Brandon University

Junior Kindergarten

Parent Handbook

2019 – 2020



Welcome to BU Junior Kindergarten!

We hope this handbook answers any questions you may have about the program and prepares you and your child for the upcoming year.

**Program Goals and Objectives**

Preschool children are rapidly developing at their own rate in motor, communication, social and cognitive skills. They are active, curious, complex individuals. Play is their natural way of learning and discovering the world around them.

Therefore, we believe in:

* A respect for the unique nature of each child and his/her level of development.
* The child’s active participation in his/her own learning experience.
* A program that nurtures the intellectual development of the child, the development of social interaction, the development of communication skills, as well as the physical growth and development.
* A rich, multi-sensory environment.
* The value of play as the basis for learning.
* A professionally qualified, caring teacher.
* A mutual interdependence of the home and school.

Research shows that children learn best when they are interested and actively engaged in their surroundings. The program reflects this by following the children’s interests in an emergent direction, rather than using pre-determined themes. As we interact with the children, we reflect on what we see and hear and document these observations through notes and photos. We use this information to determine areas of interest for the children, their prior knowledge, and their abilities. This in turn determines the play space, materials, and activities we provide.

**Daily Program**

The daily schedule is a guideline and may change due to the children’s needs or special circumstances.

9:00 – 10:15 (1:00 – 2:15) Free play and art

10:15 – 10:30 (2:15 – 2:30) Clean up and group time

10:30 – 10:45 (2:30 – 2:45) Snack

10:45 – 11:15 (2:45 – 3:15) Free play, large motor activities, or outdoor play

11:15 – 11:25 (3:15 – 3:25) Group time

11:25 – 11:30 (3:25 – 3:30) Locker/home time

**Behaviour Management Policies**

Our aim is to lead the children into patterns of self-discipline. Often, children need to be taught or shown appropriate behaviour in a certain situation, rather than being told what behaviour is inappropriate. Many potential problems can be avoided by thoughtful preparation of the environment and by transferring the attention of the child to a different activity. Discipline will be administered in a loving manner and always for the good of the child. Discipline includes praising desirable behavior as well as discouraging negative behavior.

We shall not permit, practice or inflict any form of physical punishment, verbal or emotional abuse, or denial of physical necessities for any child in attendance.

**Registration Policies**

**Admission**

Children will be taken into the program on a first-come-first-served basis. Children enrolling must be three by October 31st of that year, and potty trained.

**Hours of Operation**

 Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

 Monday, Wednesday, Friday 1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

 Tuesday and Thursday 9:00 - 11:30 am.

 Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 - 3:30 pm.

Your child should come to school no earlier than 8:50 a.m. or 12:50 p.m. Time before that is used for preparation and/or teacher conferencing.

**Monthly Fees**

Monthly fees are based on the number of scheduled classes in each month x $10.40. Post-dated cheques are required upon enrollment or before the first day of classes. Cheques should be dated the first or the 20th of the applicable month and are payable to Brandon University Junior Kindergarten.

**NSF Cheques**

BU Junior Kindergarten charges $40.00 for all cheques which are returned (i.e. non-sufficient funds, account closed, etc.)

If your account is in arrears by two months, we must ask you to withdraw from the program. Accounts are held with Financial and Registration Services, 2nd Floor, Clark Hall.

**Withdrawal**

If for any reason you wish to withdraw your child from our program at any time we require at least 2 weeks written notice of the intent to withdraw. This ensures we have an opportunity to fill the vacant spot. If for any reason you do not give sufficient notice of withdrawal, you will be charged for the 2 weeks before any of your monies will be returned to you. If sufficient notice is given, your outstanding monies will be returned to you. (Post-dated cheques that have been cashed will be returned) Please contact the Program Director/ECE if you will be withdrawing your child from the program.

If your child is away for 5 consecutive school days without prior notification, you will be considered withdrawn with improper notice and a bill for 2 weeks fees will be sent.

