

River East French Exposure Nursery School



Parent Handbook 2025-2026

You can teach children a lesson for a day;
but if you can teach them to learn
by creating curiosity, they will continue the
learning process as long as they live.

www.refens.com

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Administration.....	5
REFENS EMPLOYEES.....	5
Parent involvement	6
• Board of Directors	6
• Pent Volunteers	12
• Toy Cleaning.....	12
• Fundraising Events.....	13
• Donations	13
Policies.....	13
• Enrolment Criteria.....	13
• Inclusion Policy.....	14
• Registration Policy.....	14
• Substitute Policy.....	16
• Withdrawal Policy.....	16
• Confidentiality.....	16
• Days and Times of Operation	17
• Class Sizes.....	17
• Arrival and Departure	17
• Late Pick-Up Policy.....	18
• Fees.....	18
• Late Tuition Payment Policy.....	19
• Health.....	19
(Absence, Chicken Pox, Lice, Life-threatening Allergies & Pandemic Plan)	
• Behaviour Management.....	22
• Travel Policy.....	24
• Emergency Procedures	24
(Fire Drills, Evacuation, Lockdown)	
• Child Abuse.....	26
• Insurance.....	26
Operating Procedures.....	26
• Daily Timetable.....	26
• School Supplies	26
• School Pictures.....	27
• Parties/Concerts.....	27
• Birthdays	28
• Outings.....	28
Code of Conduct.....	28
Curriculum Statement.....	32
Goals and Objectives.....	38

River East French Exposure Nursery School Co-operative Incorporated (REFENS)

If you have questions and/or concerns, please contact the Chair of the REFENS Board of Directors at chair@refens.com

This handbook is provided to all parents to get acquainted with REFENS. Please read it thoroughly to familiarize yourself with our policies and operating procedures.

INTRODUCTION

We are happy you have chosen to send your child to REFENS. We hope the information contained in this booklet will help you throughout the upcoming year.

At the beginning of each month, a calendar/newsletter containing specific classroom information (e.g. Show & Tell, birthdays, messy days...) will be shared with families so you know what to be prepared for. Additionally, emails may be issued by the Board of Directors to keep all families informed of upcoming events as well as fundraisers and any other important "news". If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions regarding our Nursery School, please contact any member of the REFENS Board of Directors. A list of the current REFENS Board of Directors can be found on our website and is posted in our classroom.

Our school website is refens.com. Please check this site for contact email addresses.

ADMINISTRATION

REFENS is a private, parent-run program with 2 salaried employees. River East French Exposure Nursery School Co-operative Incorporated is licensed under the Manitoba Government - Community Child Care Standards Act and is required to abide by the regulations set out in this legislation.

REFENS EMPLOYEES

REFENS employs 2 people to manage our classes. The TEACHER is responsible for the daily operations of the school. The CLASSROOM ASSISTANT works with the teacher to ensure that all REFENS classes run smoothly. Here is a general outline of their respective duties:

Teacher

1. Responsible for the Educational Curriculum and day to day operation of the Nursery School
2. Establishes a permanent inventory of supplies
3. Supplies a list for Classroom Supply Coordinator to replenish supplies required for crafts and activities
4. Notifies Chair/board members of any problems or situation that arises in the classroom regarding health and safety of any child
5. Arranges a list of duties for classroom cleaning
6. Prepares a monthly planner and distributes to all Parents/Guardians
7. Discusses activities and program criteria with the Board Members
8. Acts as an advisor to the Board of Directors

Classroom Assistant

1. Works with the teacher to ensure the day-to-day

- operation of the nursery school
2. Helps maintain a permanent inventory of supplies
 3. Notifies Chair/board members of any problems or situation that arises in the classroom regarding health and safety of any child
 4. Arranges a list of duties for classroom cleaning

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We believe that your child will benefit from your involvement in their education. Here are the ways that you, as a parent, can be involved:

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors is comprised of volunteer **members*** elected annually by its members at the Annual General Meeting. The Board is responsible for conducting the affairs of the co-operative (REFENS) in compliance with the Co-operatives Act, REFENS By-Laws and all licensing requirements. The Board will implement and determine general policies for the nursery school while operating within the given finances.

We encourage anyone who is interested in being on the Board of Directors to read the following job descriptions and talk to a current board member. The Board meets monthly to ensure smooth operation of the school. At certain times of the year more frequent meetings may be required.

**a member is someone who has paid the \$40.00 annual membership fee and is interested in helping our Nursery School function by volunteering their time and skills*

All parents/members are encouraged to attend the AGM in

April. Nominations and voting for positions on the board will take place at this time. Please contact the Co-Chair at co-chair@refens.com for more details.

