes, but it is required for the safety of all students. Please be patient. If you need to collect your child early, make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance where possible.

If you are collecting your child at lunchtime, make sure your teacher knows that you are coming—you will pick up and drop off your child at the dedicated Kindergarten entrance along Fairford Avenue. At any other time of day, you must make arrangements in advance and pick up your child from the main office.

Making Alternate Arrangements for Pick-up

If you wish for your child to be collected by someone other than yourself on a regular basis, please inform the school office so that this person can be added to the list of people permitted to collect your child. You also need to let your child's teacher know. If someone is picking up your child only on rare occasions, you can let your teacher know on that day.



Lateness or Absence

If your child is late to class and misses morning or afternoon registration, they must first report to the school office for a late slip. This slip should then be handed in to the class teacher when the student reaches their classroom.

If you know your child will miss school for some or all of a day, please inform the school office either in person or by calling (416) 393-9555. You can leave a message.

If a child misses morning or afternoon registration, the Safe Arrival automated system will be implemented to call parents or family members, using the contact numbers you provided when registering for the school. You will need to confirm the reason for the absence using the menu options on the call. Please make sure your contact numbers are up to date.

Please try not to be late for pick-up. While no student under grade 4 would ever be sent home without an appropriate adult, the efficient running of the school relies on prompt collection of all students, and we have no provision for after-school care in these circumstances.

Skills for Success

Kindergarten teachers are experienced with students arriving at all levels of skill and confidence, but it will help your child to settle in quickly (and help our staff too!) if they are confident and competent at age-appropriate skills.

- Encourage your child to learn the name of their teacher and their area number once you have been given it. This will help them to speak up in class, and, although they should not be alone in the school, it means if they are not sure where to go, they are always able to ask.
- Students are expected to be able to dress themselves, wash their hands, and use the washroom independently—you can help them by limiting wardrobe challenges (we are looking at you, overalls!) and these are skills you can usefully practise at home. Outdoor clothing can be a particular challenge for students, but kids love to learn the “coat-flip” and the independence of dressing themselves. Our staff do understand that some students still need extra support and encouragement at times.
- Let your child know their backpack is their responsibility. They should be able to carry and pack / unpack it themselves. Practice opening and closing bags and lunchboxes, so they are confident doing it in school.
- Student backpacks should include the following when you drop them off at school: a labelled lunch container, a labelled water bottle, an extra change of labelled clothes in a plastic bag (the bag is used for soiled clothes), and an extra pair of labelled indoor running shoes. Running shoes are mandatory for gym class. The clothes and shoes can be left in school in the child's cubby. A backpack that can hold a large book is recommended.
- If your child is staying in school for lunch, it is best to send them in with something they are used to eating. If you usually have a hot meal at lunchtime, that might mean practicing with sandwiches or finger foods for a few weeks in August. They can also practice opening and closing their own lunch containers. Try not to worry if a lot of food comes home in the first few days of school; it takes some students a while to settle into the routine of eating on a schedule and with their friends around them.
- Students are not allowed to bring toys, jewellery, etc. to school. This prevents conflict among students or the risk of the item being lost/broken. Please keep much-loved objects safe at home. Practice before school starts by leaving loved items, such as a favourite stuffed toy, at home when going shopping, to the park, or to visit family and friends.

- Consider having your child's hearing and vision checked before school starts. Problems with hearing and vision can make learning more difficult and are most easily treated when identified early. You should also ensure that their immunizations are up to date.

First-Day Tips

The first day of school can be exciting and scary for both students and their families. Try to remember that your teachers have helped students through this transition before and are experienced in handling all the emotions your family arrives with.

- Arrive early, before 8:45 a.m., to avoid the morning rush. This will help make it less overwhelming for your whole family and allow your child to "settle in" to the school yard before you say goodbye. Kindergarten starts at 8:55 a.m
- Before school starts, check the name of your class teacher and area number. You should also have received instructions telling you where to meet on the first day.
- Our building is air-conditioned in summer and heated in winter, but students need to bring appropriate clothing for the weather because they spend part of each day outside. Layers are great—just make sure everything is labelled! Staff are not permitted to apply sunscreen, so if you consider this appropriate you should apply it before school.
- When you arrive at the school, you will be greeted by your child's teacher and ECE.
- Remind your child that they have a spare change of clothing in their backpack, which will be stored in their cubby. Make sure they know this is available to them.
- Where possible, you are encouraged to say goodbye to your child before they enter the school. This usually allows for a smoother transition, even for those students/families who are nervous or worried about the first day. Consider sending your child with a small, non-valuable "token" or reminder of you, such as a friendship bracelet or a photo in their backpack.
- Staff at Roden do recognize that some students will need additional support, especially during morning drop-off. Parents are more than welcome to discuss this process with staff. Some parents take the morning off from work on the first day of school. This helps give you peace of mind knowing that if your child has a meltdown during the morning drop-off you do not have the added stress of rushing off to work. And, if your child is fine during the first day of school, then you will have a free morning all to yourself!

