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# Pomme d'Api Policy and Procedures Manual

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(To be read by all incoming Board Members upon election to the Board of Directors)

Revised June 2015



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# 1 Introduction

This is the 2015 revision of Pre-Maternelle Pomme d'Api's Policy and Procedures Manual. The manual's purpose is to guide Pomme d'Api staff and parent volunteers in decision-making and actions relevant both to routine issues, and to specific situations that may periodically arise. This is particularly important in helping Pomme d'Api's constantly changing parent board and volunteer pool make a relatively smooth transition to the school community.

Our vision is for Pomme d'Api to continue offering quality programs long after our own children have moved on. We recognize that the staff's dedication and the parents' commitment are critical to Pomme d'Api's success. As such, the policies we make must reflect our beliefs and provide clear guidance towards achieving this vision.

## 1.1 Philosophy

Pomme d'Api is committed to offering our students a quality early childhood educational experience where French is an integral part of the program.

We provide a safe and nurturing environment where children can develop healthy self-esteem. All children are accepted and respected, and their family heritage is valued. We encourage parents and children to share special cultural occasions with the teachers and other students.

We believe that children learn spontaneously while engaged in free play and fun structured activities, and we provide opportunities for the children to develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively.

Pomme d'Api has the following goals:

- to make our children's first experience of "school" as enjoyable as possible
- to provide a stimulating and friendly environment in which they can explore
- to introduce them to the French language as naturally as possible
- to use a wide variety of activities, equipment, and materials
- to explore topical themes with songs, games, puppet plays, creative activities, outings, and invited guests

Because children benefit from regular outdoor activity, a portion of each class is held outside, weather permitting.

As a parent-run school, our secondary goal is to draw from the talents of the parents to administer the school and organize events that directly benefit the children both in the classroom and during extra-curricular activities.

Our focus is to enable our children to get the best possible experience while they are enrolled, and to ensure that Pomme d'Api continues after we have moved on.

## 1.2 Our Programs

Pomme d'Api's preschool programs meet the general objectives of preschool level education and maintain a level of quality comparable to that of other preschools in our region. What sets Pomme d'Api apart is that

we offer preschool French Immersion (French-as-a-second-language) programs and Programme Francophone (French-as-a-first-language). Very few preschools offer either of the above programs, and even fewer offer both programs in the same school. Pomme d'Api offers the following basic programs:

### **1.2.1 Two-day immersion program**

The two-day immersion program is aimed at children entering their first year of preschool. Most of the children will be 32-48 months of age, and activities and language are geared to that developmental level. French is introduced, but English is used as necessary.

### **1.2.2 Three-day immersion program**

The three-day immersion program is aimed at children progressing from the two-day immersion program, as well as new students who are at least 4 years old by December 31 of the year they start the program. The use of French in the classroom increases throughout the year.

### **1.2.3 Three-day francophone program**

The three-day francophone program is aimed at children aged 3-5 from francophone families. This program is conducted exclusively in French.

### **1.2.4 Four-day francophone program**

The four-day francophone program is aimed at children aged 4-5 from francophone families. This program overlaps with the three-day francophone program, but has one extra class each week. The additional day allows the teachers to pursue more age-appropriate activities with the older children that are unsuitable for the younger students.

At the Board's discretion, Pomme d'Api may offer fourth day spots to any children eligible for the francophone school program (avants-droit) in the three-day immersion class, depending on the numbers enrolled in the fourth day.

### **1.2.5 Intense advanced immersion**

Depending on enrollment in the francophone program, an advanced immersion option may be offered, at the Board's discretion. With this option, children in non-francophone families may enter the francophone program. The program is conducted entirely in French, and is recommended only for those who expect to enroll in French Immersion kindergarten, and whose parents actively expose them to French outside of school.

## **1.3 Basic methodology for teaching French**

This section outlines Pomme d'Api's basic methodology for teaching French.

### **1.3.1 Immersion program**

The immersion uses two basic steps to aid in teaching French.

