

KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK

EQUINOX HOLISTIC ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL



Prepared by:
Equinox School Council &
Equinox Kindergarten Team



Welcome to Equinox

Welcome to Equinox Holistic Alternative School and our unique outdoor Kindergarten program!

Parents with children entering Kindergarten are often filled with questions and concerns about what will happen in September and how to prepare their children (and themselves!) for the start of school. The Equinox School Council – a group of parent volunteers – in collaboration with the Equinox Kindergarten Teachers, have put together this handbook to help ease the transition to Kindergarten at Equinox. It contains helpful information, advice, and insight from parents whose children have attended Kindergarten at Equinox as well as from the team that will be teaching your children in September.

If you have further questions about anything mentioned – or not mentioned – in the following pages, feel free to contact the Equinox School Council by email at chair@equinoxschool.ca.

We look forward to meeting your family in September!

Andrea Schneider, Equinox School Council Chair,

Lori Baxter, Equinox Kindergarten Teacher,

Heather Lott, Equinox Kindergarten Teacher

Angela Nikolakakos, Equinox Kindergarten Early Childhood Educator

Making Connections

Summertime is a wonderful opportunity to meet other Kindergarten families and make connections that will ease your child's transition to full-day Kindergarten.

Summer Meet-Ups

During the summer, Equinox families from all grades are invited to regular park meet-ups at places like Greenwood Park and East Lynn Park. These gatherings are a great way to meet other families attending the school and to give kids an opportunity to meet each other before September. Check the Equinox Facebook page throughout the summer for more information or email chair@equinoxschool.ca

Welcome to Kindergarten Picnic

Equinox Kindergarten families, both new and returning, are invited to attend a Welcome Picnic during the last week of August. This is an opportunity for families to connect with their child's teacher and ECE (Early Childhood Educator) and to meet other Kindergarten families. Information about the picnic will be sent out in July.

Kindergarten Parent/Guardian Voluntary Contact List

Your family will be invited to join a voluntary* Kindergarten parent/guardian contact list. This list is a way for Equinox Kindergarten families to contact each other outside of school to set up play dates, send out birthday invitations, plan camping trips, etc. Please add your family's contact information to this document if you want other Kindergarten families to be able to contact you by email.

**Note that this is a self-subscribed list. The TDSB has strict rules regarding personal information; schools cannot disclose or distribute the personal information of families or employees.*

Gear

"What kind do I buy?"

"Do I need more than one?"

"Is this the right size?"

Oh, the stress of choosing the right clothing and accessories for your child's first year of Kindergarten! Especially when you know your child will be spending half the day, every day, outside. To help you navigate the endless sea of school stuff, we present the collective wisdom of the parents and teachers who have found out (the hard way) what works and what doesn't.



What you Need

Here is a list of the items that your child will need for the Kindergarten year as well as suggested brands and features. **ALL ITEMS should be labelled with your child's name, either in permanent marker or using name labels** (Mabel's labels and Oliver's labels are two local options).

Every Day Items

- **Backpack** big enough to hold a lunchbox, separate snack container, and water bottle
 - *a clip on the front to connect the two straps is a must as this keeps the backpack from sliding off during walking trips*
 - *kids must be able to open and close all zippers and compartments by themselves*
 - *MEC backpacks come in smaller sizes and are durable*
- **Lunchbox or lunchbag** big enough to contain all lunch items
 - *ensure that your child can open and close all lunch containers by practicing in the weeks before school (don't worry, teachers and lunch room supervisors will help children with containers and wrappers when needed)*
- **Snack container or bag** that is separate from lunchbox
- **Water bottle** that kids can open and that is easy to shut (to prevent leaking)
- **Bag of extra clothes that is kept at school**
 - *bag should include 3-4 pairs socks, 3 pairs underwear, 2 pairs of pants/shorts, 2 t-shirts/long-sleeve shirts, and plastic bags in which to carry soiled clothes home*
 - *extra clothing should be adjusted for seasonal needs and replenished regularly*
 - *all items should be labelled as children often borrow clothing*



Summer Weather

- **Sun hat, sunscreen**
 - *teachers can only apply sunscreen that belongs to your child and only with your express permission; apply sunscreen in the morning before school and leave a labelled container at school for use during the day*
 - *have your child practice putting sunscreen on themselves at home so they can reapply it at school*
- **2 pairs of running shoes with Velcro** (no laces, unless your child can tie them themselves) **and/or close-toed sandals that your child can put on themselves**
 - *kids should have an extra pair of indoor shoes that are kept at the school to change into when coming in from outside*
 - *no flip flops or dress shoes/boots*
- **Rain boots and rain pants** to be kept at school or brought to school every day
 - *in warmer weather, teachers often will create "water play" stations with hoses, buckets, and a water wall*
 - *keeping these items at the school is helpful in the event that rain arrives unexpectedly*

