



École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School

With Christ as our ever-present teacher, in an environment rich in French Language and culture, we ensure every child succeeds: personally, spiritually, academically.

8 Sandpiper Drive

Sherwood Park, Alberta T8A 0B6

PH: 780-467-7135

epk.eics.ab.ca

Kindergarten Orientation Package

YOU'VE MADE A GREAT CHOICE!

Welcome to the École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School French Immersion Program for 2023-2024. We are so glad that you chose to join the ÉPK family and to be part of the Catholic French Immersion Advantage! We are looking forward to working with you this year, and celebrating the many successes your child will experience throughout their learning career!

This orientation package contains important information to help you and your child join the ÉPK family with ease. It also provides you with information relevant for the entire year.

Further newsletters will be published regularly to keep you informed of school activities and news. These are often sent via email. Another fantastic resource for class and school events is the school website epk.eics.ab.ca. We recommend that you visit it often as we update it regularly.

We look forward to working with you throughout the year!

École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School Kindergarten and School Leadership Team

STARTING KINDERGARTEN WITH EASE

Small Group Orientation: Reserve Yours Today!

We are so excited to welcome your child to their first year at Ecole Pere Kenneth Kearns. It is a privilege to be part of their learning journey and we can't wait to get started.

Recognizing that coming to school for the first time may be a little stressful on young children (and parents too), we are planning a slight deviation from a typical day. On your child's first day of school, August 31st 2023, he/she will attend for half a day only. Smaller groups have been organized, allowing for a less busy and a more gentle beginning. For your assigned day your child will either attend from 9:00 - 11:00 am or 12:30 - 2:30 pm. Your child should bring a small snack and a bottle of water. Please verify the date and start time at the bottom of this letter. On your child's next scheduled day, September 5th, classes will resume to regular hours, drop off can begin @ 8:30 and dismissal is at 3:11. They will also be able to access the bus if that is what your family has planned. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school.



Please see attached letter for your child's Staggered Entry Appointment.

If you have any questions, please contact us. ÉPK school office will remain open until Wednesday, June 28th, 2023. After this day, if you prefer to call, please leave a voicemail as the office will re-open August 21st, 2023. We will respond to all emails and voicemail messages received throughout the summer during the week of August 21 – August 30th, 2023.

GETTING STARTED

First Day of School – After your staggered entry

M-F Full Day Program: Tuesday, September 5th, 2023

Tues/Thursday and additional Fridays Tuesday, September 5th, 2023

Class Times

Full Day (M-F) Kindergarten Class:

- 8:42AM to 3:11PM for the full day students
- Monday through Friday throughout the year

Tuesday/Thursday Full Day Program:

- 8:42AM to 3:11PM on Tuesday and Thursdays.
- 8:42AM to 3:11PM on the following Fridays: Sept 15, 29, Oct 13, 27, Nov 24, Dec 15, Jan 19, Feb 2, Mar 15, Apr. 12, May 24, Jun 21.

Last day for Full Day Kindergarten class is Friday, June 21, 2024

Last day of School for T/Th Kindergarten class is Friday, June 21, 2024

Please visit the school website at epk.eics.ab.ca for a complete calendar.

Attached to the orientation package email is the EICS District Calendar. It can also be accessed at <https://www.eics.ab.ca/schools/calendar> or at <https://epk.eics.ab.ca/calendar>.

WHERE TO PARK

- Visitor parking is available in any stall in front of the school
- Back parking lot
- On Flamingo Drive.

Our Drop Off Lane has supervision beginning at 8:30 am. If your child is dropped off after 8:42 am please have them enter through the front door. After school, the PICK-UP Lane will be open after the buses have left. This lane is **not intended** for parents to park and exit their vehicle. If you wish to walk your child to their classroom in the morning or greet them at the front of school at the end of the day please park on the street or in the assigned parking stalls.



WHAT TO BRING

We ask that your child brings the following personal items:

- A pair of runners with white soles, preferably with Velcro closure (to be kept at school)
- Backpack & Lunch Kit
- Water Bottle
- A set of spare clothing for your child (pants, shirt, socks and underwear in a labeled Ziploc bag – Which will be left at school)



Please label these items with your child's name so they can easily be identified and returned if misplaced.

Your child's school supply list should accompany this orientation package however it is also available at <https://epk.eics.ab.ca/parents/school-supply-lists>.

Please bring all supplies to your Staggered Entry Session.

Helping your child become independent is a fantastic gift!

Please prepare your children to dress themselves by having them practice fastening their coat and shoes.

SCHOOL FEES (FIELD TRIPS AND ENHANCED PROGRAMMING)

School fees are currently being revised and will be online in September of 2023. For your convenience, these fees will be available for payment by debit or credit card online under your PowerSchool Parent Portal Account.

For more information <https://epk.eics.ab.ca/parents/school-finances>

What is a Parent Portal Account?

This is an account that you created upon registration for yourself in our school's software system called PowerSchool. Your account will give you access to your child's field trip costs, report cards, student forms and more. **This program will be used every year at ÉPK.**

If you have any questions regarding your account, please call the school.

A screenshot of the PowerSchool Student and Parent Sign In page. The page has a dark blue header with the PowerSchool logo. Below the header, the title "Student and Parent Sign In" is displayed. There are two buttons: "Sign In" and "Create Account". Below these are two input fields: "Username" with the placeholder text "your username" and "Password" with a masked password ".....". A link "Forgot Username or Password?" is located below the password field. A "Sign In" button is at the bottom right.