A Day in Kindergarten

Kindergarten classes at Roden contain a mix of both junior Kindergarten (3–4 years old) and senior Kindergarten (4–5 years old) students. In order to provide a greater level of attention to each child during their early years, all Kindergarten classes are staffed by both a teacher and an early childhood educator (ECE).

Kindergarten students attend school from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and generally stay on the north side of the school, where their classrooms and dedicated playground for outdoor recess are located. Classrooms contain individual desk areas for each child, various activity stations, and a carpeted reading area. There are washrooms and sinks adjacent to each classroom. Specialist teachers and rooms are provided for gym, music, and library classes.

Roden P.S. runs on a five-day timetable. This means that scheduled classes, such as gym, music, library, and many extra-curricular activities, might be timetabled on Day 1 rather than Mondays. Over the course of a year, this means classes are not affected disproportionately by holidays and P.A. days, which generally fall on Mondays and Fridays.

Kindergarten students spend much of their time on “play-based learning,” using the various activity centres in their classrooms, including sand/water tables, building blocks, puzzles, pretend kitchens, etc. They also spend “carpet time” learning for short periods of time (date, weather, stories), and table time practising reading and writing.

Kindergarten is a time of transition for most children. Please be aware that the students do not take naps throughout the day and might need time to adjust to new routines. Kindergarten students are also expected to be toilet trained, although parents can send extra clothing in the event of any accidents throughout the day.

Kindergarten students eat their lunch in a dedicated lunchroom together and parents are required to pack a nut-free lunch as well as snacks for your child to eat throughout the day. Parents can also opt to bring their child home for lunch either every day or occasionally throughout the school year.





Curriculum

While it is wonderful to engage in early learning activities with your child before the start of Kindergarten, please remember that teachers will guide the entire class through the curriculum and that there are no expectations that your child will enter the school with specific knowledge. If you are curious about the Ontario Kindergarten curriculum, a copy can be found through the Resources page on our website at www.roden.ca.

Social Skills

A big element of Kindergarten is learning social skills, including the basic skills of sharing, making friends, and interacting with other children and adults outside their families. Students learn independence, expectations, and rules. They are even learning to learn! You can support your child in learning some of these social skills by fostering open communication about their experiences at school, encouraging the development of a strong and positive self-image, and appreciating diversity among different individuals and families. Organizing play dates outside the classroom is a great way to encourage friendships with other students and to practice these critical skills.

Reading

It is never too early to get your child excited about reading! Reading is an excellent way to spend quality one-on-one quiet time with your child, and it is a skill that supports so much of their learning.

Students are not expected to be able to read when they arrive at Roden, although many arrive knowing some or all of the alphabet. Our Kindergarten teachers have a range of incredible strategies that help students on their learning journey, from games and puzzles to a library of “levelled” reading books to bring home, and of course lots of practise in class.

ReadUP Reading Club is a non-profit community-based reading club free for kids of all ages who are learning to read. Formerly run out of the Roden P.S. library once a week, the program has had to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions. For more information and current updates on their offerings, visit their website at <https://www.readup.ca/>.

The friendly Toronto Public Library (Gerrard–Ashdale Branch) is located next door to our school, at the corner of Gerrard Street East and Ashdale Avenue. Visit them in person to sign your child up for a library card and start a lifelong reading habit.

Math

Numbers and counting are incorporated into all sorts of areas of learning in our Kindergarten classrooms. For example, students might count the days they have been at school or the seeds in a pumpkin. They conduct surveys among their peers—for example, to find out everyone's favourite vegetable or candy—and do experiments such as testing whether items float or sink.

