

Kindergarten Program Guide

Welcome to the Greenbelt Academy family! We are excited for you and your child to begin their educational journey with us. Please find that our guide includes all the required information to ensure your child is prepared for Junior and Senior Kindergarten and you, as parents/guardians, know what to expect.

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Mission & Vision Statement

Mission:

Education rooted in nature to inspire in our students a deeper connection to the community around them.

Vision:

Every child is given the opportunity to learn about their world through daily access to extended time in nature. Quality educators facilitate an emergent curriculum that reflects the needs of the whole child and meets the demands of the world in which we live.

How Does Learning Happen

At Greenbelt Academy we strive to meet our vision through hands-on *experiential learning* opportunities that follow the interests of the child, by allowing the curriculum to be fluid and built through observation and real life happenings. Teacher-led workshops and small group demonstrations are a mix of Ontario Curriculum and Forest School pedagogy which offer new skills and address the needs of the *whole child* and realities of their community. We incorporate opportunities for *risky play* while in the forest and onsite, and offer multiple *unstructured play* sessions throughout the day. Our pedagogy places importance on developing *emotional intelligence* and we incorporate these skills into our lesson plans and responsive interactions with students. Through *nature immersion*, children develop *environmental literacy* which encourages them to grow to be humans who are authentically connected to the world around them and are more likely to care for and advocate for the future of our planet and their communities. Through our program, your child will be prepared with a solid foundation to support them down whatever path their education takes them.

Kindergarten Program- JK/SK (3.8 years *up to* 6 years). Our two year nature-based full-time (M-F) and part-time (M-T) Kindergarten Program offers an enriched learning experience during the most formidable years of a child's life. *Your child must be 4 years old by December 31st, 2022 to participate for the 2022/2023 school year.*

*Look deep into **nature**, and then you will understand everything better.*
- Albert Einstein

Our innovative teachers are registered Early Childhood Educators, Certified Ontario Teachers, Environmental Educators, Forest School Practitioners, or qualified in their field. We are dedicated to delivering high quality experiences through the application of Forest School and Ontario Curriculum. This offers a balanced learning approach through a mix of hands-on teacher led and child directed opportunities.

Our days vary throughout the week with two afternoons (Mon/Wed) and one full day (Fri) immersed in Nature. During our time in the Forest, teacher directed science workshops are offered, which are guided by place based learning. Free play is an important aspect of our program and children are given time each day to explore and engage freely (in the Forest and at our home base). Throughout the week, teacher one-on-ones and mini-workshops including music & drama, foreign languages, geography, history, health & wellness, art and S.T.E.A.M are offered. We regularly have experts from our community join us to share their skills and inspire us with new experiences. We value being connected to our community and encourage parent participation and volunteers to join us in our programs (*please note that considerations for volunteers are guided by public health while COVID restrictions are in place*).

Please see a [sample](#) of our daily schedule below:

Greenbelt Academy and Early Learning Centre **Daily Schedule- School-Aged - 2022/2023- SAMPLE**

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45-9:15	Outdoor free play	Outdoor free play	Outdoor free play	Outdoor free play	Outdoor free play
9:15-9:30	Morning meeting	French	Morning meeting	French	Free-flow snack
9:30-10:00	Snack(<i>free flow</i>) & free play	Snack(<i>free flow</i>) & free play	Snack(<i>free flow</i>) & free play	Snack(<i>free flow</i>) & free play	Forest Workshop and skill-based activities
10:00-11:30	Curriculum workshops	Curriculum workshops	Curriculum workshops	Curriculum workshops	
11:30-12:15	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:15-1:00	Forest Workshop & Free play	<i>Well-being</i>	Forest Workshop & Free play	<i>Well-being</i>	Group Games
1:00-1:30		Free play		Free play	STEAM Activity &

1:30-3:00		Art		Music	Free play
3:00-3:30	Transition to school	Share circle, story time & snack	Transition to school	Share circle, story time & snack	Transition to school
3:30-4:00	Snack & story time		Snack & story time		Snack & story time
4:00-4:15	Pick up	Pick up	Pick up	Pick up	Pick up

Please note: During the colder months, we eat our snacks and lunch indoors, unless weather permits us to eat outdoors. Many of our curriculum and rotary classes are also moved indoors, when it is too cold to offer the activities outside comfortably. Our standard is to spend a minimum 3 hours outdoors daily, weather permitting.