BOARD MEMBER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

(General outline)

Chair

1. Responsible for supervision, administration and management of the affairs for the co-operative
2. Functions as the Board coordinator
3. Prepares agenda and chairs the Board and General Meetings
4. Is a signing officer
5. Prepares bi-monthly newsletter
6. Hires teacher in conjunction with others on the Board of Directors
7. Negotiates teacher's salary
8. Takes care of registration if the co-chairperson position is vacant
9. Attends monthly meetings
11. Comes to the class on a regular basis

Co-Chair

1. Performs duties of the Chair in their absence
2. Responsible for program registration and ensuring that all necessary forms are completed for each child
3. Compiles a waiting list and informs these families when a space becomes available
4. Updates and maintains website and webpages/forms
5. Chairs meetings in Chairperson's absence
6. Is a signing officer
7. Attends monthly meetings
9. Comes to the class on a regular basis

Secretary

1. Records minutes of the *General Meeting* and all Board meetings
2. Responsible for typing/writing of minutes
3. Responsible for archiving minutes in the classroom and on the Cloud
4. Responsible for distributing minutes to Board members
5. Post highlights of *Monthly meeting* in the classroom
6. Writes letters and thank-you notes deemed necessary by the Board
7. Updates and maintains the *Secretary's Binder*, *Minutes Binder* and "*In Camera*" Binder
8. Attends monthly meetings

Treasurer

1. Responsible for teacher's payroll, *Receiver General* remittance and insurance payments
2. Keeps and maintains up to date records of all monies received or paid out by the *Nursery School*
3. Submits and presents a monthly written financial report at each *Board Meeting*, as well as an annual revenue and expense report to *Parents/Guardians* at the *General Meeting*
4. Is a signing officer
5. Provides an income tax receipt for each family for the period of *September to December* and then again for *January to June*
6. Responsible for submitting records to the *Worker's Compensation* and the *Canada Revenue Agency*
7. Helps during registration with the writing of receipts, collecting postdated cheques, and collection of cash payments
8. Deposits cheques monthly, deals with any *N.S.F.* cheques and collects all cash payments
9. Collects money from *Fundraiser* or *Class Coordinators*

- for Nursery School events/outings
10. Works together with the accountant to ensure all audits and financial statements are accurate and on time
 11. Attends monthly meetings
 12. Comes to the class on a regular basis
 13. Archives all documents in the classroom and to the REFENS ownCloud in June

Fundraiser

1. Presents fundraising suggestions/ideas to the Board
2. Organizes fundraising activities
3. Arranges with Class Coordinators to collect money and orders at fundraising deadlines
4. Distributes products to Nursery School families
5. Attends monthly meetings

Class Coordinator

1. Arranges extra volunteers for class when requested by the teacher
2. Assists Fundraiser in arranging pick-up of money and forms for their class
3. Responsible for posting party sign-up sheet prior to class parties.
4. Responsible for distribution and collection of permission slips for each class outing in conjunction with the teacher
5. Compiles a list of all children attending a class outing and the name of adult responsible for the child (for the teacher)
6. Helps parents with transportation issues (assists in arrangements, does not provide the ride)
7. Attends monthly meetings
8. Comes to the class on a regular basis

Classroom Supply Coordinator

1. Responsible for purchase of supplies required by the teacher
2. Responsible for purchasing gifts/treats for parties when funds permit
3. Arranges to find an Elf for each class' Christmas Party
4. Is a credit card holder (signs a credit card holder agreement form)
5. Attends monthly meetings
6. Comes to the class on a regular basis

Alumni Representative

1. Contacts REFENS Alumni with all pertinent information as determined by the Board
2. Organizes a Special Event for the enjoyment of all current students, alumni and their families
3. Responsible for organizing the Christmas Hamper
4. Arranges babysitters when needed during members meetings
5. Attends monthly meetings

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

Because REFENS has 2 employees, we no longer require parent volunteers in the classroom daily in order to respect child/adult ratios as dictated by our licensing body. We will however continue to welcome parent involvement in our classes to maintain relationships between your child's school life and your family. While a parent will not be required at each class, we will still require help on special activity days, with toy cleaning and on special occasions.

Families are no longer required to provide background checks to volunteer in the classroom as all activities will be supervised by our staff.

REFENS will be maintaining a volunteer calendar where parents will be invited to sign up to share activities and events with their child in our classroom.

REFENS welcomes parent volunteers in order to expose the children to a parent's particular talent (e.g. storytelling, painting, singing, crafts, instrument playing, etc.). Please advise the teacher if you would like to be scheduled as a guest.

Substitutes

In order to keep our program running if one of our employees needs to be away, we pay an honorarium of \$30 per class to a parent or grandparent who has clear background checks. Please email co-chair@refens.com to find out more about being someone we can call on as a substitute.

Parent Volunteer Duties

When a parent volunteers in a REFENS classroom, their duties will be determined by the teacher. These duties may include activity preparation, special in-class event, one-to-one time with a child or extra supervision of the class.

Toy Cleaning

A toy cleaning schedule will be posted in the classroom. Each family will be required to sign up for a certain number of cleaning days determined each year by the number of families enrolled in our program.

Fundraising Events

REFENS is a non-profit organization therefore some of the money required to operate is acquired through fundraising

events. Parents' involvement in this area is essential to keeping our fees reasonable and allows us to cover the costs related to class outings throughout the year. New ideas and suggestions are always welcome.