You can encourage mathematics learning by counting with them at home—maybe they could put out the right number of plates for dinner or estimate how many cheerios are left in their breakfast bowl.

Dexterity / Writing

Very few students arrive in Kindergarten able to write, but by the end of SK most can legibly write their own name and a short sentence about what they did over the weekend. They practise fine-motor skills by using playdough tools, painting, and drawing, moving on to safety scissors and holding a pencil or pen to form letters. In SK, students have daily writing practise during class.

Although students are not given homework in Kindergarten, you can encourage them to practise these skills by drawing and colouring, sticking stickers, or cutting up an old magazine. As they gain confidence, signing a birthday card or writing a short letter to a family member can be fun ways to work on these skills at home.





Confidence and Responsibility

Each teacher arranges it differently, but all Kindergarten classes at Roden have some version of “Special Helper”—a student allocated to each day who is encouraged to help the teacher with jobs like feeding the class fish, taking the attendance folder to the main office, and making a “Show and Share” presentation to the class.

Perhaps there are a few big-kid jobs the child could do at home to help you out, or you can celebrate their “Special Helper” day by letting them choose what to have for dinner or with another treat.

The World Around Us

As students go through Kindergarten, they start to understand time in all its variety. Not only are the days more defined—gym today, library tomorrow, etc.—but dates and seasons are noticeable. Students are encouraged to note the change from fall to winter and then into Spring, and many classroom activities are based around the seasons and the various holidays celebrated at different times of year. They may make leaf pictures and decorate pumpkins in October, bake mooncakes at Chinese New Year, and plant seeds in the spring.

Where possible, field trips take place a couple of times throughout the year—look out for the permission form and consider volunteering to go along; it is amazing to see your little kid acting all grown up and independent in the company of their friends and teacher. You may be asked to contribute to the cost of the trip, often to pay for a bus to transport the class to a farm or show. If you have difficulty paying, please speak to your teacher in confidence—the school has a small fund to assist families with these costs.

Music

Music lessons are a lot of fun for most Kindergarten students and are generally a great way for the children to express themselves. You might learn a new song or two yourself as they come home humming a new favourite! In Kindergarten, music classes mostly revolve around singing, but students are also encouraged to start noticing the beat and rhythm of the music, and to join in with actions.

Self-Restraint and Self-Care

Emotional regulation can be difficult for all of us. As adults we continue to struggle and learn how to deal with our own feelings and the feelings of those around us. We can teach our children that although this is an ongoing project for everyone, we can honour our feelings and the feelings of our peers and work on knowing what social interactions can look like. The goal is to empower our children to respect themselves and others. In Kindergarten, students are encouraged to learn and use the words they need to stand up for themselves, and to listen to others. Students may also be taught some simple coping mechanisms, such as deep breathing, singing, and moving their bodies. You can encourage your child to be ready for Kindergarten by discussing values such as kindness, sharing, co-operating, listening, taking turns, being patient, and setting boundaries.

Encourage your child to share their voice, in both positive ways and ways that help them to be confident, even if this means saying, “no, thank you.” You can model these behaviours and help to support their self-confidence. Give your child lots of opportunities to play with other children so that they may learn these skills. Ask your child what they should do if another child pushes, hits, kicks, bites them, or says something rude. They should not push, hit, kick, bite or be rude back, but instead say “stop” or “no” firmly, then go and find an adult to help address the situation.



Eating and Drinking

Ensure that your child comes to school with a full water bottle each day. Although they will have access to a drinking fountain, lining up with the class and taking a quick sip is unlikely to provide them with enough to drink during the school day.

Breakfast Club

Roden is very fortunate to have a Breakfast Club program, open to all students from 8:30 a.m. to 8:50 a.m. The Breakfast Club is located on the main floor of the school by the Ashdale doors. It offers healthy, free breakfasts made on site every weekday. The Breakfast Club is a NOT a care service. All young students who use the Breakfast Club must be supervised by their own parent/guardian.

Snacks

A morning and afternoon snack is provided to all JK/SK students, free of charge, through our snack program. This is usually veggie sticks, fruit, or a piece of bagel or crackers. This usually takes a week or so to get going in the fall, so feel free to send in a small snack for the first few days of school.



Lunch

All TDSB schools encourage families to take their children home for lunch to give them a break from the school day. Realistically, however, most parents work and the majority of students stay for lunch at school and are supervised by paid lunch supervisors. If you do wish to collect your child, let their teacher know and you can collect them at 11:45 a.m. from the Kindergarten doors.

