



# Whatcom Family Cooperative Preschool

Family Handbook 2022-2023

Whatcom Family Cooperative Preschool

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# School Schedule

We follow the [Bellingham Public Schools Calendar](#). We do not have school on holidays and semester breaks indicated on the Bellingham Public School calendar. Please note special dates below. The calendar is subject to change, and the most up to date version can always be found on the [Bellingham Public Schools website](#). Inclement Weather/Snow Days are decided by Bellingham Schools. In case of a school delay, morning classes are canceled. In case of a school cancellation, all of our classes are also canceled.

Our first day of school is **Tuesday, September 13, 2022**.

## PRESCHOOL CLASS

**9:30 am - 11:30 am**, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday

## SPECIAL CALENDAR DATES

Friday, September 23 : Outdoor Park Day (details TBD)

Friday, October 14 : All School field trip (Details TBD)

Friday, November 4 : Optional Parent Teacher Conferences, No Classes

Friday, November 11 : No School (Veteran's Day)

December 19-30 : Holiday Break (No School)

March 10 : All School Field Trip (Details TBD)

March 16: No Toddler Class (Teacher Professional Development Day)

April 3-7 : April Break (No School)

June 14 : Last Day of Class

June 15 : All School Celebration

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Children will be dropped off and picked up at the classroom. Please enter Kelly Hall through the main front doors and not through the side door to the left of the building as that is the entrance for the Head Start program only. The working parent(s) and teacher will help children get settled for the day. All students must be signed in and out daily. If you are carpooling with other families, please make arrangements to transfer car seats as needed before pick up time. It is crucial that your child is picked up on time every day.

**The classroom cannot be open until all volunteers have arrived.** Please do not plan on an early drop off: time before the classroom opens is important planning and preparation time and is done more easily without children in the room yet. You may of course bring your child with you early on your volunteer days.

A fee of \$5 will be assessed for every 15 minutes a child is picked up late, and will be added to the following month's tuition.

## **STREET AREAS: DESIGNATED USES AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS**

### **Main Parking Lot**

Please use the parking lot by Kelly Hall to park for parent volunteer shifts and for parking to drop off your child to the classroom. The spots in the parking lot are open for everyone to use, unless marked otherwise. Just a friendly heads up, any cars with tires on the white parking space lines could be ticketed by the college.

In addition to the parking lot, you may also use the loading/ unloading only parking spots to the left of the building for drop off and pick up. Please only use these spots to park for drop off and pick up if it is close to our class starting and ending times as the Head Start program is sharing those spaces with us. Please be sure to use crosswalks and enter through the main doors to Kelly Hall.

For the care and safety of children, we expect caregivers to follow all [Washington state laws and regulations](#) for safely transporting to and from school in personal vehicles. We care deeply about our community and keeping children safe.

## **Tuition**

Tuition is due on the 5<sup>th</sup> of every month for the following month. For example, October's tuition is due on or before September 5<sup>th</sup>. All payments received after the 5<sup>th</sup> will accrue an additional \$15 charge. Payment is set up through the Jovial platform. If you have questions about tuition, please contact the school treasurer: [wfcoop.treasurer@gmail.com](mailto:wfcoop.treasurer@gmail.com)

## **Teacher Info + Schedule**

Ashley Reynoso

**Email:** [wfcoop.wcc@gmail.com](mailto:wfcoop.wcc@gmail.com)

**Phone:** 360-610-7298 (call/text)

I encourage you to communicate with me whenever you have a thought, idea, or concern about your child or our learning community. Email is the best way to start a conversation that might be longer or more in depth, and we can schedule a meeting from there. I'm always around for short chats at pickup time.

# The Daily : What to Expect, What to Bring

## DAILY SCHEDULE

For all classes, our daily schedule includes:

- Gathering Circle
- Indoor Exploration and Play
- Outdoor Exploration and Play
- Whole Class Activity
- Storytime

As we start our school year, our main priority is getting to know each other, creating our learning community, and establishing routines. This is work that we all do together over the first few weeks. Families receive a weekly email on Fridays updating everyone on classroom happenings, so you will always have an eye into what is happening and how we are creating a more specific daily schedule.

## CLOTHING

We will use our whole bodies to explore and play, both indoors and outdoors, every day.

Children should be dressed in comfortable, washable clothing. We will get dirty.

It is especially important that children wear clothing that they can manipulate by themselves (for example: elastic waistbands, velcro, large buttons).

**“There is no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing.”** We try to play outside even in the rain, and in a bit of cold, and sun, and maybe even some snow! We do not have the resources to have some children indoors and some children outdoors, so please dress your child appropriately. Children should have an extra change of clothes in a ziplock bag, labeled with their name, that will stay at school. If you do not want your child to get paint, food, clay, mud, or whatever other messy things we may use in preschool on their clothes, please do not send them to school in those clothes. *If you need assistance accessing weather-appropriate clothes (boots, rain pants, coats, hats, mittens, etc.) please reach out for help.*

## SNACKS

Young children need appropriate nutrition to get them through their busy day. Please pack healthy, ready to eat snacks in a bag or lunch box. We always have a snack time in our schedule. Please provide utensils as needed and labeled water bottle daily for your child. If there are any severe allergies that require restricting certain foods from coming into the classroom, families will be informed.