Morning Meeting- We meet to greet the day. Date, weather, daily schedule, and other relevant information are shared. We also like to share a story and sing a song to finish our group gatherings.

Curriculum Workshops- These are small group Math & Language workshops that take place indoor and outdoors, weather dependent. Children will be called in small groups to participate in Ontario Curriculum focused activities. Our workshops are hands-on and nature-based.

Forest Workshops (Mon/Wed)- These small group Forest Sessions take place outdoors. The curriculum is influenced by the principals of Forest School as stated in the Forest School Canada's Guide- A Hands, Head, and Heart Approach to Learning. We also source other important guides such as Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature to inspire our curriculum. These workshops offer students real life, nature-based skills, that create a foundation of environmental literacy and empathy for the world around them.

Well-being (Tues/Thurs)- These classes are run in whole group outdoor sessions. Whole body well-being topics and activities are offered.

Art- These teacher directed art sessions offer students new art skills and the use of different art mediums as they progress through the semester.

Music- These teacher directed, small group music classes offer students skills in line with Ontario Curriculum standards, through fun and hands-on sessions.

Outdoor free play- During free play, students have the opportunity to build on skills developed during our rotary and curriculum classes while using a variety of resources and loose parts in our enriched outdoor play space. These areas include: our Mud Kitchen, Art Centre, Cozy Area, Math & Language stations, Gross Motor areas, and building area.

We offer small class ratios (1:10) which allows us to not only apply the Ontario Curriculum, but connect our learning to the world around us in an authentic way. What makes our program exemplary is our fluid approach to curriculum which allows us to

tailor our weekly focus in line with the child's interest, real life happenings, and development level. We offer self-directed outdoor play opportunities that encourage positive social competence and emotional intelligence, problem solving and executive functioning skills, as well as autonomy. Our Teacher directed sessions follow curriculum expectations and offer preparedness for deeper exploration in their surroundings.

A minimum of 3 hours per day is spent outside, unless dangerous weather prevents us. This integration with nature allows children to build resilience and self preservation as they navigate how to keep themselves comfortable and safe in the changing environment. Our indoor classrooms are set up to utilize and encourage the use of natural materials and tools for investigation (microscopes, computers), and to bring the outside indoors through intentional provocations that build on their current skills.

Our day begins at 9:00am and ends at 4:00pm. Before and after-school care is available.

School Year Calendar

Fall term- September 6th, 2021 to December 23rd, 2021

Winter term- January 9th, 2022 to March 10th, 2022

Spring term- March 20th, 2022 to June 23, 2022

Holidays:

- *October 10th(Thanksgiving), school closed*
- *Dec 26-Jan 6th (Winter break), school closed. These dates are subject to change depending on the schedule of local school boards.*
- *Feb 20th (family day), school closed*
- *March 13-17th (March break), school closed*
- *April 7 th (Good Friday), school closed*
- *April 10th (Easter Monday), school closed*
- *May 22th (Victoria Day), school closed*

Extended Care

- Our Full-day program runs from **9:00am** to **4:00pm**.
- Before care is available starting at **8:00am** and our after care is available until **6:00pm**. Please register at the beginning of the year if you will consistently need extended care. The fees will automatically be applied to your monthly invoices. No refunds will be granted for missed days. Refunds will not be applied retroactively if extended care is canceled for the remainder of the year.

Before care(registered)- \$7/ day

After care (registered)- \$7/day

Drop in before care- \$12/day

Drop in after care- \$12/day

Drop In /Late Pick Up Fees

If you have not registered for before/after care at the beginning of the year, and drop off before 8:45 and/or pick up after 4:15 without 24 hours notice, you may be charged for the drop in fee on the subsequent month's invoice.