Donations

Donations are always welcome! If you have toys, books, software, costumes/dress-up clothes and craft items (e.g. yarn, felt, fabric paint, etc.) that you no longer need, please check with the teacher to see if REFENS could put them to use.

POLICIES

Enrollment Criteria

- The child **MUST** be at least three years of age by December 31st of the registration year.
- The child **MUST** be toilet trained.
- An alternative phone number **MUST** be provided in case of an emergency. Anyone picking up the child **MUST** know the "password" chosen by the parents and marked on the application form. Children will not be allowed to leave with people claiming to have permission to pick them up if they do not know the "password". **THIS IS FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION.**
- **NON PAYMENT OF FEES OR EVASION OF DUTIES THAT ARE REASONABLY REQUIRED OF A MEMBER MAY BE GROUNDS FOR CANCELLATION OF MEMBERSHIP.** This decision is made at the discretion of the Board.

Inclusion Policy (for children with additional support needs)

ACCESS

- We accept and welcome children of all abilities.
- Indoor areas are arranged so all children can move freely and make choices based on their abilities, interests and needs.

PARTICIPATION

- Opportunities are provided for all children to participate in social free play and routines throughout the day.
- We believe that each child deserves an environment and experiences that promote growth in all areas of his or her development.
- We use program approaches that best meet the needs of each child and his or her family.

SUPPORT

- We respect and value input from parents and encourage them to be part of the decision-making process for their child.
- We support families by consulting with early intervention professionals.
- We work with parents and professionals who have valuable knowledge and expertise to share with us and each other.
- The teaching and support staff receive training to learn about various disabilities.

Registration Policy (for the upcoming school year)

Those families that are currently enrolled in REFENS and those families that have previously attended REFENS are eligible for Alumni Registration, held in February. Registration for the General Public will be held in March. The registration dates will be chosen by the Board of Directors. It is the

responsibility of the family to contact the Co-Chair at co-chair@refens.com for the necessary registration forms.

All current 3-year-old students that are registering for the 4-year-old program for the following year may hold their current class spot for the 4-year-old class (ie. AM spot to AM spot or PM spot to PM spot). The remaining spots not filled will be available on a first come, first served basis for those families wanting to switch classes (ie. PM class moving to AM class or vice versa). After all spots are filled a waitlist will be generated in the order that applications are received. This policy is only in effect until the current 3-year-old registration is closed.

Members of our Board of Directors have the opportunity to register one child prior to registration opening with a maximum of 3 children per class. In a situation where there are more than 3 Directors registering for the same class, the tie will be decided at the January Board meeting by a scrutineer by means of drawing names out of a hat.

During the registration period(s), all registrations are accepted on a first come, first served basis. **Spots are only reserved once the Membership Fee, Tuition Deposit and Registration Forms are completed and submitted.**

All inquiries regarding enrollment must be directed to the Co-Chair. All inquiries regarding program content may be directed to the teacher or Chairperson.

Substitute Policy

In the event that the teacher and/or the assistant are absent, the REFENS Board, in consultation with the teacher, will hire a parent substitute. We feel that familiarity with the children

and the program is in the best interest of the students. If a parent substitute is not available, the Board will source a substitute teacher externally.

Withdrawal Policy

The Membership Fee and Tuition Deposit are **non-refundable** and you are required to pay for the entire month of withdrawal, regardless of how many more unattended classes remain in that month. Should you withdraw your child before January 31st, the post-dated cheques not yet due will be returned to you. Should you withdraw your child after January 31st. Your February to May post-dated cheques are non-refundable. It is mandatory that you fill out a **Withdrawal Form** (available at refens.com or in the classroom) at the time of withdrawal.

Confidentiality Policy

In accordance with our licensing body's regulations and REFENS Privacy Policy, any information, verbal or written, regarding the children or their families, will not be released to anybody other than the legal guardians of the child. In the case of emergency or injury to the child, information may be released to the police or medical staff attending to the child.

Days and Times of Operation Policy

REFENS operates from September to June inclusively. We follow the school calendar established by the River East Transcona School Division Board (RETSD) School Board and therefore will be closed for Christmas Break, Spring Break and all statutory holidays. On some divisional and provincial in-service days, we do not have access to the classroom by decree of the RETSD.

Each session will be as follows:

9:15-11:35 a.m.	Tuesday & Thursday
1:00-3:20 p.m.	Tuesday & Thursday

9:15-11:35 a.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday

1:00-3:20 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday

Whether a session will be a 3- or 4-year-old class is determined annually by the Board of Directors based on registration numbers. Parents will be informed of class composition by telephone as soon as possible.

Class Size Policy

Maximum enrollment will be 12 children per class for the 3-year-old program and 15 children per class for the 4-year-old program. (Classes may be cancelled, combined or re-organized if registration does not meet minimum or exceeds maximum requirements. This decision will be made by the Board and the Teacher.)

Arrival and Departure Policy

All children are to be brought into and picked up from our classroom by their parent or designated escort at the appropriate times. **Please do not leave children unattended in the foyer, hallway or classroom at any time.** If you cannot pick up your child, please inform the teacher in advance as to who will be picking up your child. REFENS assumes responsibility for the child when the child is in the classroom and signed into the attendance log.

