

ÉCOLE SPERLING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS



Mission Statement École Sperling School

École Sperling School is an inclusive, safe, healthy and welcoming educational environment where all can learn. We obtain knowledge to enable everyone to be creative and life-long contributors in our local and global communities.

- created by the students and staff of École Sperling School

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

| | | |
|----|---|-------------|
| A. | School Phone Number and Bell Schedule | Page 3 |
| B. | School Calendar..... | Page 4 |
| C. | How do I find out about dates and activities going on around the school? (what if I miss something?)..... | Page 4 |
| D. | Questions you might have about École Sperling School ... | Page 5 - 16 |
| | 1. Size of school and class sizes..... | Page 5 |
| | 2. Arriving at school in the morning..... | Page 5 |
| | 3. Illness and absences | Page 6 |
| | 4. Recess and Lunchtime..... | Page 6 |
| | 5. Parking..... | Page 7 |
| | 6. After school..... | Page 8 |
| | 7. Kindergarten (<i>A special note to Kindergarten parents</i>)..... | Page 8 |
| | 8. Talking to your child's teacher | Page 9 |
| | 9. Problems or concerns..... | Page 9 |
| | 10. Success at school..... | Page 10 |
| | 11. English as a Second Language (<i>A special note to ELL parents</i>)..... | Page 11 |
| | 12. French Immersion..... | Page 12 |
| | 13. Safety | Page 13 |
| | 14. School Rules | Page 14 |
| | 15. Parent Involvement | Page 15 |
| | 16. Snow..... | Page 16 |
| | 17. Curriculum..... | Page 16 |

A. School Phone Number and Bell Schedule

École Sperling Elementary School
2200 Sperling Avenue
Burnaby, B.C. V5B 4K7

Telephone: (604) 664-8836

Principal: Mme Karen Floyd
Head Teacher: Mr. Kelsey
Secretary: Mrs. S. Bonvino

Bell Schedule

8:50 First bell inviting students to line-up
8:55..... Instruction begins in classroom
10:30 Recess (15 minutes)
10:45 Instruction begins
12:05 Students dismissed for lunch
12:20 Bell to go outside
12:30 All students to be outside, unless it is an “inside day”
12:53 Bell inviting students to line-up
12:58 Instruction begins in classroom
3:00..... Students dismissed for the day



B. 2015-2016 SCHOOL CALENDAR

A copy of the school calendar is in the student agenda.

C. Dates and Activities around the School (how to keep track of what is going on)

1. **Newsletters** --- these are posted online on the last day of the month and contain many important dates, information etc. They also include a calendar for the month.

Tip: Print the calendar page on your fridge—you'll have all the dates right in front of you!

2. **Other notices**—classroom teachers send home notices regularly, check your child's planner/backpack every evening!

If your child has been absent, it is always a good idea to check with the teacher if they missed any notices. Extras are kept at the office.

Tip: It's best to deal with notices as soon as you receive them so that you don't lose track of them.

3. **Our school website** is: <http://www.sperlingpac.com/>
It lists important dates, upcoming events, and all the contact information for the school.
4. **The parent/community bulletin board** next to the office always has the current newsletter and calendar, as well as many other community notices, including babysitting, music lessons, community events, etc.
5. **Your child's teacher** is often available to answer questions, and many teachers hang current notices in their windows.
6. **Other parents** can be a valuable resource, especially if you think you've missed something.
7. **Our school secretary, Mrs. Bonvino**, can always be relied on to answer questions as well. The school's phone number is: (604) 664-8836

D. Everything you wanted to know about École Sperling School; your questions answered...

Tip: This section contains many topics, some of which will interest you, and some which may not. Keep this booklet around, and you'll be able to look things up, as they come up through the school year.

1) How big is Sperling School? How many children will be in my child's class?

There are approximately 500 students at Sperling, divided over 21 classes.

Primary classes (Kindergarten) may have 22 students per class, Grade 1-3 may have 24, and Intermediate classes (Grades 4 – 7) may have 30.