#### **1.3.1.1 Step one – establishing trust**

At the beginning of the school year, we concentrate on welcoming the children as individuals and establishing a solid foundation of trust and friendship. French is introduced very gradually.

### **1.3.1.2 Step two – increasing the use of French**

Once the children feel comfortable in the preschool setting, we increase the use of French and decrease the use of English, with the ultimate goal of English being used only when dealing with matters of safety or discipline. The language is kept simple yet challenging, and is adapted according to the maturity of the children.

The teachers do not point out language mistakes, because correcting the children would discourage many of them and hinder their spontaneity. Instead, the teachers rephrase the children's statements in a supportive and positive manner. For example:

*Child: Yesterday I seed a dog in the park.*

*Teacher: Oh, you saw a dog in the park yesterday!*

Children need both structure and flexibility in order to develop a positive attitude towards the French language and culture. Therefore, we provide structure, but it remains flexible based on the children's needs, language levels, and learning styles.

### **1.3.2 Francophone program**

Our approach to the Francophone program similarly emphasizes initial relation-building in Step 1 and follows the principles of Step 2.

However, we assume that at least one parent is speaking French to the child at home. Anticipating that Programme Francophone children will adapt more quickly to higher levels of French than the Immersion children, we introduce French more rapidly to this group.

All group activities are conducted in French, and, as much as possible, all individual interactions are also conducted in French. We do, however, gauge the needs of each child and adapt to his or her needs, using English when it is necessary.

## **2 Administration – Executive Board**

Pomme d'Api preschool is governed by the Pomme d'Api Society Constitution, which is administered by the Executive Board.

### **2.1 Structure**

The Executive Board consists of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and other Directors as determined by the members of the Society.

The Executive Board positions are filled by parents of children enrolled at Pomme d'Api. If more than one parent vies for a single position, an election is held at the Annual General Meeting, or a compromised solution that includes all interested parties is sought.

Only one parent per family may fill a board position.

The Executive Board is ideally composed of new and returning members to facilitate the transfer of experience.

## **2.2 Responsibilities**

The Executive Board is responsible for:

- school administration
- policy development and maintenance
- finances
- staffing
- organization of all parent meetings including an Annual General Meeting

The Executive is legally responsible for the Preschool and must file all relevant legal documents.

A complete description of each Board Member's responsibilities may be found in the Pomme d'Api Society Constitution (Appendix A).

## **2.3 Payroll & Expense Payments**

The four signing members of the board (President, Vice President, Secretary & Treasurer) are responsible for ensuring that the teacher's payroll and other expense payments are made on time. The staff are paid bi-weekly, on Mondays. Arrangements are made for pre-payments over the Winter and Spring holidays, to ensure that the payments are not missed while the school is closed.

All payments must be verified by both signees, who initial the supportive documents to indicate that they are correct. It is the responsibility of the signing officer to return, unsigned, any cheques with errors on them to the Treasurer or Treasurer's Assistant.

Whenever possible, the President and Vice President shall take primary responsibility for signing payroll and expense cheques, as generally they are more involved with the day-to-day operations of the school, and as such, are knowledgeable about the types of payments to be made.

## **2.4 Meetings**

The Executive Board meets monthly to address all issues concerning the preschool. One of the teachers is paid to attend the board meeting, to provide feedback from the classroom to the parents, and vice versa. Parents wishing to address the Board may request attendance at a meeting by advising the Secretary. The Secretary will add the parents to the attendee list and their topic of concern to the agenda. Parents may however be asked to withdraw from the meeting during discussion of sensitive issues.

Summary minutes of each meeting are distributed to all parents, teachers and the accountant. Details of discussions of sensitive issues will not appear in the minutes; however the minutes will note that the issues were discussed in camera.

## **3 Parent Participation**

This section details Pomme d'Api's policies regarding parent participation.

### 3.1 General information

Participation by parents is mandatory, as Pomme d'Api is administered and operated entirely by parents. Parent participation is essential to developing a sense of community, keeping tuition fees low, and maintaining or improving the existing infrastructure.