LUNCH & SNACKS

Every day, students will have lunch & two snacks.

Thank you for helping us keep École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School a **nut sensitive** school. Please remember to read ingredient labels carefully when packing your child's snack to help ensure food is nut free.



WHEN YOUR CHILD IS AWAY FROM SCHOOL

If your child is not attending school, please contact the school and share:

- the name of your child
- his/her homeroom classroom
- the reason for the absence
- the duration of the absence

Absences can be reported in several ways:

- Please go to the Safe Arrival website:
<https://go.schoolmessenger.ca/#/account/signup>
- Call the toll-free number: 1-877-246-9970
- Report the absence through the smartphone mobile APP: SchoolMessenger
- Email us at epk@eics.ab.ca

If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact us at the school at 780-467-7135

To ensure student safety, we check student attendance in the morning and afternoon.

TAKING THE BUS

If you coordinated bussing through EICS, it will officially begin Thursday, August 31st 2023. Your child's bus driver will notify you by phone just prior to school starting as to the time and location of your child's pick-up. Please make sure you ask the bus driver for the number of the bus your child will be taking to **return** home after school.

Your child will receive bus passes within the first few days of school. We strongly encourage you to attach these passes to the outside of your child's backpack so that it is easily visible. This will assist your child as well as the staff in ensuring your child boards the correct bus.



If you have applied for bussing on your registration, to date, no further information is available regarding routes. If you have not yet requested bussing, and would like to, please go to www.eics.ab.ca and click **Transportation** to complete an application.



Transferring buses may be necessary for some students, even in kindergarten. Don't worry, the students are well taken care of and they learn quickly. You can help by ensuring bus passes as well as bus numbers are visible on the exterior of your child's backpack. There are always supervisors at transfer points to help ensure children get to their correct bus. Please encourage your child to go to a supervisor (usually wearing a reflective vest) if they are confused.

GETTING INVOLVED

Ways to become involved:

- Volunteer for Special Events and Activities
 - Just to name a few, parents are welcome to volunteer for L'épluchette (A French Canadian Harvest celebration), Carnaval, ÉPK Family Fun Night, National Indigenous Peoples Day, Sports Day, Faith Day along with many classroom specific field trips and activities. A great time to sign up is during our Meet the Staff event.
- Be a classroom representative
 - Participate in School Council and work closely with the Principal to learn all the ins and outs of what is going on in the school
 - Be a voice for your child's class and provide information and feedback about decisions affecting ÉPK
- Loom Les ceintures fléchées Carnaval Belts
 - Our amazing ÉPK School Council in collaboration with ÉPK school wants to ensure every child has a Carnaval belt of school colours to wear during ÉPK and French Canadian celebrations. Take time to loom and network with fellow Kindergarten parents.
- Support ÉPK from home
 - There are many ways to support your child's class and school by helping with projects or special events from home.
- Attend ÉPK School Council Meetings
 - This is a great opportunity to meet other ÉPK parents, learn about the amazing events happening at ÉPK, get involved in whole school activities and be a voice for School Council and ÉPK School leadership regarding ÉPK's bright future. Visit <https://epk.eics.ab.ca/parents/school-council> for more information and once a month meeting dates.





What is ÉPK School Council?

École Père Kenneth Kearns Catholic School also has a fantastic School Council. Each month they meet to help guide the direction of the school, assist in decision making that affect all ÉPK students and keep up to date on the amazing opportunities for students. They also plan and coordinate special events, as well as establish fundraising opportunities to support Faith experiences at school, and many Cultural events. It is also an excellent way to get to know other parents in the school, and develop lasting relationships. As a parent of a child(ren) attending ÉPK, you are encouraged to attend meetings as well

as participate in the planning and volunteering for events. Ensuring we have Kindergarten parent voices is vital. All meeting dates are posted on the school website at epk.eics.ab.ca under Parents.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL START

For some children, starting kindergarten might sound super exciting, but for others, it is quite intimidating. After all, a child has to experience and adjust to a completely new environment which can be pretty scary (even for parents). If your child is having mixed feelings about starting kindergarten, don't worry about it. It is absolutely normal to feel overwhelmed with different emotions. Here are a few back to school tips for parents of kindergarteners!

Get a school routine going early

Summertime schedules are often different from school year schedules, and there's nothing wrong with that. However, kids do well with routines so establishing a school routine early is important.

Get appropriate gear for your kindergartener

There are tons of cute and fun school supplies out there! A tiny backpack is not very useful. The backpack should be able to hold a water bottle, a lunch bag, occasional treasures and books.

Talk and read about school

Listen to your kindergartener and answer any questions they might have. Share insights into when you were in school and all the fun you had there. Books about school are a great way to generate conversation.

Encourage independence

While no one expects a 5 year old to do everything on their own, age appropriate independence is important. Some important tasks would include dressing and toileting themselves and cleaning up after themselves. While perfection isn't necessary, working towards independence is the goal.

Prepare for back-to-school emotions

Sometimes young children deal with separation anxiety when school time rolls around. Honestly, some parents have trouble separating from their children too. In both cases, those feelings are totally normal! Many of the above tips will help ease school anxieties. Children adjust to new experiences and in no time they will wave good-bye to you and join their friends to have a morning of fun.