**Late fees**

We encourage all parents/guardians and/or alternate pickup persons to be prompt when picking up their child from Junior K (11:30 – 11:45 or 3:30 – 3:45). We ask that you phone as soon as you are able to let the teachers know if you are going to be late.

BU Junior Kindergarten charges $5.00 for every 5 minutes you are late. After 30 minutes of being late, and if no contact or arrangements for pick-up have been made, alternate actions will be taken.

After 3 occurrences of late pick-up, you will be asked to remove your child from the program.

**Supply Fee**

Each child is asked to pay a $25.00 supply fee when they start at Junior Kindergarten, as well as bring in one box of Kleenex. This is to help offset the cost of supplies needed to start out the year.

**Attendance**

Regular attendance is essential for your child to make the most of his/her education. Please make every effort to have your child at school every day.

Parents are required to sign your child in and out each day.

Please inform us if your child will be absent 204-727-7420 or orrh@brandonu.ca.

BU Junior Kindergarten follows the Brandon School Division calendar and will be closed on designated PD days and school holiday days.

**Holidays**

Christmas break: December 23/19 – January 3/20

Spring break: March 30 – April 3

Planning & development days (matched to BSD PD days):

* October 25/19
* November 15/19
* November 29/19
* March 6/20
* April 17/20

We will be closed for all statutory holidays:

* Thanksgiving October 14/19
* Remembrance Day November 11/19
* Louis Riel Day February 17/20
* Good Friday April 10/20
* Victoria Day May 18/20

**Storm Days**

We will close only if harsh weather conditions prompt closure of the Brandon University. This message will be broadcast over the radio stations, on BU’s Facebook page, and by email or phone from your class rep. It is at your discretion to send your child on storm days; please call or email if you are keeping your child at home.

**Health and Safety**

**Nutrition**

We ask that you follow the guidelines of the Canadian Food Guide and supply healthy snacks for the children. A snack must contain one serving from the fruit and vegetable group and one serving from any other group (proteins, whole grains).

Please **do not** send items such as candy, chips, and pop as they will be returned home. Cut grapes in half and avoid other choking hazards.

BU Junior K is a peanut-free environment.

**Sickness**

 i) Children entering nursery school should be fully immunized to their age level.

 ii) The Jr. K director should be informed by parents of any medical condition past or present that a child has i.e. epilepsy, diabetes, heart disease, eczema, allergies etc.

 iii) No child is permitted to be in school if they are ill. Please keep children home if they have any of these symptoms: slight fever, excessively runny nose, diarrhea, vomiting, bouts of coughing, etc.

 iv) Any time a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, parents/guardians are asked to notify the director as soon as possible.

 v) No child may attend the program school with an undiagnosed rash.

 vi) If at any time a child should become ill at nursery school, a parent or emergency contact person will be notified immediately to pick the child up as soon as possible.

**Clothing**

Please dress your child in comfortable clothing that is suitable for play/mess. Include a **full change of clothes** in case of spills or accidents. Your child will need a pair of non-lace shoes to keep at Jr. K.

We may play outside when possible, even when the weather is rainy or snowy. Please dress your child in seasonally appropriate outdoor clothing.

**Fire Drill and Evacuation**

Fire drills are carried out on a monthly basis. The smoke alarm or bell is sounded and the children are evacuated with teachers. Daily attendance books and children’s files are taken. In case of an emergency our place of shelter is at the WMCA where you would be contacted to pick up your child. We also practice a lockdown procedure within the classroom.

**Toilet Training**

All children must be completely trained prior to attending the program. The Junior Kindergarten does not have changing facilities for diapers and/or pull-ups.

**Technology**

All children, parents, staff, and others involved in our program must abide by confidentiality protocols when using email, electronic devices, and the internet. We encourage parents and caregivers to leave their phones off when dropping off or picking up children in order to give your full attention to your child.

**Parent Communication**

Parents/guardians are welcome to drop in and observe the program at any time. There is a viewing window outside of the classroom. If consultation with the director is desired, please let her know ahead of time. If you would like to volunteer within the class, please let me know!

