

2024 | 2025



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION HANDBOOK

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Message from our Junior School Principal & ECE Manager



Dear ECE Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to Queen Margaret's School Early Childhood Education program.

Our Early Childhood Education program marks the beginning of your child's educational journey, and we are thrilled that you have chosen QMS. As a member of our Junior School community, you are part of the traditions that have become the foundation of our school for over a century. From the achievements of our youngest students in the ECE program to our Grade 12 graduates, our accomplishments in academics, athletics, fine arts, and service to our community are well recognized.

QMS teachers are committed to creating an environment where your child will flourish. The learning process in our Early Childhood Education Program is viewed as a partnership where parents, teachers and the School work together in support of your child's achievement. Together, we will encourage each student to build on their interests and strengths, and work toward meeting their own unique goals.

Over the last 20 years, QMS has established an engaging play-based Early Childhood Education curriculum that aims to inspire children to become lifelong learners. Our experienced educators provide a nurturing environment which promotes exploration, inquiry and social interaction. We offer beautiful learning spaces both indoors and outdoors that foster opportunities for your child to connect, explore and learn. Our educators will guide your child through inquiry and exploratory activities that will enhance all areas of your child's development.

This handbook provides you with an overview of the information required for students and parents including general information about QMS and specific information regarding your child's program, expected behaviors, and practices. We encourage you to read through the handbook, and if you have any specific questions, please reach out to our experienced teachers and staff for assistance.

Again, welcome to QMS, and we look forward to beginning our educational journey together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan Cruikshank".

Susan Cruikshank
Junior School Principal



A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stacy Paton".

Stacy Paton
ECE Manager



1.0 Organizational Structure

Our Purpose

To prepare young trailblazers...no two journeys are the same.

Our Values in Action

- Be Curious
- Be Kind
- Be Brave
- Be You

Our School Motto

Servite Fortiter—Serve Ye Bravely

Service to others has always been an important part of a QMS education. As Queen Margaret (Saint and Queen, wife and mother) served her generation, we hope that QMS students will go out from the school with a sense of service for their generation. We see the importance of helping others and recognizing those who do.

The School Crest



The official heraldic description of our school's crest reads:

"Vert on a cross gules colised or between; in the four quarters consecutively, a two-flamed pendent lamp, a mullet, a chain of three links, and a sword all argent, a crown of the third."
(*Beyond All Dreams, A History of Queen Margaret's School, 1975*)

The cross and the crown were inspired by Queen Margaret's School, Scarborough, whereas the lamp, chain and star were borrowed from Miss Geoghegan's school, Uplands at St. Leonard's-on-Sea, England. The Sword was chosen to represent the QMS School hymn, "Soldiers of Christ Arise."



2.0 Major School Dates Calendar



QMS MAJOR SCHOOL DATES 2024–2025

<p>September 2024</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30						<p>Aug. 31 Returning Grade 12 Boarders and Boarding Leaders Arrive</p> <p>Sept. 2 New Boarders Arrive</p> <p>Sept. 2 Labour Day (School Closed)</p> <p>Sept. 3 Returning Boarders Arrive</p> <p>Sept. 3 Senior & Junior School New Student Orientation Day</p> <p>Sept. 4 First Day of Classes, Kindergarten & ECE Gradual Entry</p> <p>Sept. 30 Truth & Reconciliation Day (School Closed)</p>	<p>January 2025</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td></tr> <tr><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td></tr> <tr><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td></tr> <tr><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31		<p>Jan. 6 Professional Development (ECE Closed)</p> <p>Jan. 7 Classes Resume</p> <p>Jan. 31 Mid Term Break (ECE Closed)</p>							
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3.0 Introduction Day and Uniform

Introduction to Junior Kindergarten and Preschool lasts for one hour on **Wednesday, September 4, 2024**. The students will be divided into two groups and each group will be in the classroom at different times. A letter will be sent to you in late August indicating which group your child is in on Introduction day.