2) Arriving at school in the morning

Students should arrive at school around 8:45 a.m., when most other students and their families begin to arrive. However, there is no “official” supervision. The first bell rings at 8:50 a.m.

The only exception to an 8:50 arrival would be when children are requested to be at school early by their teacher for reasons such as team practice or some organized activity. **Students must wait for the teacher to let them in rather than entering the school on their own.**

Tip: How to get to school on time, every timeor at least most of the time

We know that it's sometimes difficult to get your children up in the morning and off to school in time to make the 8:50 a.m. bell. Here are some tips on how to get your child up in the morning:

- establish a specific time for your child to get up each morning, and when you wake your child, do not leave the room until he/she is out of bed
- if your child has trouble waking up, wake him/her 20 minutes before needing to be out of bed and getting ready for the day
- give your child an alarm clock to help him/her get up on time, but do not provide an alarm equipped with a “snooze” button
- turn on the radio in order to help your child get up on time
- make sure you are up and out of bed in order to help your child get up on time
- make sure your child is going to sleep at an appropriate hour to ensure that he/she is getting enough sleep, and that he/she is not being kept awake by loud talking, the TV, the radio, etc.
- sleep needs vary, but the average Kindergarten child needs approximately 10- 12 hours sleep at night to ensure adequate rest
- do not allow your child to have a TV, computer or telephone in his/her room that may cause staying up late at night
- have your child prepare school clothes, materials for school, lunch, etc. the night before so he/she does not have several things to do when waking.



3) Illness and Absences

Children should be well to attend school. Children who do not feel well should be at home.

If your child is to be absent or late on any school day, please call the school before 9:00 a.m. Please indicate the reason and possible duration of the absence. If we do not hear from you the school will contact you at home to check the absence. Our concern is the safety of the students. If your child is late arriving at school she/he must report to the office or you may be phoned by mistake, as your child's teacher may already have marked them absent.

Tip: Plan NOW for alternative care for your child or children if they are sick, particularly if you work and cannot easily take time off. Ideally, you want to have several choices of people you can ask.

4) Recess and Lunchtime

Recess is from 10:30 – 10:45. Teachers supervise the children outside (on a rotating schedule) Kindergarten students often have their snacks inside, and only go outside with the supervision of their teacher, or, later in the year, under the supervision of older students.

Lunch: Children may (and most do) bring their lunches and eat at school. Three noon hour supervisors are on duty at lunch time. “Monitors” (older students) also stay with the little ones while they eat.

Until 12:20 p.m.

- Stay in classroom
- Eat lunch
- Clean up after themselves

After 12:30 p.m.

- All children go outside once they finish their lunch
- Children are only to enter the school again in case of an emergency or to use the washroom.
- The Noon-Hour Supervisors are here to supervise SAFETY on the playground. The Noon-Hour Supervisors will let your child's teacher or the principal know about uncooperative or inappropriate behaviour.

Adventure Playground

There is a Primary adventure playground on the middle field and a shared Primary and Intermediate adventure playground on the lower grass field.

Rainy Days

If it is an “inside” day because of poor weather, a double bell will ring:

- Students will stay inside – playing quiet activities or rainy day games in the classroom

Out of Bounds Areas: Any area off the school grounds, and Staff Parking Lots



5) Parking around Sperling School

Just like at most schools, there is limited parking around Sperling and over 300 families who all need to be at the school at exactly the same time every day!

You can park on Adair (North of the school), Hycrest (South of the school) and on Sperling Avenue (west of the school). There is NO PARKING on the school side of each of these streets, you have to park ACROSS the street and walk your children across.

Please *avoid* blocking driveways and the staff parking lots.

SAFETY BEFORE CONVENIENCE—Please commit yourself to this!