Fall/Spring Weather

- **Waterproof rain jacket and waterproof rain pants** (not water resistant)
 - *rain pants must have elasticized bottoms to prevent water leaking into boots*
 - *MEC or the equivalent is worth the investment; rubber jackets and pants will rip when kids climb on branches and slide along rocks in the ravine*

- **2 pairs rain boots** (one for home, one for school)
- **2-3 pairs light gloves** (available at dollar stores)
- **Light hat**
- **Fleece, hoodie, or vest** to go under rain jackets on chilly days

Winter Weather

- **Winter jacket and snow pants**
 - *having an extra pair of snow pants can be helpful as pants will be wet/dirty most days after school*
- **Winter boots**
 - *Boots should be high (not ankle boots) and easy for kids to pull on and off themselves (Bogs are great for this)*
- **2-3 pairs waterproof mittens/gloves that are relatively easy for kids/teachers/ECEs to put on**
 - *mittens/gloves should be long enough to go over/under coat sleeves*
 - *brands that are popular include Stonez, Kombi, and MEC*
- **Warm hat that covers ears**
- **Neck warmer/tube**
 - *long scarves become untied and often drag on the ground or join their many scarf friends in the lost and found*



Whither the Weather



Outdoor Classroom

Every morning is spent outside in the outdoor classroom, regardless of the weather. Students should arrive at school in gear appropriate for spending 2-3 hours outside that day. *Children should get into the habit of putting rain/snow gear on at home rather than at school.* Putting on outerwear at school is time consuming and can result in kids being late for attendance. If children absolutely refuse to put on

appropriate clothing at home (And this happens! Frequently!), bring the items to school and let the teachers work with the students to get them dressed.

There are, of course, exceptions to the classes spending every morning outside. If there is lightning, extreme cold (e.g., colder than -20°C) or extreme heat (e.g., hotter than 30°C), teachers will bring the children indoors. Teachers also gauge the collective and individual needs of students on a daily basis, based on weather conditions, and will bring kids in early or create warming/cooling centres as needed.

Walking Trips

Walking trips take place in all kinds of weather, including rain, snow, wind, and cold temperatures. Students should come to school dressed for trips taking place that day. If, on the morning of a scheduled trip, conditions are deemed unsafe (e.g., too icy) or extremely unpleasant (e.g., very cold windchill), teachers will cancel the trip and stay at the school.

Food at School

Figuring out the what, when, and how of meals and snacks at school is a daunting task. Here is a general timeline and some helpful information for how to nourish your child in the Kindergarten program.

Breakfast Club

Roden/Equinox has a free breakfast snack program called "Breakfast Club." It is located on the main floor just inside the Ashdale doors. Breakfast Club offers healthy food made on site and runs every school day from 8:30 to 8:50 am. Please note that all young students who attend Breakfast Club must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. *Teachers ask that all food, from breakfast club or from home, be eaten BEFORE entering the outdoor Kindergarten classroom in the morning.*

Morning Snack

Please pack a snack for your child to eat outside in the morning. It should be in a separate container from your child's lunch; children can be confused about when to eat which items when lunches and snacks are packed together. Snacks should have a form of protein and should not contain any candy or junk food. There is no set time for morning snack; children are given the option to eat at whatever time they feel hungry.

Lunch

The lunch period at Equinox is from 11:45-12-45. Children eat lunch at tables in their classroom, and when they are finished (usually around 12:15), they go outside to play. Lunch monitors (one for each of the classes) watch the kids while eating and while out in the playground. Parents are welcome to take their children home/out for lunch, as long as they return by 12:45 to be counted as present for attendance.

Afternoon Snack

The school's snack program, which is supported by funds from the School Council, provides afternoon snacks to all Equinox classes. Snacks consist of fruits and vegetables only.

After School

If you are picking up your child after school, it is a good idea to bring snacks to eat immediately after dismissal. Kids will often want to play in the playground with their friends, and so it might take longer to get home and get fed than anticipated. In addition, there are many reasons why kids might not have eaten their snack/lunch that day (distracted, ran out of time, didn't like the food) and thus they might be very hungry by the end of the school day.