Parents are encouraged to communicate using email orrh@brandonu.ca. Telephone communication is also welcome at 204.727.7420. ,

Parents/guardians can expect ongoing communication with staff concerning:

 a) Your child’s progress

 i) Verbal communication every day

 ii) Parent/teacher interviews in January for Kindergarten children

 iii) As requested

 b) Program activities

i) A monthly newsletter is sent out to parents through email to keep them informed of events, monthly program interests and experiences, etc.

**Parent Advisory Committee**

A parent board will be set up in September with a chair, vice-chair, secretary/treasurer, and a parent representative from each class. This board member will be designated to act as a liaison for the class.

This committee will be responsible for helping with the fundraising activities for the year, as well as contacting parents in case of emergency or closure.

**Program Information**

**Field Trips**

Permission will be required on the release form sent in your registration package. Advance notice will be given for outings away from the University grounds. Transportation to outings is the responsibility of the parent.

**Transportation Policy**

The parents/guardians will be responsible for their child’s care and transportation until they sign their child in at the beginning of class and after they sign their child out at the end of class.

When the children leave the classroom as a class to travel to and from the gym or to and from a field trip, the teacher(s) and volunteers will assist in transporting or walking with the children. Only those children who have signed the permission form will be taken out of the classroom. If you have not given your permission, you must remain with your child or keep your child at home during the event.

**Fundraising**

Our school participates in a minimum of two fundraisers throughout the year to raise money for various items/experiences for our classes.

**Book Orders**

There will be a Scholastic book order available every month for you and your child to look over. If you’d like to place an order, please make cheques payable to Scholastic Canada.

**Home Reading**

Home reading will go home each day, starting in October. Included in your child’s bag will be a book for them to read with you. Please return your child’s book each day so they may choose new books to bring home.

**Rules**

There are no rules in Junior Kindergarten but we do have three expectations:

* We show respect for others
* We show respect for our environment
* We show respect for ourselves

**Toys**

Bringing toys from home is strongly discouraged due to breakage and potential sharing issues. Occasionally, we will have Show & Share days where children may bring in a special item (labelled).

I have read and understand the information in this handbook:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**BU Junior Kindergarten Inclusion Policy**

Children of all abilities are accepted into the program. Support staffing is provided on an individual basis per child, as needed. Parents are asked to disclose any information that would ensure supports are in place for the first day of classes.

The class is arranged into open, easily accessible areas to allow for children of all abilities to gain access to materials/toys. The building is equipped with wheelchair accessible entrances and ramp, as well as an elevator.

Children are observed and interacted with at all times to ensure that all their needs are being met. Activities are modified to ensure participation and success from all children involved.

Goals for children with additional support needs are carried out during play with their peers. Opportunities are provided for the children to all play together so that they develop relationships with each other. Special days and outings are planned so that all children can attend and participate in the activities.

I observe the children’s play and work to identify the abilities and needs of each child. There are limited whole group/teacher-led activities to optimize participation of all children. These activities are modified so everyone can participate and be successful in their own way. Centre time activities are open to allow both small and large group participation during play. All play materials are available to children on an interest basis, and rotated as necessary. A quiet space is provided and always accessible to children in need of personal space or alone time.

I am available to each family, every day either in person or by phone or email. Every parent is given a copy of my contact information upon registration. Parents are encouraged, and welcomed to share any information or concerns or suggestions about their child or the program/centre. Information regarding a child’s progress is provided at parent’s request or on an as needed basis. Kindergarten readiness evaluations are done in May for those children qualifying to enter kindergarten in the fall.

Individual Program Planning meetings will be attended for children who require an adapted plan. Visits from various medical professionals (Occupational therapists, speech pathologists, nurses, etc) are planned and attended with all staff who will be working with the child. Reports from the professionals are read and filed to refer to goals and recommendations on a monthly basis. Parents are part of the decision making process for planning for their child, and I welcome and value any input and information they bring forth.

