



Handbook

2023 - 2024

Children with complex special needs prepared for school success

KidsAbility School – WATERLOO
500 Hallmark Drive, Waterloo, ON
N2K 3P5
Phone. 519-886-1960

KidsAbility School - CAMBRIDGE
887 Langs Drive, Cambridge, ON
N3H 5K4
Phone. 519-886-1960

ATTENDANCE LINE:

Please call **519-886-1960**
each day that your child is absent
from KidsAbility School.

KidsAbility School

Office Hours: 7:45 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

School Office: 519-886-1960

Reporting Absences:

Call **519-886-1960**. This is a 24-hour message line.

Office Staff

Joanne Cotter, Executive Assistant, 519-886-8886 ext. 1227

Janet Steffler, School Secretary, 519-886-1960

Principal

Krista Mooney, 519-886-8886 ext. 1225

Special Education Liaison Teacher

Virginia Andersen 519-886-8886 ext. 1327

vandersen@kidsability.ca

Chair of the Board of Trustees

schoolauthoritychair@kidsability.ca

School Hours

| WATERLOO & CAMBRIDGE | |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| A.M. classes start | 8:50 a.m. |
| A.M. dismissal | 11:20 a.m. |
| P.M. classes start | 12:20 p.m. |
| P.M. dismissal | 2:50 p.m. |

Welcome to KidsAbility School Authority

KidsAbility School is one of six Section 68 public school authorities funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education and operating within a children's treatment centre.

KidsAbility School Authority Trustees govern the operations and policies of the school.

The one-year program focuses on early identification, early intervention and transition into community schools.

Therapy services from KidsAbility Centre are provided to support your child's success in the classroom.

Therapy in the classroom may involve: consulting with the teacher and educational assistants, trialing equipment, teaching new skills, reinforcing skills, or using skills in the classroom setting with peers.

KidsAbility School

KidsAbility School Provides:

Education for children with communication, physical and developmental challenges.

Early identification of the child's strengths and special needs.

Early intervention to develop strategies that address the child's individual needs .

Accommodations/modifications to the year one Kindergarten program for each child, based on the students' Individual Education Plan and the Kindergarten program document.

Support to the family in preparing for community school entry.

Communication with local school boards when transitioning students to the community school.

KidsAbility School supports students attending their community school in addition to KidsAbility School. We will work with families to determine when this best meets the needs of our students and families.



IMPORTANT DATES AT KIDSABILITY SCHOOL 2023-2024

ENTRY MEETINGS

Tuesday, September 5 to Friday, September 8, 2023
First day of school for all students, Monday, September 11, 2023

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY DAYS

Thursday, August 31, 2023
Friday, October 6, 2023
Monday, November 13, 2023
Friday, January 19, 2024
Friday, April 19, 2024
Friday, May 31, 2024
Friday, June 28, 2024

HOLIDAYS

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| Monday, September 4, 2023 | Labour Day |
| Monday October 9, 2023 | Thanksgiving Day |
| Monday, December 25, 2023 to Friday, January 5, 2024 (Back on January 8, 2024) | Winter Break |
| Monday, February 19, 2024 | Family Day |
| Friday, March 8, 2024* to Friday, March 15, 2024 (Back on March 18) *Fri. March 8 th is additional holiday | March Break |
| Friday, March 29, 2024 | Good Friday |
| Monday, April 1, 2024 | Easter Monday |
| Monday, May 20, 2024 | Victoria Day |

LAST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS

Thursday, June 27, 2024

School Year 2023-2024 for New Students

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|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| April | Registration at KidsAbility School for students offered placement. |
| May | Orientation for parents/guardians. Entry meetings held in September will be confirmed by teachers. Waterloo Region District School Board/Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WRDSB/ WCDSB) are notified of students accepting placement at KidsAbility School. |
| September | Entry meetings with child, parents/guardians, teacher and educational assistants. |
| October | Individual Education Plan (IEP) sent home. IEP Conference invitations sent to community schools. |
| November | IEP conference and Initial Communication of Learning Reports (parents/guardians, KidsAbility teachers and community school staff). |
| December | Open house |
| January | Updated student information - address and community school sent to WRDSB/WCDSB. |
| February | 1st term Communication of Learning sent home. Registration at community school for September for those students not yet attending. Term 2 IEP sent home. |
| April/May | Transition meeting with community school. |
| June | Final Communication of Learning. |

Did you Move?

Please call the KidsAbility School Office at 519-886-1960 to update your address, phone number, email or emergency contact information if/as it changes.

School Entry Doors

Entry through the exterior school doors is restricted during school hours. When picking up your child, please buzz the school office at the outside school entrance doors.

Pick-up/Drop-off of Students

Parents/guardians who drop off/pick-up their child at school may park in the family parking spots at the side of the building.

Children may not be picked up at school by any person other than the legal parent/guardian of the student without verbal or written consent. Anyone picking up a child from school must go to the school office to sign the child out. Photo identification is required.