Parents are asked to wait in the Ecole Margaret-Underhill rear foyer (back entrance) no more than 5 minutes before class starts and ends. Anyone arriving any earlier must wait outside the school.

Please take your child to the washroom before class. This prevents interruptions in our program. Remember that if one child mentions having to go, it creates quite a chain reaction!

Late Pick-Up Policy

REFENS is responsible for the children during school hours. When a parent/guardian is late picking up their child, the teacher is required to supervise this child until the parent/guardian arrives. As a non-profit organization, we do not have additional funds to pay our teacher over time for this service.

Parents who pick-up their child late will be issued a letter of warning from the Board. The second late pick-up will result in a \$5.00 fee for 5 to 15 minutes late and an additional \$10.00 for each additional 15 minutes. After the third late pick-up, the Board has the right to remove your child from the program. There will be no refund of the current month's fees and all regular withdrawal policies remain in place.

We understand that there are unforeseen circumstances, and we encourage that you phone the school or your class coordinator if you are unable to pick your child up on time.

Payment Policy for Fees/Annual Tuition

Payment will be due on the first day of school in September, there are 3 payment options:

1. Nine Monthly Installments - September thru May, postdated to the 1st of each month
2. Three Equal Installments - September, December and March, postdated to the 1st of each month
3. One Lump Sum, dated September 1st of the registration year

The non-refundable membership fee (one per family) and tuition deposit are due and cashed at the time of initial registration.

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for N.S.F. cheques. If payment is not received further actions will be taken in the

form of a letter of warning, followed by the withdrawal of your child from REFENS.

Subsidy for children enrolled in REFENS is available from the Manitoba Provincial Government because we are a licensed Child Care Facility. However, the Membership Fee is NOT covered thru subsidy and is the responsibility of the parent. This payment is due at the time of initial registration. Please contact the REFENS Treasurer at treasurer@refens.com for more details about subsidy.

Late Tuition Payment Policy

Any late tuition fees are subject to \$25.00 fine. Tuition payments (cash or cheque) are due by the first of the month. Any alternate payment arrangements must be approved by the Board. After 3 late payments, the Board has the right to remove your child from the program. There will be no refund of the current month's fees and all regular withdrawal policies remain in place.

Health Policy

If your child will be absent from class due to illness, you may call your class coordinator and he/she will advise the teacher. Because you bring your child to the classroom, the teacher will assume that if the child is not at school, then he/she must be with you - the parent.

If your child has an infectious disease, he/she should not be sent to school. Please advise the teacher as to the nature of the disease/infection so proper action can be taken. If your child arrives ill or becomes ill at school, the parent will be notified to pick up the child. No medication will be administered by the staff unless the required form is filled out and signed by the parent. In case of outbreak of a communicable disease, REFENS will notify the Public Health

Office and the area Child Care Coordinator. If there is a known case of German measles, mothers in their first 3 months of pregnancy are advised to stay away from the school.

Please note these Health Policy specifications:

Chicken Pox

- Child is taken home as soon as possible.
- Cannot return to school until all sores are scabbed over.

Lice

- Child is taken home as soon as possible.
- Cannot return to school until he/she has received 2 treatments and all nits are removed.

Life-threatening allergies

A policy has been developed by REFENS to deal with life-threatening allergies. Parents of children with such allergies should contact the teacher to receive a copy of this document and establish an action plan.

*River East Transcona School Division has a **NO PEANUT/TREE NUT** policy in all buildings. In accordance with the guidelines for life-threatening allergies, there are to be no peanut/tree nut products of any kind brought into the division's facilities.*

Pandemic Plan

In case of a pandemic health event, the REFENS Board of Directors has developed the following action plan:

BOARD RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Maintain communication with the teacher about classroom activities (i.e. absenteeism, classroom cleanliness...etc)
- Maintain communication with the parents.
- Have a list of three substitute teachers who are not within our immediate school population therefore not affected by our "germs".

TEACHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Ensure good hand washing practices with all children, staff and parent volunteers.
- Ensure that the children, staff and parent volunteers practice healthy living habits (i.e. sneezing/coughing into their elbow, using a tissue and washing hands)
- Ensure cleanliness of the toys the children are using.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

- If your child is sick, fevered, has nausea, vomiting, or any other flu like symptom, please keep them at home.
- If your child's sickness persists, please take them to the appropriate medical personnel and inform us as needed regarding their status
- Practice good hand washing technique at home with your family.
- Sign-up for toy cleaning duties in the classroom to ensure a safe and healthy environment for your child.

The REFENS Board of Directors believes that prevention is the key to keep infection and germs from spreading! We can assist in keeping the classroom clean and germ free for the safety of our children and their educators.