3.1 Introduction Days

Introduction Day: **Wednesday, September 4, 2024**

Group 1 9:00am–10:00am

Group 2 11:00am–12:00pm

- Students are to be dressed in uniform and meet at the ECE Building.
- Parents are requested to stay with their child.
- Snack will be provided for both groups on this day.
- **Please note there will be no Afternoon Care on this day.**

Regular Junior Kindergarten and Preschool begin on **Thursday, September 5, 2024**

- Junior Kindergarten and Preschool hours: 8:15am–12:00pm
- Afternoon Child Care hours: 12:00pm–5:00pm

3.2 Junior Kindergarten and Preschool Uniform

QMS uniform items may be purchased from the School Store or through the Unicycler. The year-round uniform requirements for all students are as follows:

ALL STUDENTS:

- Navy Blue QMS Polo Shirt
- QMS Tunic **or** Black Dress Pants
- **or Black Skirt or Black/Dark Grey Dress Shorts (external purchase)**
- Green Knee-High Socks or Green Tights (with tunic/black skirt)
- Grey Dress Socks (with dress pants or dress shorts)
- Green QMS Sweater, Vest **or** Cardigan (optional)
- QMS Blue School Coat (optional)
- *Black Dress Shoes or Runners (external purchase)*
- *Indoor Shoes i.e., Holesy, Crocs or Slippers (external purchase)*
- *Muddy Buddy Rain Suit (external purchase)*
- *Rain Boots (external purchase)*
- Complete change of clothing

Extra items required (afternoon childcare students only):

- Tooth brush (not electric)

Please remember to label all your child's clothing, footwear and personal items.



4.0 Student Safety and Emergency Procedures

4.1 Parking Lots and Drop-off Procedure

Safety is our priority for all of our students. When dropping off your child at QMS, please be aware that young children may run unexpectedly across your path.

Please avoid blocking the flow of traffic at all times, as the ECE entranceway provides emergency access to school buildings. Please respect any parking sign instructions.

Licensing regulations require that Early Childhood Education students are escorted to their classrooms and signed in and out for the day.

4.2 Student Illness/Accident/Injury

If your child is injured or becomes ill during school hours, they will be treated as needed. If an injury or illness warrants medical attention, the parent/guardian will be notified by the ECE Manager or School Nurse and asked to direct the school as to what action is deemed appropriate.

If the parent/guardian is unavailable and the situation appears to warrant it, the School Nurse, in consultation with the ECE Manager, shall act *in loco parentis* and take such action as she deems appropriate, including consultation with the child's physician, where necessary.

Parents must ensure that the school has current medical information for their child at all times.

4.3 Emergency Procedures

Emergency Drills

Each year, QMS performs fire, earthquake, and lockdown drills as required by law. These drills are conducted throughout the year. The procedure by which they are conducted is posted in each classroom and office at QMS.

Emergency Contacts

In the event of an emergency, QMS will only release students to their parents or to designated individuals recorded as emergency contacts. In all cases, QMS will continue to care for the student until the designated person arrives.

Parents are encouraged to keep their emergency contact information up-to-date at all times by notifying reception@qms.bc.ca if there are any changes.

Emergency Situations

Parents are asked not to telephone the school following an earthquake or other emergency situation. It is vital that the phone lines remain open for emergency use. Parents may listen to radio stations 89.7 Sun FM, 102.3 The Wave or 106.9 The Wolf for information about the school.

To ensure that all students are properly accounted for at all times, it is imperative that students not leave the school grounds until released by teachers. If parents drive to the school after an earthquake or other emergency situation, it is important that their cars do not block emergency access routes.



5.0 Inclement Weather Policy

At QMS, we make every effort to ensure all of our decisions to remain open or close the school are a direct reflection of our ability to safely transport, care for, and teach our students. After careful consideration of these factors, the decision will be made to remain open *or* close by the Head of School, in consultation with the Facilities Manager. On school days where there is a likelihood of inclement weather, the decision to remain open *or* close for the day will be shared with our community by **6:15am** through the following channels:

Social Media

Announcements will be posted through the following means:

QMS Facebook: www.facebook.com/QueenMargaretsSchool

QMS Twitter: www.twitter.com/QMSDuncan

QMS Instagram: www.instagram.com/qmsduncan/

QMS Website: www.qms.bc.ca

Radio

We will continue to notify the following radio stations of our plans to remain open *or* to close on the day of inclement weather events:

Duncan 89.7 Sun FM

Nanaimo 102.3 The Wave

Nanaimo 106.9 The Wolf

School Phone

Our recorded message will clarify whether school will be open or closed.

