

Welcome to the Lower Elementary Birch Classroom!

Just like the trunk of a birch tree, there are many layers that go into making a successful year for each child and our community as a whole! Below is some information on just a few of those layers.



The Beginning of the Year

I like to say, “You cannot get back the first two weeks of school.” This is really to say that the first two weeks of school are when you are starting to set the culture of your classroom. This time is a combination of procedures, games and songs, classroom rules, art, fundamental behavioral lessons & problem-solving skills, and learning about the classroom jobs. In addition, we want start observing how each student is interacting, handling challenges, working independently and in groups, and responding academically. These observations are then guiding the additional lessons, and support, that we will give to each student throughout the year. You can think of this as a different type of learning that begins the year. This work, though, will still continue throughout the year. When we get to the middle of the second week, we will be transitioning to more of our regular work.

Schedule

- Our day begins promptly at 8:20. Students arriving by 8:30 will be recorded as being on time.
- We will start our day with an uninterrupted block of work time called the work cycle. This time will include lessons, group work, individual work, kitchen classroom work, snack, and/or brain breaks.
- Each day, we will finish the morning by meeting as a group for a community meeting. This is a time for sharing, community building, and social/emotional lessons.
- At 11:25 (11:15 on Mondays), the students will transition to gym.
- Lunch and recess occur between 12:00 and 1:15.
- In the afternoon, the students will have another work cycle. This may include lessons, group work, individual work, and/or specials classes.
- The Birch students will have French on Tuesdays (2:45) and Thursdays (2:15) in the afternoon.
- Tuesday afternoons, we will also have our Music and Art classes.
- Carline begins at 3:15.

Trips and Swimming Lessons

- Leelanau Outdoor Center: 9/12 and 5/27 - 5/29
- Swimming: 1/7, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2/4

- Other trips (going out, extra field trips, etc.) We would love to have you as a driver!

Spelling Tests & Math Facts

We are updating our procedures on this from last year. Please look for an email coming soon with more details!

Sharing

Children are welcome to share items from home during community meeting. These objects should fall within the categories of items found in nature, photographs, something they have made, something from a different culture, or a memento from your child's travels.

Birthday Celebrations

We will celebrate with your child on their birthday or half-birthday during the school year. At home, your child may create a poster of photographs (please- no digital frames). There should be one picture from each year of life. We encourage your child to write captions to help them present their story. You are welcome to send in a healthy birthday snack to share with the class on their celebration day. Please let us know if you plan to send something.

Lunch/Allergies/Snack

We eat lunch in the classroom or outdoors. The school provides a daily morning snack for all elementary children. Please keep any other snacks for home. An email will go home with any updated allergies.

Friendship Groups

Trisha Short, our mental health specialist, will lead friendship groups to supplement our work in social/emotional growth. She will meet with the Birch Classroom on 10/1, 10/8, 10/15, and 10/22.

Communication

Children have a red folder that will be sent home on Fridays and should return to school on the next school day. This folder is used to send notes and work home and for you to send forms or notes back to school.

During the school day (8:20 - 3:40), the person at the front desk will forward your calls to voicemail. If there is something we should know during the day, please leave a message at the front desk. Should the need arise, please reach out so we can schedule an in-person meeting. You can email me at carey@traversechildrenshouse.org. You may also text me, as appropriate. However, I will not be looking at my phone during the school day. My phone number is (586)255-9103.

Room Parents:

Christina Gallagher, Mother of Finley
Karen Mueller, Mother of Aidan