Behaviour Management Policy

REFENS and our teacher do not accept the use of physical punishment, verbal or emotional abuse, or any harassment of the children to promote acceptable behaviour. Children are treated as individuals, each with different personalities, needs and aptitudes. Behaviour is managed in a caring and accepting environment in which children are encouraged to participate fully in the program and enjoy their experience while learning

new developmental skills. Positive behaviour is rewarded through positive reinforcement. Negative behaviour is discouraged through negative re-enforcement (i.e. discussion with the child, temporary withdrawal of some privileges, calming the child through discussion in a quieter area of the room) and finally, any behaviour problems of a more serious nature are discussed with the parents so that a mutual and consistent approach can be worked out. Children are encouraged to behave in an acceptable manner in order to develop both individual skills and positive peer relationships, but not in a way that promotes regimentation or stifles individuality. All behaviour strategies used are based on the child's developmental capabilities.

If a child must be disciplined in class he/she will be spoken to and the teacher will notify the parent that same day. If the problem persists the teacher will seek parental assistance to overcome the problem. If, however, the child continues on a regular basis to disrupt the class, the Board of Directors may ask for the removal of the child from the program.

Any incident that occurs in the classroom or outside of the class, (e.g. to or from the washroom, playground, etc.) not witnessed by the teacher, **MUST** be reported by staff or volunteers to the teacher. This ideally should be reported at the site of incident whenever possible, or as soon as the group returns to class.

All of the following situations must be reported to the teacher (regardless of whether the child seems "fine" or not):

- Any type of accident (falling anywhere in the school, playground, gym or on school outings, scratches - no matter how minor they seem, bumps, wetting of clothing either due to accident or spills)
- Complaints made by child (stomach aches, headaches, feeling hot or cold, not feeling well).

- Emotional upsets (crying, tantrums, aggressiveness, running away, etc)

If the teacher is not present and staff or volunteer feel that disciplinary action is necessary, let it be known that REFENS does not condone ANY TYPE OF PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL PUNISHMENT. All disciplinary measures must be positively reinforced and reported to the teacher IMMEDIATELY so that the parents can be informed at the completion of class. ***To date we have not had an incident with any helper/volunteer overstepping their disciplinary boundaries.***

Please be advised that if an incident were to arise and cause physical and/or emotional harm to child in our care, REFENS would file a complaint with Manitoba Child and Family Services. The volunteer in question would then be relieved of any future volunteer dates until an investigation was completed. REFENS is responsible to account for any and every incident while your child is in our care. We do sincerely appreciate all of our classroom helpers and we thank you all for ensuring the safety of our children and our program.

Travel Policy

- Permission slips must be signed by parents prior to field trips or outings.
- When traveling to or from outings or field trips, all children in the vehicle must be restrained properly with seat belts.
- REFENS is responsible for all children prior to leaving the classroom. Once directions and instructions have been given and the children have left the classroom, they become the driver's responsibility.
- REFENS resumes responsibility of all children once they have gathered and have been accounted for at the destination.
- All drivers should review their liability insurance prior to volunteering to drive children to outings or field trips.

Emergency Procedure Policies

Fire Drills

Every month we will be practicing what to do in case of a fire in our school. We will also be learning about fire safety with PLAY SAFE! BE SAFE! a program designed especially for young children. On occasion, the fire bells will ring in the school and we must evacuate along with everyone else. Please check the map in the classroom designating the nearest fire exit. If you are waiting in the school when the fire bell rings, use the nearest exit to leave the building.

First Aid Kit - is in the class backpack we take to the bathroom

PA system (to reach the office) - the call button is below the chalkboard.

Evacuation Location

In the event of any school evacuation, we will be sent to Ecole Centrale (604 Day St. 204-958-6426). In such an emergency, you will be contacted by telephone as soon as possible.

Lockdown/Shelter in place

The River East Transcona School Division and the Province of Manitoba require that each school have procedures in place to use in situations where students need to be kept in a safe location within the school. This is referred to as a *lockdown/shelter in place procedure*. This procedure might be used in a variety of circumstances: a medical situation in which the hallways must be kept clear, a situation outside the building such as a fire in the neighborhood, an unknown person in the school or any other situation the administration feels would warrant keeping the students safe in their classrooms. Students must practice this procedure a minimum of twice per year so that if there ever is a need to

use the lockdown/shelter in place procedure, it will happen quickly and effectively. Procedures are practiced similar to fire drills. Before such a procedure practice takes place, teachers will explain the rationale and procedures to students at a developmentally appropriate level.

What does this mean for REFENS? As a private program within the walls of Ecole Margaret-Underhill, we must follow along with the plan. In our class the children, assistant, all volunteers and the teacher would sit on the floor with the door locked and lights off until we get the all-clear from the office. This room is a safe place because the door is locked from the inside and because we are short, we cannot be seen from the windows. We believe that our students are too young to understand what will be happening, so other than telling them that we are going to a safe spot, we will not go into details about why we are staying safe. In such an emergency, you will be contacted as soon as possible.

Child Abuse Policy

Our first responsibility is to your child. If we suspect any form of child abuse, it will be reported immediately to the proper authorities.

Insurance Policy

REFENS has adequate liability insurance.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

Daily timetable Example

All activities are inclusive and based on the developmental capabilities of the child.