JK/SK students eat lunch under the care of lunch supervisors in their classrooms around 11:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., then go outside for a recess until 12:45 p.m. If you take your child out of school for lunch, please return them at this time, checking in with the member of staff on duty in the yard or classroom.

What to Pack?

Try to keep snacks and lunches healthy, easy, and quick to eat. Finger foods are great as they are easy to eat without much fuss or mess. Especially in the first few weeks, provide something your child is accustomed to eating and enjoying and that fills them up and gives them lots of energy for the rest of the day. If in doubt, we recommend providing a little more food than you expect your child to eat, then tweaking quantities based on what comes home.

Students are encouraged to have litter-free lunches and to take anything they do not eat home, so that you can see what has and has not been eaten. Keep this in mind when packing things like yogurt and applesauce. If they do not have resealable lids, they will leak all over your child's bag.

Due to severe food allergies at our school, nuts, fish, and seafood are banned. Remember to practise opening and closing containers with your child so that they are comfortable doing so themselves when the time comes.

After-School Challenges

After a long, active day at school, kids become very hungry. Many parents bring an extra snack to eat right at pick-up to reduce the chance of their child having a "hanger" attack on the way home.

Be prepared, especially in the early months of Kindergarten for your child to be extremely tired after school. You may discover that they need to eat dinner and go to bed much earlier than normal. Do not worry—your child will eventually transition back into their normal routine as they adjust to the busy school schedule.

The Rest of the Building

As a Kindergarten family, you will mostly keep to the dedicated area at the north side of the school, along Fairford Avenue. However, your child will be taken to other areas of the building for classes and eventually you will discover these areas too!

Finding Your Way Around

In our experience, students find their way around school pretty quickly, but for many parents and caregivers it can feel confusing. Here is a quick guide.

The main floor is made up of the Kindergarten classrooms, library and administrative offices, and the Early ON Drop-in Centre and the Breakfast Club room. Steps lead down to the older grades' music room and to the gym.



You can access the school through the main doors on the Hiawatha side of the building, by pressing the buzzer and waiting to be let in. For everyone's safety, please ensure that you always check in with the office before going elsewhere in the school. The main office will be straight ahead of you, with the family washroom and steps down to the gym to your right. The Lost and Found area is in the main part of the foyer of the school (each classroom also has a small Lost and Found bin) or sometimes relocated to the lobby just inside the main Ashdale doors. The library is down a corridor to your left when you are standing in front of the main office. Most public events, such as presentations, council meetings, and concerts are held in either the library or the gym.



At both ends of the building, staircases lead up to the second and third floors, which house the Grade 1 to 8 classrooms. Classes are labelled by “area number,” as the school is largely open-plan, with classrooms around the outside walls and central areas allocated to staff rooms, specialist classes, and storage. There are student washrooms on all floors.

We have three outdoor areas. The smaller, fenced area on the Fairford side of the school for Kindergarten students includes an age-appropriate climbing structure. The larger school yard can be found to the South of the school buildings, and includes a climbing structure together with basketball court, a baseball diamond, and a large grassy area as well as an enclosed wildflower garden. Along the Ashdale side of the building is the outdoor Kindergarten classroom for Equinox Holistic Alternative School. This area is out of bounds to Roden students and to the public during school hours.

Lost and Found

Around 650 students share our same school building. Each school year, hundreds of items are misplaced and end up in our Lost and Found; many are never claimed. There is a small Lost and Found bin in the Kindergarten area and a larger one near the main office.

Encourage your child to stop by the lost and found frequently to look for any misplaced belongings and make it the first place you check if you know something has disappeared!

Please keep any important and valuable items at home where they are safe.

For all items and garments coming to the school, with your child, please label them with your child's name. One option is to use Mabel's Labels, a Canadian company that makes name labels that can sustain washing and weathering. Roden School Council collects a portion of each sale made through their fundraising initiative; ensure you select Roden School Council as your fundraiser when you purchase labels, as a portion of that sale comes back to the school for council activities. Labels can be customized and purchased on their website: <https://mabelslabels.ca/>



Equinox Holistic Alternative School

Roden P.S. shares our building, facilities, principal, and some support staff with another TDSB school, Equinox Holistic Alternative School. Equinox is funded through the TDSB just like Roden, but it is an optional-attendance school and many of their students come from further away. Equinox staff teach through a holistic alternative model and their Kindergarten students are taught year-round in outdoor classrooms.