## **WHAT TO BRING (AND WHAT NOT TO BRING)**

The only thing you need to send your child with each day is developmentally and weather appropriate clothing, a snack, and water bottle. Please label all belongings including backpack, lunchbox, and water bottle. We ask that children do not bring toys/items from home to play with at school: those items will need to stay in their bag during class time.

## **CELEBRATIONS**

At Whatcom Family Cooperative Preschool, we endeavor to be inclusive and encourage sharing in many celebrations. If there is a special family occasion you would like to share with the class, please let us know and we can plan an appropriate way to bring it to our community.

Alternatively, if there is a celebration you do not wish your child to participate in, we respect that and will either choose to not celebrate or find an alternative way to honor your wishes. Due to students in the school with food allergies and special diets, we do not allow the practice of celebrating individual birthdays at school with food treats such as cupcakes. We do welcome celebrating in ways that do not include food.

The birthday child is encouraged to bring in a special book to be read to the rest of the class, by their own grown-up if they wish! In the interest of the feelings and needs of children, you are asked not to bring gifts to school. Please only distribute birthday and other invitations in the classroom if all children in the class are invited.

## **Parent Volunteer Commitments**

As members of the co-op, a representative from each family is expected to:

- Work about 3 classroom shifts per month
- hold a school job;
- attend all monthly Parent Education Meetings; and
- participate in fundraising

## **WORKING PARENTS AS ASSISTANT TEACHERS**

A family representative is required to sign up for classroom volunteer days two months in advance. For example, the work days for the month of December will ideally be finalized by October 1<sup>st</sup>. If the calendar is not full at this time, family members not signed up for at least three days for the month will be contacted by the scheduler to help fill in the days lacking workers.

If family members are not able to fulfill their previously scheduled work days due to illness, emergency, etc., they must find a substitute. This works best through email or text, depending

on how your class communicates. Your class representative and the teacher should be part of this conversation so they can be aware of what is happening.

If a worker is not scheduled for each school day, class will be canceled. It is imperative that all families commit to working one to two days per month. All individuals working in the classroom (including subs) must have completed the vaccine attestation for Whatcom Community College. You'll receive an email with the link/ instructions for completing the attestation.

The working parent who has signed up/been assigned to the class session has a number of responsibilities:

- Arrive 10 minutes before class begins (9:20 for our WCC preschool class). You'll use this time to help Ashley finish setting up for class, and to get specifics on what the session will look like and what is expected of you. Working Parents must enter through the front doors of Kelly Hall.
- Support children at play during class: this may look like being stationed in a specific area, or floating around the room depending on the day's plan.
- Help children with hygiene tasks before and after outdoor play and snack (sanitization/handwashing)
- Participate in documentation (notes, photos, and videos) about children's learning and play (training provided)
- Stay for 15 minutes after class to help tidy, sanitize, and chat about the session with Ashley.

Working parents are encouraged to interact with children in accordance with our child-centered model, providing support for their playful learning. Helpful signage will be posted around the classroom to assist with open-ended questions and how we can keep children in the lead. You are welcome to ask teachers about methods and teaching styles at any time!

In order to reduce distractions from working with children, working parents **should not use their phone in the classroom**: this includes checking notifications and taking pictures/video. Cameras will be provided in the classroom to document learning; please do not use your personal camera during class sessions.

Emergency numbers for Whatcom Community College campus security will be posted by the telephone in the classroom.

The Organization of Parenting Education Programs (OPEP) and our Whatcom Family Cooperative Preschool community strive to create a safe learning environment. Firearms, weapons, drugs or drug paraphernalia, and adult literature are not permitted in the classroom.

## **SCHOOL JOBS**

A representative from each family is expected to have a school job; these range from board positions to fundraising, carpentry, field trip coordination, etc. There is room for parent talents and interests in the school jobs! Your skills can help make our community thrive. School jobs will be coordinated in the first month of the school year.

## **PARENT EDUCATION MEETINGS**

The mandatory parent education meetings for this school year are as follows:

October 20, 7-8 pm (zoom)  
November 17, 7-8 pm (in person, WCC Classroom)  
January 19, 7-8 pm (zoom)  
February 16, 7-8 pm (zoom)  
March 16, 7-8 pm (in person, WCC Classroom)  
April 20, 7-8 pm (zoom)  
May 18, 7-8 pm (zoom)

## **Health and Safety**

### **PICK UP**

You will be asked to provide a list of people who are authorized to pick up your child. These will be on file in the classroom, and can be changed by you when and if needed.

Please be on time for pick up. A fee of \$5 will be assessed for every 15 minutes a child is picked up late, and will be added to the following month's tuition.

### **CHILDREN'S HEALTH RECORDS**

A complete, current, and signed immunization record form must be on file in the classroom prior to your child's first day of school. This includes returning students.