15 mins: Arrival and free play

20 mins: Circle time (O Canada, attendance, daily helpers, calendar, weather)

30 mins: Directed activity to develop motor skills

30 mins: Center time (stories and language arts, math and manipulative, housekeeping, creative art, science and discovery, music and movement, blocks and building, sand table, water table or bead table)

15 mins: Classroom clean-up and washroom break

10 mins: Water break and clean-up

10 mins: Story time

10 mins: Game (outdoors or indoors)

NOTE: Order of events may differ on some days

School Supplies

Your child will need the following items at school:

- *indoor shoes*
- *backpack* - please provide a bag large enough to carry a good sized craft and other paraphernalia. Please check your child's basket after every class to find out what your child created and for any notices.
- *clothing* - please provide a change of clothing including underwear and socks, in the event of spills or accidents.
- *a metal or plastic water bottle with water in it*- please provide a metal or plastic water bottle with water in it that is labelled with your child's name that they can bring to school with them.

Label ALL items with your child's name

School pictures

Individual and class pictures will be taken in the fall by a professional photographer. Parents are not obligated to purchase any of the photographs.

Parties/Concerts

To celebrate special occasions and to offer a chance to show off what we have learned, each class will host several parties throughout the school year. At Halloween, Christmas and at the end of the year, we invite Mom, Dad, brothers, sisters, grandparents, aunts, uncles, friends...to visit our classroom and enjoy a concert prepared for the occasion. In January, we invite Grandparents to come and spend a class with us. In April, it's time for Mom and Dad to be spoiled on Parent's Day. These gatherings offer you the opportunity to get to know your child's friends and their families. For all these special occasions, the class coordinators will post a food sign-up sheet in the classroom next to the helper calendar. All of our parties are potluck thus giving you a chance to show off your culinary talents! If you do not come to the classroom on a regular basis, please call your class coordinator 2 weeks before the party and arrange for your contribution. Please ask if there are any food allergies in your child's class.

Birthdays

As it is not always possible to be at school on your child's birthday, we designate ONE day and celebrate with all the children having a birthday that month. It would be greatly appreciated if, on this day, ONE parent could provide cupcakes or other birthday treat for us to share. If you have any special birthday requests, please let the teacher know during the month that precedes your child's birthday. Please ask if there are any food allergies in your child's class.

Outings

Outings are organized periodically throughout the year. These

trips are integrated into the school curriculum and are geared specifically for young children to enhance the learning experience. Outings such as *Le village du Père Noël* (Santa's Village) and the *Children's Festival* are designed to show the children that they can use French in places other than school. Parents will be notified well in advance of an outing and are required to sign a permission form allowing their child to participate.

CODE OF CONDUCT

At River East French Exposure Nursery School, we strive to provide a safe and caring, learning environment for the children, staff and families. We believe in equality and respect diversity.

The following people are expected to behave in a respectful manner and comply with this code of conduct:

- Board of Directors
- Director/Teacher /Assistant (referred to as "staff" in this document)
- Children
- Parents/guardians of children enrolled
- All others involved with our centre

Guiding Principles for Appropriate Behaviour

Be Respectful

We are respectful of ourselves and other people. We are respectful of the ideas and feelings of others. We are respectful of the environment, equipment and materials.

Be Safe

We work and play safely to help keep ourselves and others from getting hurt.

Be Cooperative

We solve our problems by talking and listening to each other respectfully to find a solution. When we cannot solve a problem ourselves, we ask for help.

Be Supportive of Learning

We learn to the best of our abilities and support the learning of others.

Developmental Capabilities of Children

We understand that it is normal for children to display inappropriate behaviour at times for a variety of reasons. The developmental capabilities of each child will always be considered when determining both expectations for behaviour and consequences of inappropriate behaviour.

Appropriate Use of Technology

All children, parents, staff and others involved in our centre must use e-mail, electronic devices and the Internet according to our policies. This protects people's privacy and the confidentiality of information.

Unacceptable Behaviours

The following behaviours by children, staff, parents and others involved in our centre are unacceptable:

- All forms of bullying (physical, verbal, emotional, social or cyber bullying), including comments, actions or visual displays that are intentional, hurtful and repetitive
- Harassment, including behaviour that degrades, demeans, humiliates or embarrasses someone that a reasonable person would know is unwelcome
- All forms of abuse (sexual, physical or psychological), including verbally, in writing or otherwise
- Discrimination against any person or group because of their race, colour, ancestry, nationality or place of origin, ethnic background, religion, age, sex, gender-determined characteristics, sexual orientation, marital and family

status, source of income, political belief and physical or mental disability

- Actions that put another person at risk of harm, including violent physical acts (with or without a weapon) and threatening someone

Proactive Strategies

We actively strive to create an environment that supports the health, safety and well-being of the children by:

- Having realistic and developmentally appropriate expectations for behaviour
- Setting up the environment and materials to encourage appropriate behaviour and reduce potential for inappropriate behaviour
- Planning a program based on children's interests and developmental needs
- Establishing consistent yet flexible schedules and routines that help children gain trust, security and self-control.