Safe Arrival Program

It is the policy of KidsAbility School Authority to promote and support the safe arrival of students to and from school.

Implementation of the school's Safe Arrival Policy is the joint responsibility of parents/guardians and school staff.

Parents/guardians are responsible for communicating pupil absences and providing the school with current emergency contact information and telephone numbers. Please contact the School Office 519-886-1960 if your child is going to be absent from school.

The school is responsible for follow-up with the parent/guardian for a child's unexplained failure to arrive at school, or to make arrangements for the safe return of a child home when early dismissal is required.

Inclement Weather & School Closures

When school buses are cancelled for Waterloo Region School Boards due to poor weather, KidsAbility School buses are cancelled, and KidsAbility School is closed.

The message will be broadcast on

- local radio stations
- the school office message phone line, 519-886-1960
- transportation website: www.stswr.ca

There are occasions when weather conditions deteriorate throughout the day. A decision will be made by the Principal in conjunction with the bus company to cancel the routes in the outlying areas. Parents/guardians will be contacted directly by school staff if afternoon routes are cancelled.

Illness

Children with flu symptoms including fever, cough, diarrhea and vomiting should remain at home. Symptoms should be improving for at least 24 hours, 48 hours if gastro-intestinal, before returning to school.

Children should not attend school with any conditions which may be contagious.

If your child is ill when he/she arrives at school or becomes ill at school, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child. Please ensure that your emergency contact information is up to date.

Medication

The KidsAbility School Authority approved prescription medication form (7001-A) must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian requesting the school administer the medication as outlined on the form specifying the following:

- Diagnosis for the medication,
- Medication(s) prescribed,
- Dosage,
- Time of administration,
- Possible side effects.

The medication must be in a pharmacist's container and clearly labeled with:

- Name of student,
- Name of drug,
- Administration instructions,
- Storage and safekeeping requirements.

A safe storage area is provided for medication in a locked box in the office, or a locked cupboard in the classroom. Medication requiring refrigeration is stored in the classroom refrigerator in a secure container.

Plans of Care

Please ensure the school office is aware of any medical conditions (e.g., anaphylaxis, asthma, seizure disorder, diabetes, etc.) your child may have. The Critical Medical Alert form will need to be completed so specific Plans of Care can be documented.

Communication with Parents/Guardians/Teacher

The school uses a variety of ways to communicate with families:

- communication books
- telephone communication
- conferences with the parents/guardians and the school team
- technology with classroom platform

Special Education Liaison Teacher

Students who attend KidsAbility School will receive special education liaison services during their transition to community schools. If you have any questions related to your child's attendance at their community school, please call Virginia Andersen at 519-886-8886 x 1327 vandersen@kidsability.ca.

Off-Site Programs

Off-campus trips may be part of the school program. Off-site programs may include visits to the pumpkin patch, tree farm, fire station, and other locations within the Waterloo Region. Children ride the bus for off-campus activities as an extension of the school program. Parents/guardians will receive details about each trip in the communication book or the class calendar.

From time to time throughout the school year as part of our educational program, our classes go on a nature walk on the path behind the KidsAbility Center. The path does not go near any roads. The walks are typically 20 – 30 minutes long and the education staff accompany the children at all times.

Allergies

- **Peanuts and Nuts**

The School and Centre strive to be nut-free as a precaution to students and clients who may have adverse, allergic or anaphylactic reactions to peanuts and/or nuts. Snacks and lunches sent to school must be free of peanuts, peanut butter, nuts, nut products and foods containing peanut oil.

- **Latex**

The School and Centre strive to be latex-free. Latex balloons are not used in the School or Centre.

- **Scents**

Visitors to the school are asked to avoid the use of scented products when entering the school.

School Council

School council meets to share information and discuss programs in the school. Membership is open to parents/guardians with children who currently attend KidsAbility School. Other members include the Principal, school staff and community.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the School Council, please contact the Principal.

Fire Drills

In partnership with KidsAbility Centre for Child Development, fire drills are scheduled throughout the school year to ensure that staff and students are prepared to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

Photographs

Photographs of KidsAbility School students are often displayed inside KidsAbility Centre and used in displays in the community, or on the KidsAbility website as a way of communicating the work of the School and Centre. Class pictures are also taken and shared with staff and other families of children attending the school. When registering your child for school, you will be asked to give consent for the sharing of these photographs.

Website

Parents/guardians are invited to visit the KidsAbility website for information about KidsAbility School, KidsAbility Centre for Child Development, and the KidsAbility Foundation.

www.kidsability.ca

Code of Conduct

KidsAbility School Authority follows the guiding principles and standards of behaviour as mandated by the Ministry of Education.

The KidsAbility School Authority recognizes that members of the school community have a right to be safe and to feel safe in their school community. With this right comes the responsibility to contribute to a positive school climate.