General Information

- **No nuts, fish, or seafood may be sent to school with your child** due to severe allergies of staff and students. *Please inform teachers and administration before school starts if your child has specific food allergies or requirements.*
- **Food is not to be shared between students at school.** This is for safety reasons, as many children have allergies or intolerances.
- **The TDSB uses a model of "litterless" lunches and snacks.** This means that everything sent into school with your child will be returned home with your child, including uneaten food, peels, wrappers, and containers. This is done for two reasons:
 - returning all items back home allows you to see what and how much your child ate at school; and
 - returning organic and conventional waste home reduces the amount of materials the TDSB has to process, thus cutting costs.

- **No candy or junk food should be sent to school for your child's snack or lunch.** This rule is not intended to inconvenience or shame parents; it is in place to help model good nutrition and prevent conflict among students over treats.
- **Make sure food is easy to eat!** Peel fruit/eggs and other items, and ensure that your child can open all containers. Kids often eat slowly; if they get delayed by peeling or preparing their food, they may run out of time to finish their food.
- **Remember that kids are commonly eating morning snack outside.** It can be windy and cold, so keep snacks simple and easy to eat.



Typical Day

Here is a general outline of what your child's day might look like in the Kindergarten Program at Equinox.

- 8:30-8:50 Breakfast Club runs
Healthy food is provided free of charge, but kids must be supervised and food should not be taken to class.
- 8:45 Supervision begins in the outdoor Kindergarten classroom. You may drop your child off at school and leave as of this time. *Make sure you let your teacher/ECE know that your child has arrived.*
- 8:55 School starts
- 9:00 Attendance and Morning Circle
Children sit in stump circle (Linden Kindies are under Linden tree to the south, Maple Kindies are under Maple tree to the north), attendance is taken, morning song is sung, and teacher/ECE outlines morning activities.
- If your child is going to absent from or late to school, please call Jodi in the office (416-393-8274) to let her know.** If you don't inform the school of an absence or late arrival, you will receive automated phone calls to your contact numbers to inquire as to why your child arrived late/did not arrive.
- 9:10-11:30 Outdoor Play
Snack is eaten during this time at child's discretion. Activities can include sandbox play, riding bikes and playing with wagons, building with sticks/bricks, water play, gardening, chalk drawing.

- 11:30 Children clean up outside and head inside to get ready for lunch.
- 11:45-12:15 Lunch is eaten at tables in classroom under the supervision of lunch monitors.
- 12:15-12:45 Kids are outside in north playground (this playground is used for Kindergarten students from Roden and Equinox; the playground/field to the south of the school is used for Grades 1-8).
- 12:45 Attendance
- 12:45-2:45 Indoor activities and learning in the classroom
- Snack is put out during this time and children eat when they are hungry.
The Kindergarten program is predominantly play-based, with stations such as Duplo, blocks and figurines, drama/dress-up centre, puzzles, book nook, colouring, etc. Teachers work in small groups with kids on literacy and math at this time.
- Subject areas taught by other teachers include Phys. Ed. (outside or in the gym), Library, and Music (generally taught in Kindie indoor or outdoor classroom). These take place a few times a week.
- 2:45 Children clean up inside and get ready for dismissal
- 2:55 Closing stump circle
- 3:00 Pick up
Kids must be picked up at 3:00 at either the north gate (Maple Kindies) or south gate (Linden Kindies). Please make sure that the teacher/ECE makes verbal contact with you before leaving with your child.

If there is a change in who is picking up your child from school, you must inform the teacher or the main office before pickup.

If there is an emergency and you are going to be late for pickup, please call Jodi in the office (416-393-8274).

Kids will be kept outside until 3:15, at which point they will be transferred to the office and Jodi will contact you by phone.

3:30

Pick up for Grades 1-6



Walking Trips

Walking trips generally start in October, when teachers are familiar with the children's abilities/personalities and feel safe to take them off school grounds. There are two trips each week: one to Monarch Park and one to Williamson Ravine. **Trips generally need at least three adult volunteers to go ahead.** Volunteers can be parents/guardians, grandparents, aunts/uncles, or any other adult who is special to your child.



Monarch Park

Monarch Park is located just north of the school. Students walk north on Ashdale Avenue to the path by the railway tracks, and follow this path west to the Rail Garden and under the tracks to the park.

Monarch Park trips are an opportunity for kids to explore shared



community space.

Kids learn safe walking skills and participate in guided activities that make use of the park's large, open spaces.