Students at the two schools are taught completely separately, but share a yard at recess and lunch times, and before and after school. Some events are hosted jointly by the two schools and the two School Councils work closely together as so many of our interests align. Any event hosted by one School Council is open for both communities to attend. You can find out more about Equinox at www.equinoxschool.ca.



Roden Child Care Centre

A private organization runs a child care centre in our school building, on the second floor. They offer full-time care for younger children and a before- and after-care service to students. There are many families who use this centre and the waitlist can be long, so make contact as early as possible if you are interested in sending your child there. Many other providers, including individuals and a number of local businesses, run before- and after-care programs that include pick-up from Roden. If you would like their contact information, please email chair@roden.ca.

EarlyON Child and Family

Reached through the Breakfast Club, near the Ashdale doors to the building, the EarlyON Centre is open every morning during the school year, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Children from birth to 6 years of age can enjoy a wide range of activities including painting, sand or water tables, blocks, dolls, and books. Every day we have circle time with stories and songs, as well as a free, healthy snack for all children. When the weather is warm we go outside to explore the Kindergarten yard and climbing structure. A washroom and stroller parking are provided in the Breakfast Club room.

Parents and caregivers are required to stay and supervise their children, and many find the social aspect is as useful for them as for the little ones! The program is free and there is no sign-up or waitlist—just drop in and say hello. The EarlyON Centre is a great way for future Kindergarteners to get to know the school (and possibly some future classmates) before arriving in September and for little siblings to get ready for their turn.



Getting to School

Most Roden students walk or cycle to school because of our small catchment area. Please be aware, however, that the roads around the school can be very busy at drop-off and pick-up times and take extra care for the safety of yourself and others. Bike racks are provided outside the main doors on both the Hiawatha and Ashdale sides of the building. Kindergarten students can park their bikes inside the “cage” by the Kindergarten doors. Speak to a member of staff if you are not sure where to put a bike or scooter.

Dogs (other than service animals) are not allowed on school grounds at any time. Please be sure to leave them outside the gates or at home.

On the south side of the school yard, between the school and Gerrard Street, is a small parking lot. Parents may park in the lot to accommodate pick-up and drop-off between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. There are also a few spaces of street parking on each road around the perimeter of the school. These get very busy, so we ask you to be patient and allow for extra time if parking in these areas.

Please comply with posted parking restrictions, both in the parking lot and on the surrounding streets as these are strenuously enforced and are there to protect the safety of our students.

If you are driving west on Fairford Avenue to school, please note there are no left turns onto Ashdale Road or onto Woodfield Road from Fairford before 9 a.m.

A few road safety reminders: double-parking and parking on sidewalks is not allowed. Please follow the posted reduced speed limits for the school zone. Vehicles are not allowed to idle for more than 1 minute maximum by the school (even in winter). Turn your vehicle off when parked. Always make a full stop at stop signs and, lastly, remind your child to cross the street at designated areas as opposed to between parked cars. Let's work together to keep our community safe.

A Few Rules

Ask a Grade 1 student and they will tell you there are three rules at Roden:

1. **Respect!** Have respect for your peers, for the adults in the school and for the building and belongings around you.
2. **Responsibility!** Take responsibility for your own behaviour and your own belongings. Students may be given extra age-appropriate extra-responsibilities, too, such as feeding the class pet, welcoming visitors, or carrying the attendance to the school office.
3. **Try Your Best!** Staff are aware that our students are learning and developing at different rates and in different ways. Whether they are trying to read a challenging book, spell a difficult word, or simply sit still and listen, students will not always get it right, but they should always try their best.

Of course, there are a few more detailed rules too, but for the most part they can be explained through the three principles above. If you are unsure about how to handle a situation in school, you can always contact your class teacher, the main office, or the principal. The list below will help with some common situations.

Clothing: TDSB has a rule that children should not wear any clothing that might be deemed offensive or abusive. If a student wants to wear a costume, or express themselves in a creative way, that is fine—provided they will be comfortable for the entire day, will not be distracted or distracting to other students, and can participate in all class activities including gym.