Current information about the Washington State vaccine requirements, the Immunization Information System, and how to provide proof of vaccination or exemption is available here:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/Immunization/SchoolandChildCare#cis>



## **SICKNESS/ILLNESS**

Sick children should stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medicine. Lethargy, vomiting, coughs lasting more than one week, and Pink Eye are all reasons to keep your child home. Keeping your child home when s/he does not feel well, not only gives your child the comfort s/he needs, but it also helps prevent the spread of illnesses to the other children and adults in the classroom which will minimize the need for a substitute teacher and substitutes for in-class working family members.

## **COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS**

We will continue taking precautions based on information we have about the Covid-19 pandemic. These protocols may shift and change over the 2022-23 school year as the board deems necessary, and all changes will be communicated with families. As the school year begins, the requirements below are in place: the source/authority on that policy is noted in parentheses.

<https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/821-165-K12SchoolsChildCare.pdf>

- Facial coverings are optional.
- Families should follow the [Department of Health Decision Tree](#) when experiencing covid symptoms or following a covid exposure.
- Whatcom Community College requires students taking in-person classes (volunteering in the classroom and attending preschool events) to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 prior to the start of classes. Individuals will be able to claim a medical, religious, or philosophical exemption from receiving the vaccine.

## **MEDICATION**

Please do not send medication, including cough drops, to school in your child's backpack or lunchbox. If your child has a life-threatening allergy or condition that requires the use of medication (Epi- Pen, Asthma meds, etc.), a health plan must be established and a signed health plan form must accompany any prescription medications to be kept at school prior to your child's first day of attendance. A child with a life-threatening allergy or condition will not be permitted to be at school until these critical steps have been taken to ensure his/her safety.

## **TOILETING**

Children enrolled at WFCP should be potty trained. That said, we understand that potty training is a journey, and we are here to support you! We ask that you keep us informed about where your child is and how we will support them. We have our own restroom inside of our classroom

that is available. Children should wear underwear to school. Accidents happen, of course: please make sure that your child's change-of-clothes bag includes underwear.

## **PARK DAYS/FIELD TRIPS**

Families will receive notice for any off-site outings we may plan. Please note the dates in the school schedule in this handbook: field trip days will likely have different hours than our regular class times.

## **Confidentiality**

By law, teachers must keep each child's personal information confidential. This includes any special needs, delicate family situations, and any supports in place for those needs (speech therapists, occupational therapists, school or private counselors / psychologists / psychiatrists, behavioral contracts or contracts verbal or written between the teacher and the child's family). For this reason, you will not be made aware of specific needs of or plans for any child in the classroom without the written consent of the family of the child.

## **PROTOCOL FOR CONCERNS**

Due to strict confidentiality laws and out of respect for the families within the co-op and the elementary school, all personal information of the students and the families is kept confidential. At times, you may notice a behavior from a child that is unfamiliar to you. You may also notice different ways in which teachers handle an unfamiliar situation. Our teachers and staff are trained professionals. There are often "plans of action" between parents and the teachers. Sometimes these "plans of action" can look different to someone unaware of the plan. Please understand that the teachers always have the safety and well-being of all students as their top priority. If at any time you have questions or concerns, please follow the appropriate steps to find answers to your questions and solutions to your concerns. This applies to concerns regarding a child, a teacher, a specific situation, and classroom environment or the program in general.

1. Talk to the teacher in private outside of class time.
2. If you do not feel that your question or concern was adequately addressed by the teacher, please contact the Board President at [wfcoop.president@gmail.com](mailto:wfcoop.president@gmail.com).
3. If an issue is still unresolved, it should be addressed with our WCC Preschool Facilitator and Parent Educator, Carolina Olza-Kelsh by email at [colza@whatcom.ctc.edu](mailto:colza@whatcom.ctc.edu).

## **Behavior Expectations**

Behavioral expectations are appropriate based on age and development. We will model respect for all members of the classroom and guide students toward positive social behavior.

Our biggest focus in preschool is social and emotional development, and there are organic moments throughout every day where children are able to try things on for size, and kids learn through the process of play and interaction. Children are expected to be safe, kind, and respectful to the people, materials, and the environment.

## **Family Communication**

The preschool classroom is a busy place, with constant learning and action. Because we are a cooperative, there are always discussions and decisions to make, so staying up on our communication will help our community thrive. Communication will mainly be through email; if you do not have regular access to email, please reach out and we will find an alternative plan to keep you in the loop.

### **WEEKLY E-NEWS**

The teacher sends a weekly email on Friday afternoon with a recap of the week, and a look forward at what is coming up. These emails will include stories of learning as well as logistics, like the school calendar and upcoming meetings.

Please take a few minutes each weekend to read the email as well as links to other relevant information included in the email.

### **MONTHLY BOARD UPDATE**

The board secretary will send an email after the monthly board meeting with relevant updates.

## **Documentation + Portfolios**

Throughout the year, children's playful learning is documented using photo + video, notes, and artifacts of their learning (drawing, painting, etc.). Each child's journey tells their own story, and also the story of our community.

This information is collected for children's portfolios, which will be shared with families. The portfolio is a way to see children's growth: children will not have formal assessments. Working parents will be trained in various documentation techniques throughout the year so they can participate in the portfolio process.

Portfolios will be sent home at the end of our school year.

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