Children play tag and other games, sketch flowers and trees, and explore

park areas with friends and adult volunteers. In general, children should wear the same gear that they would wear for a morning in the outdoor classroom.

Williamson Ravine

Williamson Ravine is located at Upper Gerrard and Wembley Drive. Kindergarten classes walk east along Fairford, cross Gerrard, and walk a few more blocks to enter the Ravine across from Bowmore Public School. Williamson Ravine is a naturalized forested area. It has a stream, a rough path that runs the length of the ravine, and two staircases for entry and exit, one at the south side off of Upper Gerrard, and one at the north side off of Gainsborough.

Ravine trips are magical! They are about exploration, resilience, and pushing boundaries. Kids should always be dressed in rain/snow pants and rain/snow boots. Children often test their environment by climbing fallen trees, walking/falling/ rolling the mud, and playing near the

stream. Children almost always come back to the school with wet socks and wet/muddy pants. And, of course, with excited stories about hawks and spy missions and inch worms and leaf boats.



Volunteering

Equinox doesn't just encourage volunteering; the school's philosophy of outdoor and experiential learning is absolutely dependent on community involvement and support.

General Information about Volunteering at Equinox

- **In order to regularly volunteer with students or in the school, all individuals must submit an application for a police check.** These are available at the main office, and must be in process in order to go on any school trips. Once this check is done, it is good for the duration of your children's stay at the school. Volunteers that join the class very infrequently (e.g., grandparent visiting from B.C.) do not have to complete a police check to volunteer.
- Volunteers with the Kindergarten class are expected to interact with and assist ALL children, not just their own. It is natural for your child to want to be near you and seek your attention. However, it is important to let your child know that you are there to keep all children safe.
- Cell phones should not be used on trips, except in the case of an emergency. Should you need to use your phone, please let the teacher know and step away from students so as not to provide a distraction.
- Remember that students will scrutinize volunteers and pay careful attention to their attire, their behavior, and their food. Dressing for the weather, observing the same safety rules as the students, and bringing healthy snacks/lunch are important when volunteering with the Kindies.

Walking Trips

Classes go on two walking trips a week to Monarch Park and Williamson Ravine as long as there are sufficient volunteers signed up.



There are additional trips throughout the year to Brickworks, Woodbine Park, TDSB Outdoor Education Centres, and other destinations. **If there are not enough volunteers, trips will be cancelled and will not be rescheduled.** Trips are generally posted on a sign-up site several months in advance. Please look ahead at trip schedules and sign up where you can. Grandparents, other relatives, and friends are welcome to attend as well.

In the Classroom

Volunteers are welcome in the indoor and outdoor classrooms to assist with specific activities or events. Teachers often send out emails requesting help on certain days or for more involved projects. In addition, if there is an area in which you have expertise (e.g.,

gardening, sewing, art, storytelling, yoga), please talk to your child's teacher about coming in and leading an activity. Teachers generally ask for advance notice of volunteering in the classroom. However, if you or another relative/friend wish to volunteer that same day, please ask! The kids really enjoy having adults in the classroom, and teachers can almost always use the help!

Class Reps

For each Kindergarten class, there are two parent reps, one from a Junior Kindergarten family and one from a Senior family. Reps assist with communication and planning. In general, one parent rep organizes trip volunteers while the other is responsible for communication between teachers and parents. This role generally involves a commitment of only 15 minutes a week and is done almost entirely over email and online. If you are interested in this role, please let your child's teacher know during the second week of school.

Equinox School Council

The Equinox School Council is a group of parent/guardian volunteers that plans and executes fundraising and events for the school community and acts as a liaison between the school administration and families. Joining Council is a great way to get to know other parents, figure out how things work at Equinox, and meet the Principal and Vice-Principal. Meetings take place 4-6 times a year, but council work is ongoing, and any and all help is welcome. Visit the Equinox School Council Facebook page or email the council at chair@equinoxschool.ca.

Winter Fair

Almost half of all fundraising done by the School Council comes from the annual Winter Fair, which takes place at the beginning of December. Starting in October, there will be countless opportunities to volunteer for this event.

Hot Lunch Program

In 2018/2019, Equinox and Roden started a hot lunch program that runs two days a week for Grades 1-8. It feeds approximately 160 students and teachers, including 25-30 free lunches for those students in need. It is run entirely by volunteers, so if you have time during the day to assist with preparation, serving, or clean up, please stop by the kitchen to talk to Susanna, who runs Breakfast Club and Hot Lunch.