Footwear: Ensure your child has proper footwear for the weather. Recess is almost always outside, so it is important to ensure your child has rainboots, snow boots, etc. They should also bring a pair of closed-toed comfortable indoor shoes to wear throughout the day. These are mandatory for gym class but are useful every day to keep our school cleaner and our kids more comfortable. They can be left at school in your child's cubby.

Costumes: If your child wears a costume to school, please leave anything which could be considered a weapon at home. You will also want to ensure that they are able to use the washroom while wearing their costume.

Play-fighting: Kids love to be creative and imaginative at recess, and this is to be encouraged. For the safety of all students, however, rough-housing and play-fighting are not permitted in the school. It goes without saying that real fighting is banned too!

Trading / swapping: We love how generous many of our students are, but please discourage them from trading and swapping during school hours. This includes everything from toys and cards to food.

Valentine's and other gifts: There is absolutely no obligation to bring in treats and gifts for holidays such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, or your child's birthday. However, if you choose to do so, please ensure that there is one for each child in the class and be aware of allergens.

Allergens: Please never send anything into school that contains nuts, peanuts, fish, or seafood. Staff and students have severe allergies and this can be very dangerous for them. Your teacher may also notify you of other items to avoid specific to the class. We know it can be inconvenient to check labels, but the health of our peers and community is important.

Valuables: Students are discouraged from bringing money, jewellery, or toys to school. Keep precious items at home to avoid losing them or causing upset and jealousy in the playground.

Pets: Dogs (other than service animals) are not allowed on school grounds at any time; please leave them outside the gates or at home.

Use your voice, not your hands: If somebody is doing something your child does not like, they should say so in a loud and clear voice. Students are encouraged to express themselves and make their needs known. If this does not resolve the situation, they should inform an adult, such as their teacher or lunch supervisor.

Stay in Touch

At Roden P.S., we make every effort to make information readily available but it is ultimately your responsibility to stay informed about what is happening in your child's school. Below is a list of the type of communications you may expect in the coming year. Classroom communiqués: Most teachers send out occasional papers in backpacks. These might include consent forms for school trips, information about upcoming events, and requests for donations (for example, the class may need empty tissue boxes to make Easter baskets). Make it a habit to check backpacks regularly. Better still, encourage your child to take responsibility to pass on anything their teacher sends out.

School newsletter: You should receive a monthly email newsletter from the school administration covering key dates and important school information. Roden School Council also contributes to this newsletter. If you do not receive it, check with the main office to make sure you are on the list.

Social Media: Roden School Council have social media accounts on various platforms. Please be sure to search and follow along for the most up-to-date information.
Instagram: @rodenschoolcouncil
Facebook: @rodensc

Posters: Any big school community events are often promoted by email, newsletter, and social media, but also by posters around the school.

Website (www.rodens.ca): This website is managed by the Roden School Council. It is regularly updated and is a great source of information about things like current events, fundraisers, school updates, extra-curricular options, and health and safety news.

Child-specific communications: Your teacher and ECE will establish a method of communication that works best for their classroom - this may be by email, or through a virtual platform such as Google Classroom or Brightspace. Your student will receive two report cards per year, together with the possibility of attending two in-person meetings with your child's teacher.



If Issues Arise

In most situations, your child's classroom teacher is the first point of contact for any questions or concerns you may have. They can help you with any questions about the classroom, classroom rules and consequences, daily events, etc.

As any caregiver knows, trying to have an adult conversation with kids around is hard. It is extremely challenging for teachers and staff to supervise students at the same time as trying to address your questions or concerns, especially during the busy drop-off and pick-up periods.

If you want to have a discussion with your child's teacher, it is always best to email them or send a written note. This gives your child's teacher the opportunity to reply when they have a free moment with an answer and/or to set-up a specific time to speak. Putting your questions and concerns in writing is also a helpful and easy way to track, share and escalate them if required.

If you would like more information or if you have questions that are beyond the classroom, you can speak with your principal. They can help you with student registration, schedules, suspensions, report card concerns, code of conduct, safety and security, budget and fundraising, and the School Council.

Beyond the school level, we have a Superintendent who is responsible for a network of schools. They support school staff and can be contacted if you have questions that have not been answered by your school's teacher or principal or if you need help with things such as alternate attendance requests or suspension appeals.