Parent/Guardian Guide to the Ontario Code of Conduct Ministry of Education

Standards of Behaviour - Respect, civility and responsible citizenship

All school and school community members must:

- respect and follow all applicable laws,
- demonstrate honesty and integrity,
- respect differences in people,
- treat one another with dignity and respect at all times, especially when there is disagreement,
- respect and treat others fairly, regardless of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age or disability
- respect the rights of others,
- show care and respect for school property and the property of others
- take the proper steps to help those in need,
- respect all members of the school community, especially those in a position of authority,
- respect the need of others to work in an environment that encourages learning and teaching,
- seek help from school staff, if necessary, to resolve conflict peacefully,

Transportation

- The transportation company, Voyago Transportation Services, arranges transportation for each child to and from school. A transportation form is completed at registration.
- In August, Voyago will send an information package indicating drop off, pick up times and locations.
 1. Drop Off and Pick Up times and locations.
 2. Release Form: Parents/guardians must identify to the school the names of individuals designated to take children off the bus.
 3. A direct contact phone line for any transportation questions/concerns.
- It is the parent/guardian responsibility to assist the child on and off the bus/van and ensure that he/she is buckled in.
- Parent/guardians or their designate are required to meet their children when students return home from school.

If no parent or designate is present to receive the student, the bus driver will contact Transportation Dispatch who then will call the emergency number provided by the parent/guardian.

****PLEASE DO NOT CALL VOYAGO DIRECTLY WITH ANY CHANGES****

All changes must first go through the KidsAbility School office, Joanne Cotter at 519-886-1960

This is a 24-Hour line.

The school will relay all changes to Voyago.

****Please note: there must be at least 5 working days notice for any transportation changes to be arranged. Transportation cannot be changed to accommodate a one-day change i.e. change of sitter or day-care closures.**

- If the Bus is very late and you want to know when to expect the bus, please call the designated transportation line at 226-270-4519.
- If your child will be absent, please call the KidsAbility School Office directly at 519-886-1960. The **Bus Driver will not** relay the information to the office.
- If you know your child will be away for more than 3 days, please call the KidsAbility School Office at 519-886-1960 with as much notice as possible with the stop and restart dates. Message line is open 24 hours a day.
- If permanent changes to bussing are required, please call the KidsAbility School Office at 519-886-1960. We will relay the information to Voyago. Please have the following information ready when making your call:
 - New Address
 - Date the change is being requested for
 - Contact name and phone number

Transporting Children in Wheelchairs

Parents/guardians, KidsAbility Centre and School staff, and Bus Transportation staff work together to ensure a safe and comfortable bus ride for children who must be transported in wheelchairs to KidsAbility School. The roles and responsibilities of parents/guardians and staff are outlined below.

Parents/guardians:

- Maintenance of the wheelchair and seating device.
- Proper fastening of the child in the seating device and the wheelchair before loading the child onto the bus at the pick-up location.
- Reporting any concerns about how the child is sitting in his/her wheelchair to their child's occupational therapist.
- Informing the bus driver of any changes in the seating and mobility equipment (e.g., trial of a new seating and mobility system).
- Use of prescribed wheelchair headrest.

Primary Occupational Therapist:

- Following up on any concerns regarding the way the child is positioned, fitting or sitting in the seating and mobility device.
- Referral to seating clinic if unable to resolve the seating and mobility issue.
- Follow-up with parents/guardians and school staff following the dispensing or modification of a seating and mobility system.

Seating & Mobility Occupational Therapist:

- Addressing the identified concerns of the child's seating, positioning and mobility with the primary occupational therapist and family.
- Assessing and prescribing seating and mobility devices in partnership with the parents/guardians and primary occupational therapist.

KidsAbility School Staff:

- Informing Voyago of the physical and/or medical needs of the child based on the information communicated to the school by the parent(s).
- Proper fastening of child in wheelchair before loading the child onto the bus at school.

Transportation Staff:

- Securing the wheelchair in the bus using the Q-strait system.
- Making the final decision as to whether the child can be safely transported on the bus.
- Informing the Bus Driver of the physical and/or medical needs of the child based on the information communicated to the school by the parent(s).

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESOURCES AND SERVICE ONTARIO PUBLICATIONS

The Ontario Ministry of Education has resource guides and policy documents available on its website: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/publications/>. Parents can download resources about special education, the Early Years Program, and other topics related to their children's education.

Resources which may be of interest to parents include:

- Effective Educational Practices for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
- The Kindergarten Program
- The Individual Education Plan-A Resource Guide
- Caring and Safe Schools in Ontario – Supporting Students with Special Needs Through Progressive Discipline, Kindergarten to Grade 12
- Shared Solutions – A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs

Parents can order print publications online from Service Ontario Publications at <https://www.publications.serviceontario.ca/> or by telephone: (416) 326-5300 or 1-800-668-9938 Toll Free. Most resources are free and will be shipped at no cost.