2022/2023 Tuition Rates

Full-time- \$1180/month

Part-time(4 days/wk)- \$944/month

We are happy to offer a 10% sibling discount on all of our programs.

A deposit of \$300.00 is required to secure your spot in our program. The amount of the deposit will be credited on your last invoice with Greenbelt Academy.

Payment Plan Options

Monthly plan- Payment for the upcoming month is due on the 1st of each month. Your monthly statement will be calculated based on the average number of days attended per month - this means your monthly statement will be the same every month.

Yearly plan - Payment for the entire upcoming school year is due on September 6, 2022.

Program	Monthly	Yearly
Full-time	\$1,180	\$11,800
Part-time: (Mon- Thurs)	\$944	\$9,440

What to Bring to Nature School

Children should be ready, upon arrival each day, for outdoor time. We are a rain or shine program and operate on the belief that *there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothing*. During inclement weather, we take all precautions to ensure the safety and comfort of our students, which means that we will run our nature based program inside when necessary. Please ensure that students have appropriate dress for the weather and please send extra clothing. Please take a look at our checklist below to ensure your child is prepared:

Program Item Checklist- Daily

	Indoor shoes
	Water bottle
	Lunch and two snacks- Please make these litterless if possible.
	Sunscreen/insect repellent (Fall & Spring)
	Spare change of clothes (pants/shirt/socks/underwear) **Labeled**
	Outdoor hat (Fall/Spring)
	Rain boots or snow boots- We recommend that all items be waterproof.

	Waterproof rain jacket or Winter jacket
	Waterproof rain pants or snow pants
	Winter accessories (waterproof gloves, warm hat, neck warmer,) - We recommend that you provide an extra pair of waterproof gloves and an extra winter hat. Please see tips for dressing below.

Please label ALL of your children's items. Children may store extra clothing at the school. Wet/soiled clothing will be sent home in your child's backpack.

Please check daily to ensure that extra items are replaced.

Tips for dressing your child appropriately for the Winter weather:

For cold weather please consider the following factors when dressing for school:

- 1) Insulation: Natural fabrics such as wool or silk work well as an inner layer, as does fleece. Polyester pajamas are another good option. The key for this layer is to wick moisture away from the skin and insulate it with a breathable layer.
- 2) Middle Layer: This is another insulation layer that creates 'dead-air space' between skin and the elements. This airspace helps in keeping warm. Wool sweaters (Merino wool is exceptionally warm and soft on sensitive skin) and fleece tend to work well.
- 3) Outer Shell: This layer should be waterproof and windproof, as well as breathable.

A note to parents/caregivers:

It's not necessary to invest in expensive brand names to keep your child warm. Thrift stores are great places to look for children's wool clothing at cheaper prices. If you are looking for a regular store to purchase outdoor clothing, Mountain Equipment Coop (MEC) has excellent children's outdoor wear for all seasons.

In terms of boots, we recommend purchasing boots that are one size larger than your child's foot. Again, this creates dead-air space to assist in insulation. Socks help to wick moisture away from the skin, (please note: cotton tends to sweat and doesn't do a great job at wicking moisture). The best foot insulator would be two pairs of wool socks with waterproof boots that have wiggle room.

For warmer weather we ask that your child has a light cotton/silk/hemp long sleeve shirt on for the day. Children are encouraged to wear a hat at all times. Children will be

encouraged to stay hydrated for both cold and warm weather as this will assist in regulating body temperatures.

Outdoor Safety

Teachers and volunteers are provided with and adhere to strict safety training, policies and procedures. These measures create an environment and culture that takes safety seriously and uses a proactive approach to Risk Management. Students and teachers actively play a role in personal and group safety.