Lastly, the School Trustee is your elected community officials. They are available to help you with the following areas of TDSB: concerns about your community, ideas and suggestions for the board, items on board agendas, board policies under review, board budget, and collective bargaining.

School Cash Online

School Cash Online is a payment portal used by the TDSB schools for things like field trips, events, the hot lunch program, donations, and fundraisers. It even sends out payment email reminders to families. In September, your family will receive information about creating a School Cash Online account, which you may log into to pay for various school items. TDSB prefers parents make payments through School Cash online versus paying by cash to reduce the risk of error or cash going missing.
www.schoolcashonline.com

School Council

Roden is fortunate to have an active School Council, made up of parents/guardians of students across the age range of the school, together with staff representatives. School Council represents the voice of parents and caregivers within the school community, and we foster discussions on issues such as budget and staffing, safety, and school-grounds improvements. Roden School Council also runs a number of fundraising and community-building events throughout the year to further support learning within the school. Many of our Council members will agree it has been a great way to get to know other parents, caregivers and families.



Volunteering

Parents, caregivers, and family members are encouraged and needed to sign up and volunteer for a range of activities at Roden. Please consider in what capacity you are willing and able to participate in our activities and initiatives.

Some options for volunteering include:

- **Joining a class field trip**—Teachers will send out requests for volunteers along with the consent forms for the trip. This is a great way to spend some time with your child in a different environment from the usual, and to see how they interact with their teachers and peers.
- **Joining School Council**—If you have an interest in what is happening at the school and can spare a couple of hours per month, we strongly encourage you to attend School Council meetings and even to consider joining our School Council Executive or Council Community. We meet each month and the commitment beyond those meetings is as much or as little as you have the capacity for. Our first meeting is usually around the end of September and it is a great opportunity to come and find out more; you can decide then and there whether to join!
- **Volunteering at events**—The school and School Council host a range of events throughout the year, some during the school day and others in the evenings or weekends. These events can only happen when volunteers step up to organize, plan, and run them. Email chair@roden.ca or like us on Facebook (@rodensc) to be among the first to hear about everything that is happening in your school.
- **At-home volunteers**—Even if you never set foot in the school, you can help as a volunteer. For example, you might be able to run our website, apply for a grant, organize raffle prizes, design posters or, yes, the stereotype is true, make something for a bake sale. Sign up as above to find out more.
- **In-kind donations**—The Breakfast Club and snack programs are always looking for in-kind donations of various foodstuffs. There is usually a poster outside the Breakfast Club room with more details, but if you find yourself flush with healthy, nut-free items such as bread, eggs, fruit, veggies, etc., please consider dropping them off so that they can be used by these programs.

Moving On Up

After what feels like both forever and no time at all, your child will graduate from Kindergarten and be looking forward to Grade 1!

Roden P.S. has a tradition of smooth transitions, aided by a series of trial runs in the spring of SK. Students will get to meet their Grade 1 teacher and visit their new classroom upstairs, have lunch together with some of the older students, and spend a few recess breaks outside in the “big kids” yard. Once again, it can be the parents who feel left behind, so this section of our handbook is to give you a chance to catch up!

Coming and Going

From Grades 1 to 8, students will be dropped off and picked up in the main school yard. You will be notified of your child’s teacher and area number and where to meet on the first day. After that, you can drop your child at the school gates on either Ashdale Avenue or Hiawatha Avenue, any time after supervision begins at 8:45 a.m. When the second bell goes at 8:55 a.m., the class teacher will collect the line-up and lead them inside.

At 3:30 p.m. for Grades 1 to 5, pickups happen outside the main Hiawatha doors, with the teacher waiting until they see an adult before releasing your child. Eye contact and a wave is the best way to let the teacher know you are there to collect your child. If you wish to take your child home for lunch, speak to the teacher about where to collect them and at what time.

From Grade 4, with your consent, students are allowed to leave the premises for lunch and at the end of the day without adult supervision. Grade 6 to 8 students are released at 3 p.m.

Lateness and absence continue to be dealt with in the same way as in Kindergarten.



The Grade School Day

The five-day timetable becomes more important as students move up the school and need to remember the correct homework on the correct day, but teachers will help to ease them into it and students who grow up with this system generally find it easier to follow than their parents.