Staff, including substitutes, are required to attend training on all children requiring medical service (epi pens, inhalers, seizure disorder, etc). Any opportunity to attend a training course or webinar on inclusion for professional development purposes are attended by core staff.

**Brandon University Junior Kindergarten Curriculum Statement**

Interactions and relationships to promote learning and development for children in our class are promoted through common sharing times for all children at daily circle times with activities such as show and tell, weekend review or chatting and brainstorming about new ideas for our program or things the children are interested in. Staff get down and get messy with the children by playing on the floor, playing in the sand or water, engaging in dramatic play and singing and dancing together. We also have a daily snack time that allows the children to socialize with each other and the staff in a relaxed, casual manner. Children are encouraged to play in all areas of the centre - gender stereotyping is not permitted. Working together and helping their peers is also encouraged.

Relationships between the children, parents and staff are extremely important. Staff takes the time to get to know each child and their interests so their education can be adapted to meet their needs and development levels. Parents and caregivers play an important role in their child’s lives. Greeting both the parent and the child is important, and leads to a discussion about the child’s night/weekend activities. The door is always open to parents who have questions/ concerns, or who want to observe or volunteer their time.

Communication is key to a successful year! A monthly newsletter is sent home with each child, and a parent bulletin board is set up just outside our class with a copy of the newsletter, a monthly calendar with important dates to remember on it, our topics of the month we are studying (i.e. – solar system, hibernation) and any notes or special information a parent or caregiver may need to know. I am available by email, phone (work and home) or to chat after classes with all parents.

The classroom is set up to promote learning and independence. Materials are child accessible, and easy to use. There are a variety of areas set up in our class to provide your child with choices (art, dramatic play, blocks and building, puzzles and books, science, sand and water) and to inspire creativity and learning. All areas are rotated and changed based on the ideas and interests of the children, through conversations, questions and observation.

Our schedule is consistent so the children know what to expect daily, however is flexible enough to accommodate unexpected ideas and events or special days. Transitions between activities or disruptions in the schedule are explained to the children and they are given plenty of warning (i.e. 5 minutes till we clean up for snack; today instead of having a story, Tommy’s mom is here to talk to us about being a police officer).

Within our day, there are a variety of activities that take place (art, literacy, movement, free play). To begin the year, we have some pre-planned areas of study and activities chosen by the staff. These areas are chosen based on seasons(i.e. fall, winter), general interest areas observed from past classes (i.e. animals, space, dinosaurs) and areas of knowledge of each individual staff member ( i.e. author studies, farming etc) , and then progress to more child centered activities based on their interests and abilities, observed through play and discussions with the children.

Children learn at different speeds and through different ways. Some learn by doing, some learn by listening. The activities planned take this into account. Open ended art activities are planned so children can develop creatively. Literacy activities are planned so the children can learn about print/text and have reading experiences here and at home. Science experiments are performed so the children can explore their physical world. Movement and Music activities are performed so the children can express their emotions through different ways and express their creativity. Field trips and visitors to the class are planned to help the children learn about their community.

Some parts of our curriculum that are unique are the gym program, the year-end celebrations and advancement and the home reading program. The home reading program allows the children to borrow books on a daily basis from the class and gives them the opportunity to share them with their family members at home. The gym program is run in coordination with the physical education students at BU. This program is run M/W/F mornings, and allows the children to develop physically with the help and instruction of students who will specialize in this field. Each class is also part of their own Graduation/Advancement ceremony, where parents are invited to attend and celebrate their child’s achievements for the year. The year- end party helps us celebrate our year together. It is a time for all of the children and their families from all four classes to get together and have some fun.

The children are exposed to both English and French in the class through posters and print in the room, and through French books in the home reading program. Music from around the world is enjoyed daily, ranging from Spanish Christmas carols, to Hawaiian music to move to, and songs sung in English and French. Fables and folk tales from around the world are shared with the children as part of our circle time and author studies (like Jan Brett). There are multicultural dolls to play with, and pictures on the walls depicting multicultural children. Parents wishing to share different aspects of their culture with the class are always welcome!