Communication

COMMUNICATIONS FROM EQUINOX

Equinox makes every effort to make information readily available to families; however, it is the family's responsibility to stay informed about what is happening in the school by maintaining good communication with teachers and administration. Here is a list of the types of communication you can expect while your child is in Equinox.

Weekly Class Email

Weekly emails are sent out to Kindergarten families outlining what happening in their child's class during the past week and what to prepare for in the upcoming week. Emails will include information about upcoming events (walking trips, class activities) and general reminders (bring in extra socks, return borrowed books), so please make sure to read these messages every week.

School Emails

The school administration and the Equinox School Council regularly send emails to the school community with information about events, items for purchase, fundraising, and volunteer opportunities.

School Newsletter

Once a month, the Principal sends out a school newsletter to Roden and Equinox by email. It covers key dates and important school information.

School Website

The Equinox website is managed by the School Council. Documents pertaining to School Council meetings and TDSB regulations are available on this site.

Equinox School Council Facebook Page

This page, which is only open to the Equinox community, communicates weekly about important dates, information, and events.

COMMUNICATING YOUR CONCERNS

Your child's teacher is the first point of contact when communicating concerns, followed by the Principal, the Superintendent, and the Trustee. Here is a general outline of the issues addressed by these individuals.

Classroom Teacher

If you have any issues regarding your child's experience at school, please speak to your child's teacher. While face-to-face dialogue with parents is encouraged, be aware that teachers might not be able to speak to you in depth at drop-off and pickup, as they must give their attention to the students in the class. Email allows you to set up appointments to meet, clearly outline concerns, and track/share/escalate concerns if required.

Principal

If you would like more information or assistance, or if you have questions that go beyond the classroom, talk to the school Principal. Call the main office to set up an appointment to speak in person or write an email. The Principal can help with student registration, safety and security, budgets and fundraising, and special needs situations.

Superintendent

Superintendents are 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 principal.

Trustee

Trustees are your elected community officials. They are available to help you with issues such as the following: ideas and suggestions for the TDSB; Board policies under review; Board budgets; and collective bargaining.

First Day of School

Oh, the joy and terror of the first day of school! At Equinox, great efforts are made by teachers and support staff to make the first day of school a wonderful experience for both children and their families. Here is some general information on how the day will unfold.

8:45 Teachers, ECEs (Early Childhood Educators), and the Principal and Vice-Principal will be out in the schoolyard greeting children as of this time. You may arrive earlier if you wish; the schoolyard is available any time before and after school to children that are supervised by an adult.

Equinox Kindergarten students and their families should go to the outdoor Kindergarten classroom through the gates off of Ashdale Avenue.

9:00 Teachers and ECEs introduce themselves and provide information on where your child should put their belongings and where their class will meet for stump circle.

Parents are generally encouraged to stay for the first 15 minutes of the day. **Teachers will guide parents on how and when to say goodbye to their child.** Because it can be very unpredictable how your child will react to their first day of school, it is suggested that you allow space in your schedule so that you can stay longer if you need to.

While teachers encourage children to stay the full day on the first day of school, they understand that some children might benefit from a more flexible schedule during the first week or two. Please contact your teacher by email during the last week of August or speak to them at the Welcome to Kindergarten picnic about any special concerns or requests.

11:45 If you wish to pick up your child for lunch or eat with them at the school, you can come to the classroom to pick them up. Children need to be back to their stump circle by 12:45 to be marked present for afternoon attendance.

3:00 Children will be dismissed at 3:00. **Teachers will give instructions in the morning on when and where parents should arrive for afternoon pickup.** Please ensure that your child's teacher is aware of who is picking up your child if it is not one of the child's parents/guardians.

Rituals at Equinox

Birthday Celebrations – Circle Around the Sun

At Equinox, children's birthdays are celebrated with a special ceremony called "circle around the sun." During this celebration, parents tell a story from each year of a child's life, and family pictures are shown to the students. The birthday child walks around a big paper sun one time for every year of their life, and then receives a little bag of "wishes" from other students. Parents/guardians are welcome to bring a healthy snack (fruit/veggies) in honour of the occasion. We ask that items like candy, cupcakes, and other sweets be reserved for celebrations at home.

This celebration can take place any time around your child's birthday that is convenient for family members to attend. Birthdays that fall on

holidays or during the summer break can be celebrated at alternate times. **You must arrange the date in advance with your child's teacher.** Celebrations generally take place right after drop-off at 9:00 or right before dismissal at 2:30. If you are unable to attend or uncomfortable doing the presentation, the teacher can conduct the ceremony on your behalf.