Email

Our Junior School Secretary will email a closure message to families.

Bus Students

Parents of QMS students who use our bus transportation services will be contacted in the early morning by their bus drivers if the school is closed or there will be limited availability of bus transportation services.



6.0 Release of Child in Care

As stated in the Child Care Licensing Regulation Act: The facility must obtain in writing from the parent of the child in care, and maintain at the facility, the name of each person authorized to remove the child in care from the facility.

The facility must ensure that a person in care is not released from the facility to anyone except the parent of the child in care or a person authorized in writing on file at the facility.

The facility cannot release the child to anyone that appears to be incapable of providing safe care, i.e.: under the influence of drugs or alcohol or displaying inappropriate behavior that may be harmful to the child in care. If such an incident occurs, the parent or authorized person will be reminded of the policies and the child will remain at the facility until a responsible authorized person can pick up the child.

If the child is not picked up from the facility, the caregiver will proceed with calling the authorized people as stated in child's file.

If your child will be an occasional bus rider (which may only occur if your child is accompanied by an older sibling), please include the names of all QMS bus drivers on your list of people authorized to pick up your child in care from the facility. Please contact Stacy Paton, ECE Manager, if you have any questions about this.

An unauthorized person cannot request the release of the child in care. If such an incident occurs, the facility must obtain in writing from the parent that the child may be released to such person before the child may be released. Emergency services will be contacted if the facility cannot find a responsible, authorized person to release the child and/or the persons involved become harmful to the children or employees in the facility.

6.1 Bus Policy

Children enrolled in Junior Kindergarten or Preschool may ride the bus to and from QMS as long as they are accompanied by an older sibling. Junior Kindergarten and Preschool students will not be allowed to board the bus if they are alone.

An emergency package must be carried in the child's backpack. This package needs to include an index card with the following information: Personal Health (care card) number, emergency contact phone numbers, and any allergy or other medical information. The package should also include puffers, diapers and wipes if needed. Parents must ensure that this package travels with their child.

6.2 Photographic Images

Queen Margaret's School will not use or publish any personal information of students, including images or recordings, on any media which is widely accessible, such as the Internet and including social media, or which is distributed outside the school community, without prior parental consent.

For detailed information on our *Cloud Computing, Photographic Images and Social Media Policy*, please visit our website at qms.bc.ca/school-policies.



7.0 School Communications

7.1 Parental Communications

It is our fundamental belief that a successful education requires a three-way partnership between student, parents/guardians and the school. Parents and teachers are encouraged to develop open lines of communication in order to address any questions or areas of concern at the earliest possible stage. **If parents have any questions, they should contact the teacher first.** These professionals have the most direct contact with and knowledge of the student on a daily basis, so issues are most likely to be successfully resolved through this channel. For those few circumstances when a satisfactory resolution cannot be achieved, the Junior School Principal may become involved.

7.2 QMS Website

The QMS website at www.qms.bc.ca currently provides detailed information about the school and the admissions process. We also provide information about the QMS Parents' Association, Alumni information, Equestrian shows, a multimedia gallery and a school calendar.

7.3 Royal Reminder Newsletter

The *Royal Reminder* is a bi-weekly publication that contains information about what is going on at school and upcoming activities. This newsletter is distributed via email every second Thursday during the school year and is also accessible on our website.

7.4 Social Media

Queen Margaret's School has a strong presence on the Internet through the appropriate use of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. We encourage you to follow and engage with these social media channels.

Facebook	www.facebook.com/QueenMargaretsSchool
Twitter	www.twitter.com/QMSDuncan
Instagram	www.instagram.com/qmsduncan
Vimeo	vimeo.com/queenmargaretsschool
LinkedIn	www.linkedin.com/school/queen-margaret's-school-canada/

7.5 PIPA Policy

Safeguarding personal information of parents and students is a fundamental concern of QMS. The School is committed to meeting or exceeding the privacy standards established by British Columbia's Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA) and any other applicable legislation.

For detailed information on our *Personal Information Privacy Policy*, please visit our website at qms.bc.ca/school-policies.