8:45 a.m.	Supervision begins. Students may be left in the main school yard.
8:55 a.m.	School begins. Students will line up near their class entry to file into school and begin the day.
9:30 a.m.–10:10 a.m.	Period 1 / assembly
10:10 a.m.–10:25 a.m.	Recess
10:25 a.m.–11:05 a.m.	Period 2
11:05 a.m.–11:45 a.m.	Period 3
11:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:45 p.m.–1:25 p.m.	Period 4
1:25 p.m.–2:05 p.m.	Period 5
2:05 p.m.–2:20 p.m.	Recess (Grades 1 to 5 only. Grade 6 to 8 students start Period 6)
2:20 p.m.–3:00 p.m.	Period 6. Grades 6 to 8 are released at 3:00 p.m.
3:00 p.m.–3:30 p.m.	Homeroom. Grades 1 to 5 are released at 3:30 p.m.

Curriculum

The details of the Grade School curriculum are beyond the scope of this Handbook. Students in Grades 1 to 5 remain primarily with their homeroom teacher in their own class area, traveling to specialist rooms and staff members for certain subjects. In Grade 6 and above, Roden operates a “middle school” program, whereby students remain with their homeroom group, but receive more specialised subject teaching from various members of staff.

You will notice an increase in homework as your child advances each year. Teachers do not wish to overload students and do understand that family commitments and extra-curricular activities are valuable parts of your child’s development. However, they do appreciate your support in encouraging your child to give homework proper attention and priority. You can continue to help your child get the best out of school by arriving well-rested as much as possible.

Eating and Drinking

Breakfast Club remains available to grade school students, and they continue to receive a free healthy snack in the morning (but no longer in the afternoon). All grade school students eat lunch in the gym* (or outside on warmer days), which means it is a much busier and louder experience than eating in their Kindergarten classroom. Some students take a while to get used to the change and many families collect untouched food and ravenous children at pick-up for a while. After a few weeks, they settle in and enjoy the freedom to eat their dessert before the main course without a lunch supervisor noticing!

Please note: As of 2020 and due to COVID-19 restrictions, the location of Grade 1 to 8 students' lunchroom continues to change, depending on the TDSB requirements of social distancing and classroom cohorts. As of the time of this publication, lunch is to resume in the gym as of September 2022.

Please send a water bottle to school with your student; they may also be asked to leave a second one at school to use during class time.

Grade 1 to 8 students can also take advantage of our hot lunch program. Menus are sent out in advance on a monthly basis, and orders can be placed through School Cash Online. Hot lunches are a great way to provide your child with a healthy, tasty meal and they are very popular with the students too!

From Grade 4 onward, students are allowed to leave the premises at lunch, provided you have given consent. This is great for their independence, but it gives you much less oversight of what they eat.



Extra-Curricular Activities

Students in Grade 1 and above are invited to join a range of extra-curricular activities during the school day. What's on offer varies from year to year, but here is a list of some that may be available:

- Chess Club
- Mural Club
- Book-Publishing Club
- Maker Club
- Sports Clubs (including basketball, dodgeball, multi-sport, track and field)
- Music groups (including ukelele, choir, and band)
-

Most clubs are totally free and are hosted by a teacher / parent volunteers during lunch recess. Students are encouraged to commit for the duration to have a consistent group and to ensure that those who want to join are able to; some clubs have a “three strikes” policy for persistent absence.

These clubs are advertised during morning announcements and via posters around school. Council may also alert parents via Facebook, where we become aware of a club. For the most part, however, you will need to rely on your child to become aware of them and choose to attend.

External providers are sometimes allowed to provide classes or clubs to our students on school premises. These may include an additional cost and will be advertised to parents via a backpack mailout. If your child has a particular interest but you are unable to pay, check with your class teacher or the school office in confidence, as some providers offer subsidies.

- Karate Kids
- TDSB Language Lessons
- ReadUP Reading Club (www.readup.ca)





Final Notes

We've done our best to try and capture all there is to know about the school in this booklet, and you may still have questions that are unanswered. We encourage you to connect with us, school council, with families on your street and around your neighbourhood, and with the school to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

As we get to know one another, we start to build relationships that allow us as parents and caregivers to feel a sense of connectedness and belonging within the school community. Our students also benefit by feeling safe and connected, allowing them to enhance their school experience.

We have no doubt that your little ones will settle into their new roles as Kindergarten students, and we'll be here alongside you for the adventure. We can't wait to meet you!