Research shows us that the following actions can greatly reduce accidents in school zones:

- Slow down! (even after you've dropped off your own child, there are other children and parents/caregivers on the road)
- Don't turn around (plan your route!) even after you have dropped off your child
- Don't reverse (even though YOU would never drive over anyone....someone might)
- Give pedestrians the right of way at all times

Walking Sidewalk Program

This an organized, “valet style” drop off and pick up program that parent volunteers offer here at Sperling for other parents. It's on the north side of the school on Adair both mornings and afternoons. You approach from Sperling, look for the parent volunteers in the yellow vests, pull into the line and when it's your turn, a parent volunteer will help your child out of the car and safely onto the school grounds. At the end of the day, you pull in and wait, and the volunteers will bring your child to your car.

It's great if it's raining or you're running late (or both!) or if you have babies and toddlers in the car.

We need volunteers for this program—great way to get involved and meet other parents!

Email safety@sperlingpac.com if you are interested.

Something to think about:

*In this fast paced world, it is sometimes tempting to “bend” a rule, perhaps to avoid the rain, or to save a few seconds. Please understand that this way of thinking can lead to accidents. Please commit to placing **safety before convenience.***

6) After school

The final bell rings at 3:00 p.m.

After school retention of students:

At times throughout the year it may be necessary for your child to be retained after the regular hours for a variety of reasons:

- extra help
- finishing work
- disciplinary reasons
- voluntary classroom activities
- extra curricular activities

If a student has been asked by the teacher to stay later than 3:10, he/she will be allowed telephoning privileges upon request.

8) Kindergarten

Children in Kindergarten class are asked to bring a healthy snack which they will eat in the classroom. For the first part of the year they do not go out on the playground with the rest of the school, until the teacher feels they are ready to do so. The teacher may take them out for a supervised playtime instead. Later in the year, the children may go out with older students.

A Special Note to Kindergarten Parents:

Welcome to École Sperling School. We are happy to have you as part of our parent community. If you feel a bit unsure of yourself at first, don't worry, it is completely normal! The best way to feel involved is to GET involved. There will be an opportunity to sign up and volunteer at the morning Welcome Back coffee in the primary undercover area.

We encourage you to choose something to get involved in, either in your child's classroom or in the school at large. If you work, or have small children at home, or are learning English...it doesn't matter, you are all welcome, and we can find something to include you in.

Please try to come to one P.A.C. (Parent Advisory Committee) meeting during your first year, it will give you a clearer idea of what Sperling is all about, and how the parent-school partnership works.

Sincerely,

The Sperling P.A.C.

<http://www.sperlingpac.com/>



Communicating with your child's teacher and with the school

9) Talking to the teacher

For quick questions/concerns, dropping in before or after school is fine with most teachers. For something lengthier, call ahead and book a meeting. Tell the teacher what it is you'd like to discuss, so that he/she can be prepared with work samples or ideas.

Be sure to introduce yourself to your child(ren)'s teacher in September and to drop-in/call periodically during the first few months of school to get acquainted. Clarify an assignment or just chat! Don't let a crisis be the first time you've spoken to your child's teacher. From time to time you may have a query or worry about an aspect of your child's schooling, be sure to ask your child's teacher. A healthy, honest relationship between you and your child's teacher contributes to your child's learning and school success.

10) Problems or Concerns

The best way to resolve conflict is at a parent-teacher level. Problems are likely to be resolved when people talk directly to each other. Everyone benefits when teachers and parents work together on behalf of students.

Explain what you think the problem is, and if possible, what some potential solutions might be. Listen to what the teacher has to say. Most problems will be successfully solved at this level.

If the problem persists, it may be helpful to involve a third party-- The principal will make every attempt to solve the problem at the school level and can help you contact appropriate people as necessary.



11) How do I help my child be successful at school?

You don't have to have a degree in Education to help your children be successful at school. In fact, research shows us that it is the simple things that parents do that lead to success at school:

- Read to your children
- Be involved and supportive of their school

That's it.....pretty simple, really.