Sit Spots

During walking trips, children are challenged to sit quietly for a moment and take in the world around them. They listen, look, smell and take in all that nature has to offer. You can practice this ritual with your child during the summer. Be still in a natural environment and then ask your child what they saw, heard, or smelled. This will help prepare them for moments of stillness and silence both in the class and in nature.

Winter Fair

Each December, Equinox puts on a Winter Fair at the school. This whimsical event is inspired by Waldorf fairs and is focused on hand-made items, homemade food, and magical experiences with pocket fairies, oracles, and woodland nymphs. The school is transformed into a winter wonderland full of real evergreen trees and fairy lights. This event is the major fundraiser during the Equinox school year and brings in over half of the school council budget. Families are strongly encouraged to volunteer their time and efforts to help organize this giant event.

Frequently Asked Questions

When do I find out who my child's teacher is?

Letters are mailed out in July will inform you who your child's teacher is. You can find out more details at the Welcome to Kindergarten Picnic in August.

What are the rules for pickup and drop-off at the school?

If students are arriving by car, in general, Roden students are dropped off on the Hiawatha (west) side of the school (one-way street north) and Equinox students are dropped off on the Ashdale (east) side of the school (one-way street south). It is important to remember the following when coming by car:

- *There is limited parking on the street for drop-off on both sides, and cars are ONLY PERMITTED TO STOP ON THE RIGHT SIDE of the street.*
- *There is a STRICT NO IDLING POLICY at the school. Please turn off your engine while you help your child get to their class.*
- *There are no left turns south onto Ashdale from Fairford in the morning.*
- *Please take time to familiarize with the parking restrictions posted beside the school on both Hiawatha and Ashdale. If you leave your car parked past posted drop-off and pick-up windows, YOU WILL BE TICKETED BY PARKING ENFORCEMENT.*
- *The parking lot to the south of the school is reserved for those working at the school. If you need to stay at the school for a longer period of time, please park on outlying streets.*

Does my child have to be independent in the washroom?

It is strongly encouraged that children are able to complete all bathroom steps themselves, including wiping. In the event of an

accident or an emergency, teachers and ECEs will help your child. However, teachers/ECEs cannot assist children on an ongoing basis, as they simply cannot leave the other students in the class to go to the washroom with students. Please practice with your child over the summer to ensure that they are ready for tackling bathroom visits on their own.

If you know your child is prone to accidents, please let the teacher know so they can help your child with body awareness. In addition, please provide multiple sets of extra clothes so there is always a clean change of clothes.

Do I have to keep my child at home when they are sick?

The short answer is yes. If your child has a fever, is vomiting, or shows signs of illness (coughing, runny nose that isn't clear), you should keep them away from school until symptoms clear up. In addition, **if your child has a condition that is highly communicable (lice, pinworms, chicken pox, strep throat, hand foot and mouth, pink eye, etc.), please keep your child home and report the illness to your teacher.** It is important to report these infectious conditions so that the parent community can be kept informed.

Can my child bring toys/stuffies to school?

Teachers suggest that toys be kept at home to prevent conflict between students and to ensure that special items are not lost or broken. If children need to bring a comforting object to school (especially in the first few days/weeks), it must be kept in their backpack during school hours. If children repeatedly play with toys from home, they will be taken away.

Is there nap time in Kindergarten?

There is no time set aside for resting/sleeping during the school day. However, if children feel exceptionally tired, there is always the option of resting or doing quiet activities such as reading. If your child is still taking a daily nap, try to phase it out before school starts so that your child is ready to tackle a full day of active learning.

Do I have to take home my child for lunch?

No. While the TDSB encourages families to take children home for lunch to reduce staffing requirements, only a handful of families choose this option. Eating with peers and playing with a wider range of students during lunch (all Roden/Equinox Kindergarten students share the north playground) can help with socialization and relationship building.

Are there mandatory volunteer hours at Equinox?

Yes and no. **Each family is strongly encouraged to contribute 40 hours of volunteer time each school year.** Our school was built upon the idea of community, and many of the things that make it unique (outdoor programs, winter fair, hands-on learning) are not possible without a time commitment from parents/guardians. This is especially true with walking trips; excursions outside of school grounds need an adequate number of volunteers for safety reasons. That being said, every person is different in their capacity to give back to the school, and your contribution to your child's experience at Equinox is up to you.