We create a positive environment for children, parents, staff and others involved in our centre by:

- Developing positive relationships, including making time to talk and listen
- Establishing clear, consistent, simple limits
- Stating limits in a positive way and periodically reminding people
- Providing explanations for limits
- Working together to solve problems
- Modelling and encouraging appropriate behaviour

Consequences for Inappropriate Behaviour

We will consistently respond to inappropriate behaviour by children, parents, staff and others involved in our centre by:

- reminding people of expectations and limits
- using a respectful approach to explain why a behaviour is inappropriate and what behaviour is expected

- talking only about the behaviour, not labelling the person
- responding sympathetically and acknowledging feelings
- establishing natural, logical consequences.

We will consider further steps, depending on the severity and frequency of the behaviour, such as:

- using behavioural analysis to learn what may be contributing to a child's inappropriate behaviour and how to help reduce or eliminate the behaviour
- having a formal or informal meeting to discuss concerns and to develop an action plan to encourage appropriate behaviour in the future
- developing a written contract with an adult or older child that outlines specific expectations and consequences
- giving a written warning that outlines specific concerns and consequences if the behaviour continues
- accessing outside resources for help, such as:
 - a behaviour specialist or other professionals to help staff understand and reduce a child's inappropriate behaviour
 - child and family services to access parenting supports
 - mediation services to resolve conflicts between adults
 - the Manitoba Human Rights Commission for information and advice to resolve an issue informally or to make a formal complaint if the behaviour involves discrimination or harassment
 - the police to assist with threatening behaviour

In extreme cases, we will take additional steps such as:

- suspending or dismissing a staff member
- suspending or withdrawing childcare services because of a child's or family member's inappropriate behaviour
- in the case of a visitor not allowing the person to return to the centre
- contacting the police and/or child and family services

(CFS), if the behaviour is illegal such as abuse, assault or threatening another person

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

"Why and how we do what we do"

Interaction

A child's day starts the moment he/she walks through the door to our classroom. Children and their families are always greeted by the teacher by name and with a smile. Communication is encouraged by asking open ended questions about their evening or weekend, how they did with their "homework", did they enjoy a certain activity with their family and other such topics. As children arrive at school, it is free play time thus allowing them some time to ease into the environment, seek out their friends or share with the teacher.

Our daily schedule gives the children a sense of stability as they know what activities are to come and what is expected from them. This being said, a schedule for children must also be flexible because it is important to follow the wave when an exciting activity, discussion or discovery enthralls the group.

We start our class with free play to make the most of learning opportunities. Play time makes up approximately 60 minutes of our 2 hour and 20-minute class time since preschool children learn best while they play. During this time the children have access to a wide variety of play materials and optional activities.

We have circle time which gives us all an opportunity to talk or to listen as someone usually has something they want to share with us! This leads us to our structured learning time where the children have the opportunity to practice a new fine motor

skill, do a science experiment or try out a new art technique under the direction of the teacher. All the children have the time that is needed to complete their activity and then move on to free play in areas of choice. When play time is over, we clean up our toys, tidy the room. Next, we have a water break where everyone has the chance to sit at the table for some conversation with friends. The library is set out along with some comfortable pillows so everyone can sit and read either alone or with a buddy and before we know it, we must say "Au revoir" as our class is over.

Our routine allows us to learn and play in a school space. We use our classroom, we walk through the halls to the bathroom, attend assemblies in the meeting area, interact with the secretaries and principal in the office and always are happy to see our friendly custodian!

Environments

Our main learning environment is our classroom. The play space and materials are planned in advance by the teacher. Our room is arranged to meet a variety of needs for children's play. We use themes to determine which materials to put on shelves but may modify this plan to include the children's current interests. We have a house area - where the children can play with dolls or dress-up or the play kitchen; there is the science station - with magnifying glasses and magnets to help maintain our curiosity; there is the small toy area where children can play with cars and people and animals; we have a craft station where masterpieces can be created with recyclables and buttons and bows and imagination. Books and puzzles are renewed every month to keep the children interested but the great variety of toys in our class are available to all during the school year, whenever they are ready to be discovered!

We have a large, carpeted area, great for building castles with wooden blocks to learn to balance and solve problems or have a picnic with the food from the play kitchen, where children learn to negotiate and get along with others.

We have a variety of tables, some large enough for many kids to do a puzzle at one end or diaper a doll at the other! We have small tables that work well for serving a delicious meal from the kitchen. In both examples, children develop their fine motor skills like dexterity and coordination.

Children are allowed to move freely about the room, using the space as they see fit from day to day. Some days will see our tables used for brilliant creativity with glue, tape, cardboard and buttons whereas on another day, it will be the framework for a really great tent!

We experience the outside world by going on outings to the Children's Museum, attending the Children's Festival to name but two. We have access to a great outdoor play space which is used in all seasons. In class learning is our primary focus, but every year our Board of Directors also organizes an evening event for all our REFENS families.

Relationships

In our class everyone works together. Children are encouraged to help each other out at work or at play by lifting a heavy toy as a team or helping a friend put on some dress-up clothes. When a child wishes to play alone, this is respected by the others too.