Tip: 14 Ways to help your child be successful at school (Originally published in Woman's Day, 1995)

1. Feed them breakfast (and send healthy snacks and lunch that they'll eat)
2. Get them to bed at a decent hour
3. Clue the teacher in to problems at home
4. Get acquainted with the teachers (and not just when there's a problem)
5. Don't criticize the teacher or the school in front of your children.... even when you think they're not listening
6. Don't try to block school discipline
7. Insist they do their homework and provide them with the time, space, materials and resources necessary to complete it (teach them to budget their time around soccer practice etc.) Help them but don't do it for them.
8. Limit TV viewing (and computer games/internet use). Consider limiting TV to the weekend.
9. Talk to your children about their schoolwork
10. Let your child see you reading
11. Talk about what is bothering your child
12. Point them toward extra school activities
13. Hug them when they are feeling defeated
14. Assess your child's extracurricular schedule each year--is it too busy?

Tip: To read more about *Supporting your child's Learning*, go to:
<http://www.bctf.ca/parents.aspx?id=3370>

For *Back to School Tips* from the Burnaby School Board, go to:
<http://www.sd41.bc.ca/parents/>

HOMEWORK

Six tips to help your child get organized (put together by the teachers at École Sperling School)

1. Before your child begins the homework assignment, ask what the assignment is and how long it should take.
2. Set aside a time for homework that is unpressured and relatively quiet.
3. Help to set up a study area with pencil sharpener, containers for pencils, paraphernalia and assignments.
4. Check homework after it is finished just so you can stay in touch with the work being done.
5. When your child has difficulty with an assignment, review what steps are involved. Help to make a plan, then to complete each step rather than doing the assignment for your child. If your child has problems with assignments, call it to the teacher's immediate attention. Do not wait for the next parent/teacher conference.
6. Ask your child every day if there are any notes from school or if there are special activities happening that week at school. We find that major miscommunication takes place when parents do not ask children every day - notes get lost, and parents are notified of events at the last minute.

12) English Language Learners

Tip: The English as a Second Language (ESL) Provincial Specialist Association of the B.C. Teachers' Federation has produced a brochure for parents of ESL students in B.C. public schools.

The brochure explains the following to parents:

- what ESL support might look like for their children,
- what is involved in learning a new language,
- how school in British Columbia may be different from what they experienced in their home countries,
- ways they can know how their children are doing at school, and
- what they can do to help their children learn.

The brochure had been translated into fourteen most common languages spoken by students in B.C. public schools:

<https://www.bctf.ca/parents.aspx?id=3666>

A Special Note to ELL Parents:

Welcome to École Sperling School. We are happy to have you as part of our parent community.

You will find that many of us come from other countries, and speak other languages at home. That's what makes us such a dynamic school community!

We encourage you to choose something to get involved in, either in your child's classroom or in the school at large. The best way to feel involved in the school is to GET involved. Volunteer in your child's classroom or at other school activities. Your English does NOT need to be perfect for many of the jobs that we need parents to do.

Please try to come to one P.A.C. (Parent Advisory Committee) meeting during your first year, it will give you a clearer idea of what Sperling is all about, and how the parent-school partnership works.

Sincerely,

The Sperling P.A.C.

<http://www.sperlingpac.com/>

13) French Immersion

The French Immersion Program is designed for non French-speaking families. Teachers are aware of this when notices are sent home or homework is assigned. All formal communication to parents, including report cards, is provided in English.

Children are not expected to know any French prior to enrolling in the Early French Immersion program.. Teachers create an environment where students quickly become comfortable in a French Immersion classroom.

Children learn the same things as students in English classrooms. The curriculum follows the guidelines of the British Columbia Ministry of Education. Students work toward the same academic goals regardless of the language of instruction.

In Early Immersion, children learn to read and write, first in French—pre-reading exercises in Kindergarten, and reading and writing in French in Grade 1. Formal instruction in English Language Arts begins in Grade 4.

Helping with homework can be challenging without knowing the specific content, but you can still provide guidance and support.