8.0 Guidance and Discipline

The method of guidance and discipline will be positive and consistent with the developmental age of the children. The teachers will create an atmosphere that fosters trust, security, and comfort. An organized environment for children to explore is vital in maintaining good mental health and diminishing potential for problems. The children will be given clear guidelines about what behaviour is expected. Children are encouraged to express their feelings and needs in words. The children will be supported by the teacher in their interactions with peers; to negotiate, discuss and express their feelings appropriately. In the rare event that a child cannot be encouraged to regulate their behaviour, the teacher will sit with that child until they are able to cooperatively and safely rejoin the activity.

The best solution is to avoid the need for discipline. A qualified teacher can anticipate when frustration and undesirable behaviour may be building and can intervene or redirect the children before hurtful incidents between the children occur. We are committed to providing an atmosphere that will maximize the opportunities for desirable behavior. At no time will discipline be associated with the behaviour of the child in regards to toileting or food.

Parents will be informed if there is a problem with the child's behaviour. The teacher and parents will work together to set up appropriate goals for the child and determine strategies to meet those goals.

8.1 Toileting Policy (Preschool)

Toileting is one of the first self-help skills children learn. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure their child is toilet trained before entering our program. We are aware that accidents do happen at a young age, so please provide a complete change of clothing. If there is an accident, we ensure the child is not placed in an embarrassing situation.

Starting school is an exciting time when new routines are being implemented, and your child may need extra support at this time. If your child needs a pull-up for the first month of school, our staff will support your child through this transition period.

8.2 Medication

All medications must be in their original containers and correctly labelled. They will be administered to your child by a designated staff member. You will be asked to complete a "Consent to Administer Medication" form for each day medication is provided.

If your child requires the use of an EpiPen or inhaler, they must bring them every day to school and on field trips.

While the school is not a peanut-free school, every precaution is taken to be "peanut aware."

8.3 Vaccinations

Medical Records (including up-to-date immunizations) must be provided to our School Nurse. If a family chooses not to immunize their children, they must provide a statement of conscious/religious belief or medical exemption.

If your child is not immunized against vaccine-preventable diseases for whatever reason, they may not be allowed to attend classes or fully participate in school programs in the event of a community outbreak.



9.0 Parent and Repayment Agreements

Please review the important Parent and Repayment Agreements below.

9.1 Parent Agreement

To ensure the health and safety of all the children in care at **QMS Junior Kindergarten and Preschool**, we will keep our child at home if there is any question of illness. If our child contracts a communicable disease, we will notify the teacher/manager immediately.

In case of serious injury or other medical emergency, we authorize the teacher or the School Nurse to obtain professional help (doctor and/or ambulance) and to notify the parents or emergency contact person immediately.

Any medication(s) my child requires will be in the original packaging and accompanied with a signed Consent Form. We understand that only Junior Kindergarten and Preschool Staff are authorized to administer medication.

We will be consistent with informing the teacher about any change in our child's behaviour or change in events that may affect our child's behaviour.

We will make every effort to be prompt in bringing our child to school and in picking them up by closing time.

9.2 Repayment Agreement

As stated in the Community Care and Assisted Living Act, Section 19:

If a person prepays any part of the cost of services provided by a class of community care facility designated by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, the licensee or manager of the facility must, at time of prepayment, deliver to the person a written statement setting out the terms and conditions of when a refund of all or any or the prepayment will be made.

In the event that the child can no longer attend the program or the parent/guardian and caregiver feel that the program does not meet the needs of the child, Queen Margaret's School will require **one month's notice and full payment for that month** whether or not that child is in attendance. Notice will commence at the first of the month.

In the event that the caregiver can no longer care for the child, the caregiver **must give one month's notice** to the parents/guardians.

If a child is sick and unable to attend the facility, **full payment is still required**.

If the caregiver is sick and unable to provide care, a qualified Early Childhood Educator will be called in to replace the caregiver in the facility. If a qualified caregiver cannot be contacted, the parent/guardian will be informed that the facility will be closed and the day/days missed **will be refunded** by Queen Margaret's School.

The fees **will not be refunded** for days missed due to statutory holidays.

If a child does not attend because the parent/guardian is on vacation and/or not working, **full payment will be required**.



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