Our students are well represented and proud of their classroom. Their class photo is framed and hanging on the wall. Their individual picture is hanging on the magnet board and the bulletin boards are always displaying something that was created by our students during our class to show

children's development and learning to families. We run a slide show on our computer showing pictures of the fun we had in class.

At pick-up time, the teacher takes the opportunity to talk to parents about their child's accomplishments that day - whether it is writing their name for the first time or the way their child offered comfort to a sad friend it is important to communicate these classroom events.

The multi-cultural nature of our society is reflected in our program. Our books feature all types of people and places; our dolls represent many different races of our planet; our play food is very international - the children can make chicken fingers or sushi depending on the mood of the day! The dress-up clothes are made for either boys or girls and represent a variety of occupations and styles. This way, children feel they belong, but are also exposed to differences.

Our Nursery School is a co-operative, now with 2 salaried employees: a teacher and an assistant. We encourage parents to volunteer at REFENS so they can be part of their child's educational experience. It is wonderful to get to know each child's Mom, Dad, grandparent or aunt/uncle and each person brings something unique to our classroom environment. We also have a relationship with the other students in our school. Some students from Grades 3, 4 or 5 give up their recess time to come and help out in our class. This is a wonderful way to get to know some big kids and to bring different play ideas to our students.

The children are encouraged to treat our classroom with respect. Brooms and dust pans are available to the children if they make a mess, we have sinks with cloths, soap and towels at kid level to clean up accidents, so they learn self help skills!

When it is clean-up time, a count-down of a few minutes is given and then the clean-up music starts! Each person is responsible for the toys and tools that they play with but if they are done before the others each child is encouraged to help their friends!

Planned and spontaneous experiences

During class time there is a mixture of child-led and teacher led activities. Child-led activities occur spontaneously because of a discovery a child has made. Sometimes they lead to discoveries for the whole class. One day we clipped all of our pegs together and discovered that our class was not big enough for all of them. We took our toys into the hall and laid all the pegs end to end. This led to us counting not only the pegs we used, but also the floor tiles we covered and how many children laid head to toe it took to reach the end of our peg line! This experience led to many measuring activities and discovery of measuring tools.

During circle time, children take turns being the "étoile de la journée", the designated teacher's helper, by taking attendance, discovering the captains of the day and completing the calendar. Even though one child is the leader for all these jobs, all the children have the opportunity to contribute. When taking attendance, each child has the opportunity to predict how many children are actually at school. When discovering the names of our captains, all children read the letters of the names. When looking for the correct number on the calendar, all children offer help to the "étoile" because good friends help each other out!

Teacher-led activities are planned in advance by staff. Staff use themes to determine a starting point for an activity but may modify it to include what children are showing an interest in. This gives children hands on opportunities to learn about their interests. As an example, when we learn about the

exciting properties of combining vinegar and baking soda, extra supplies are available to the children in containers they can reach for them to try the experiment again or to explore different combinations of the elements.

Our nursery school curriculum is always evolving! The planned activities are interpreted in different ways by different groups of children and influenced by what they know from other education adventures. This makes River East French Exposure Nursery School an exciting and dynamic place to learn and grow!

REFENS MISSION STATEMENT

REFENS provides a safe and nurturing environment that exposes children to the French language, fosters a lifelong love of learning, and prepares students for school by offering a positive and engaging introduction to education. · To provide a happy and fruitful environment for a child.

REFENS VISION STATEMENT

REFENS continually strives to create a community where children, families, and educators collaborate to foster an inclusive environment that celebrates cultural diversity. · To teach the child how to relate to other children and to a teacher.

REFENS VALUES

Respect: We foster an environment where children learn to respect themselves, others, and the world around them, encouraging kindness, acceptance, and love.

Exploration: We value exploration by encouraging children to discover the world around them through hands-on learning and curiosity. By introducing the French language, we open the door to future educational opportunities.

Fun: We believe in the power of play! Our curriculum engages students through group play, music, arts, science, and physical activity, to ensure that every child has fun while developing important fine and gross motor skills.

Empowerment: we empower children by providing them with opportunities to make choices, express their interests, and engage in activities that promote independence and self-confidence. Through developmentally appropriate expectations, a thoughtfully organized environment, and flexible routines, children feel secure and supported as they develop trust, self-control, and problem-solving skills.

Nurturing: We provide a safe, supportive environment where every child feels loved and valued, helping them to grow into confident, well-rounded individuals.

Support: We value support by creating an inclusive environment where all children, regardless of ability, are given the opportunities to thrive. Through collaboration with families, we ensure each child's unique needs are met, fostering their growth in every area of development.

RIVER EAST FRENCH EXPOSURE
NURSERY SCHOOL CO-OP



Located in
Ecole Margaret-Underhill
25 Regina Pl.
Rm. 113

WE OFFER:

- An introduction to the French language for 3- and 4-year-olds.
- Development of motor skills.
- Self-expression through games, art and songs.
- A safe and stimulating environment to develop independence & self-confidence.
- The opportunity to establish leadership and to accept responsibilities.

For information regarding REFENS
please see our website at refens.com