At École Sperling School, children will still hear English quite often throughout the day: during morning announcements, on the playground at recess and lunch, and during Music classes. As well, teachers will use English initially to explain classroom procedures and teach behavioural expectations.

French and English children will see each other on the playground and during school wide events. There is an effort made to ensure the children see themselves as part of the school at large, and not separate from the English classes.

Tip: Canadian Parents for French <http://bc-yk.cpf.ca/>

Canadian Parents for French (CPF) is the national network of volunteers which values French as an integral part of Canada and which is dedicated to the promotion and creation of French second language learning opportunities for young Canadians.

The Burnaby Chapter of CPF consists of local volunteers dedicated to enhancing Burnaby Children's French second language learning experiences. CPF works with parents, teachers, principals, administrators, trustees, and other community leaders to maintain and strengthen French Immersion and FSL (Core French), French as a second language acquisition programs. CPF helps children become bilingual in Canada's official languages.



14) Safety Procedures

Each year in September, parents will be asked to supply the name of an individual who has permission to pick up their children in an emergency. This emergency could be an earthquake, sudden school closure because of a power failure, or a medical emergency. **Parents are asked to keep this information current throughout the year.**

Entry to the School

During the school day, people can only enter the school through the doors by the office. This is done to ensure student safety. All visitors to the school are asked to report to the office.

Fire Drills

Throughout the year there will be regular fire drills. This is to provide a variety of situations in which students will be able to practice evacuating the building.

Earthquake Preparedness

During earthquake drills students practice to drop and cover, wait 60 seconds, and then safely evacuate the building. At the beginning of each year parents are asked to complete an Emergency Preparedness Plan, which will be important information for the school to have on file. It is an on-going process to prepare our school with the necessary emergency strategies and supplies.

RCMP School Liaison Officer

Constable A. Yep is Sperling's R.C.M.P. school liaison officer. She assists our school by advising on traffic and other safety issues. The school liaison officer will be visiting all classes this year to provide information and discuss safety in general.

Traffic Safety

Parents are reminded to "Choose Safety Over Convenience"

- Slow down
- Don't turn around (plan your route!)
- Don't reverse (even though YOU would never drive over anyone....someone might)
- Give pedestrians the right of way at all times

Remember your children are learning by what you do, *not* what you say.

Student Safety Patrol

Grade 7 student crossing guards are situated on Sperling Avenue to help students cross the street safely. They are on duty at 8:45 - 9:05 a.m. and 3:00 - 3:15 p.m. Please encourage your child to fully cooperate with the student safety patrol.

Medical Concerns:

The school should be advised of any medical concerns, including allergies. If your child requires prescription medication on a daily basis or requires an Epipen for severe allergies, you will need to have your doctor sign a consent form (please check with the office for this form). If your child is not feeling well at school, you will be called (be sure your contact information is up to date). The school will not provide Tylenol, etc.

First Aid:

Basic first aid (ice packs and band aids) is available at the school. Anything more serious will result in a phone call home.

15) School Rules (including Burnaby's dress code)

Here is the “Code of Conduct” (otherwise known as “The School Rules”) for Sperling. The children are all introduced to these rules in Kindergarten, and they are reviewed regularly.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ÉCOLE SPERLING SCHOOL

At École Sperling School, it is our aim to provide a supportive and caring education environment that encourages each student to work to the best of their ability in all goal areas. Active and open communication is maintained in the school community to foster positive and continuing growth. We strive to provide an environment that accepts individual differences and respects the rights and responsibilities of self and others.

1. Each person has the **right** to learn.
It is the **responsibility** of each person to participate in the work and activities of the school to the best of his/her ability.
2. Each person has the **right** to privacy.
It is the **responsibility** of each person to respect the privacy, personal space and property of others.
3. Each person has the **right** to feel safe.
It is the **responsibility** of each person to treat others with tolerance, courtesy and respect.
4. Each person has the **right** to hear and be heard.
It is the **responsibility** of each person to permit others to express opinions and to respect those opinions.