Our safety principles include:

- Constantly assess risk as conditions change (dynamic risk assessment).
- Set up a safe space with boundaries and safety guidelines reviewed each day.
- Observe the children's interactions with each other and with nature and guide them as needed.
- Spot the children during more challenging physical activity.
- Guide the children to skills level appropriate activities when required.
- Head counts will be carried out every 10 minutes and before and after transitions to different sites.
- Two way communication will be maintained by teachers and supervisory staff by way of two way radios and cell phones at all times.
- In depth forest and site safety checks completed seasonally.
- Daily forest and site safety checks completed before participants enter onsite or offsite environments.
- Weather and environmental safety including- teaching students about hydration, application of sunscreen and insect repellent, changing of wet clothes, as well as noticing the changes in the weather and how to stay safe.
- Educating students on safe water ways practices; such as safety equipment needed, and guidelines for safe water way play.

If at any time we feel that the children's play is becoming dangerous, we will redirect the children and discuss how we can change our play to keep ourselves safe.

If your child gets a bump, scratch, or a bruise, we will provide necessary first aid and let you know at the end of the session.

Accident/ Serious Occurrence Procedure

Any injury to a child which occurs while participating in school services, this could include, but not be limited to the following:

- unconsciousness

- fracture of a bone
- stitches
- loss of a tooth
- concussion

The staff will immediately assess the situation and use appropriate first aid treatment, or seek emergency medical attention if needed. Our qualified staff will contact the parent or emergency contact if required by phone. Where immediate emergency medical attention is needed a staff member will call an ambulance. If a parent or guardian has not arrived, a staff member will accompany the child to hospital and remain with the child until a parent/guardian arrives. For more information on our emergency policies, please see our Policy Guide.

In the event of an evacuation/ emergency:

- All classes will meet in the rear preschool playground by the fence.

Alternative shelter/ pick up:

- Centennial Park Baptist Church- 11 Kennedy Rd, Grimsby, ON L3M 1E8

Communication & Student Reports

It is important to us that Parents/Guardians have the opportunity to be aware of and involved in their child's education with Greenbelt Academy.

Parents will regularly receive photos and documentation of their child's day through our Storypark application. We also use Storypark to communicate updates and program information. We recommend that parents/guardians check it regularly. *If you are not already connected to Storypark, your child's teacher will send you an email with the details to join at the beginning of the school year.*

Meetings between parents and teachers can be scheduled throughout the school year at the request of the educator or parent. Please contact Tiffany Tierney, our Director of School-Aged Programs, and she will set up a time for you to meet with your child's teacher.

Email- greenbeltniagara@gmail.com

Phone/text- 905-931-0447

Please see our website www.greenbeltacademy.ca to view our School-Aged Policy Manual for more information about our Policies and Procedures

Student Reports

Full-time and part-time Kindergarten families can expect the following student reports from our program:

Storypark “stories”

We refer to updates sent through our Story Park application as “stories”.

Curriculum (Math & Language) Update stories will be sent at the beginning of each month. This group update will include pictures and information about what the children have done the previous month and what is planned for the upcoming month.

Rotary stories will be sent bi-monthly. These updates will include pictures and information about what activities the children participated in over the previous 2 weeks. Rotary classes include: Music, Art, French, Health & Well-being, and Forest Immersion.

Individual Student Reports

Kindergarten Reports will be sent in:

- November
- May

These written reports will reflect the standards as set out in the Ontario Kindergarten Curriculum.

Parent & Teacher meetings will be scheduled in:

- November/December 2022
- May/June 2023

These meetings will be an opportunity for families to meet in-person with their child’s teacher to view samples of their child’s work and discuss successes and any concerns. *A sign up document will be sent closer to the date to schedule a convenient time/date to meet.*

Families can request to meet with their child’s teacher or the Program Director at any time. Please email Tiffany at greenbeltniagara@gmail.com to request a meeting. Please know that if any concerns arise regarding your child’s participation in our program, we will contact you to set up a time to speak. Please avoid sharing larger (something that requires a longer conversation) concerns/issues at drop off or pick up. To ensure that we can give our full attention to the discussion, please call or email to set up a time to speak.