A safe and orderly school is a priority for students, staff and parents of École Sperling School. Infractions of this code of conduct may result in one or more of a full range of consequences, up to and including suspension.

Other rules will vary from classroom to classroom, but all are created based on the need for safety and respect for all students and staff. Please respect these rules and support the school staff in creating a safe, welcoming environment for all.

The school board offers the following guidance so that students learn to make good independent decisions regarding their choice of clothing.

- All members of the school community should dress in ways that are appropriate for their particular roles and show respect for themselves, for others and for the school
- All members of the school community are expected to wear clothing appropriate for school. Clothing that distracts oneself or others from focusing on teaching and learning is inappropriate. It is not appropriate or respectful to wear clothing which:
 - *represents or promotes alcohol or drugs*
 - *makes sexual reference*
 - *uses inappropriate language*
 - *depicts or promotes violence, racism or other discrimination*
 - *is intimidating to others*

16) Parent Involvement—How do I get involved?

There are lots of ways to get involved at École Sperling School. We welcome moms and dads, working parents and stay-at-home parents, parents who grew up in the Canadian school system, and parents who are new to our country. You will enjoy your child's school years the most if you feel involved. Here are just a few ideas.....

- a) Try to bring and/or pick up your child yourself, at least occasionally. You will soon feel a part of the school community as you see familiar faces each time.
- b) At the classroom level, teachers can always use help—just offer! Often there are things that can be done at home, in the evenings (particularly for Primary classrooms). Many teachers will send home a letter at the beginning of the year requesting help. Field trips, special events at the school, and art projects are all great opportunities to help out for an hour or two.
- c) At the school level, the parent group is called the **PAC, or, the Parent's Advisory Council**. Each school in Burnaby has one, and all parents of children attending that school are automatically members. The PAC also elects a small group of volunteers who are willing to commit extra time to hold executive positions such as the Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. PAC meeting dates are announced on their website and school newsletter. Free childminding is always available for these meetings, just call the school the day before to confirm.
- d) **The Walking Sidewalk Program** is the organized drop-off/pick-up program staffed by parent volunteers on Adair Street. We always need volunteers. This is a minimal time commitment—only 10 minutes, once a week. For more information, or to volunteer, please email Morgan Gilhespy at safety@sperlingpac.com.
- e) **Special Events** such as, the **Terry Fox Run, Pumpkin Patch and Sperling Sprint** require volunteers for the event itself, for example to direct traffic or hand out water or hot chocolate. Notices will go home requesting volunteers; be sure to fill it in and send it back!
- f) The **Lice Prevention Program** is in effect at all Burnaby Schools. Several times a year, a small group of committed volunteers screen every child in the school. If you enjoy working with children, this might be the volunteer opportunity you are looking for.

Tip: *What if I work during the day? How can I get involved?*

As a busy working parent, your calendar should be your best friend. Put field trips, classroom events and school wide activities on as soon as you can. That way, if you have any flexibility with your work schedule, you can try to be available on those days.

Ask your child's teacher if there are any tasks they need help with. Often they'd be thrilled if someone would take home a pile of cutting-out or the like. Just let them know you'd be willing to help.

PAC meetings take place in the evenings so we can include all parents. Come and get involved!



17. Snow

Schools are rarely closed, but when they are, it will be announced on local radio, TV stations and the Burnaby School District Webpage. This is done to alleviate numerous calls to the school.

If you live a ways away, use your own judgment as far as safety is concerned. If you do decide to have a “snow day”, remember to call the office and report your child(ren) absent. (604) 664-8836.

18. Curriculum—Can I see what the Ministry of Education prescribes for each grade level?

Teachers use *Integrated Resource Packages* from the Ministry to plan their units of teaching. These are available on line at http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/

Of particular interest are the *Prescribed Learning Outcomes*, or WHAT your child should be able to do by the end of the unit of study. Your child’s teacher will be pleased to discuss this with you further, if you wish.