Pomme d'Api is not a member of the Council of Parent Participation Preschools, and as such does not require that all parents spend time helping in the classroom. However, parents are welcome to volunteer in the classroom.

There are three mandatory parent participation activities: volunteer opportunities, attendance at school general meetings, and participation in fund-raising.

### 3.2 Volunteer options

Each family is required to contribute, on average, 4 volunteer hours a month. A variety of volunteer opportunities is available to suit individual schedules. Parents may choose to serve on committees, on the executive board, complete routine tasks, or arrange special events. At the Parent Meeting held in May/June of each year, a list of volunteer opportunities is presented; families are requested to choose or rank in order of preference several tasks from this list. Parents are encouraged to work with the Parent Participation Director to find a role that suits their skills and availability.

The Parent Participation Representative for each class keeps a record of each family's participation. Parents are responsible for reporting to the Representative the approximate number of volunteer hours their family has contributed each month.

### 3.3 Non-Participation policy

Upon registration, each family must submit a deposit cheque, dated for July 1 of the following year. This cheque will be destroyed if the family contributes at least 25 volunteer hours by June 30. If the family does not meet this minimum requirement by June 30, the cheque will be cashed.

Any family who has contributed less than 15 hours of volunteer time by December 31 will receive an email notification during the first week of preschool in January. This notification will:

- include a statement of the unfulfilled role or task, based on the monthly parent participation record
- ask the family to report any outstanding volunteer hours that may have occurred but not been reported to the class representative
- remind the family of the volunteer policy and requirements, and of the consequences of refusal to participate (i.e. that their parent participation deposit cheque will be cashed at the beginning of July)
- ask the family to make efforts to volunteer in the coming months (acknowledging that if they are on the Open House committee their hours will likely increase naturally in the coming months)

Any family who has contributed less than 20 hours of volunteer time by April 1 will receive a warning that their deposit will be lost if they do not reach 25 hours by the end of the school year.

The Board will review the list of families with outstanding volunteer requirements at the June Board meeting, and cheques will be cashed the first business day following July 1 for those families that did not meet the requirement.

### **3.4 Parent meetings**

The school holds two general parent meetings each year: the spring meeting for new and returning parents in May and the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in September. At least one adult from each family is required to attend each of these meetings. To ensure attendance, two post-dated cheques for \$25 are collected from each family during registration. At each meeting, attendance is taken and the appropriate post-dated cheque is returned. The cheque is cashed if a representative of the family does not attend a particular meeting.

At the May Parent Meeting, held before school starts, new and returning parents are provided with orientation. Parent participation positions are also discussed and a rank ordering of interest is obtained. Parents who are interested in becoming Board members will indicate this at the May meeting and may be asked to attend the last board meeting of the year.

At the September Annual General Meeting, Board Positions are elected. By this meeting, all parents should have chosen their volunteer roles; any parents who have not signed up are reminded to do so. The budget is reviewed.

### **3.5 Fundraising**

In addition to participating on a committee, on the Executive Board, or in other roles, all parents must participate in fundraising. Fundraising is crucial for the organization as Pomme d'Api is unable to meet all of its financial obligations based on tuition alone.

## **4 Health and Safety**

This section details the health and safety policies of the preschool.

### **4.1 General information**

The Health & Safety Committee promotes the health and well-being of students, teachers, and parent volunteers in the classroom. This committee reports to the Vice President of the Executive Board.

With the teachers' help, the committee ensures the health and safety of persons at the school. The committee's responsibilities include:

- cleaning the classroom toys on a monthly basis
- developing guidelines for safe conduct of the preschool program on the premises
- developing procedures for use in the event of illness or emergency
- delivering health and wellness information to students and parents
- closing the school when warranted

The decision to effect school closures will be made by the teachers, the board and the Environmental Health Officer (EHO).

## 4.2 Important phone numbers

These phone numbers were correct as of April 2015, and should be updated as necessary:

- Pomme d'Api Preschool: 604-800-1197
- South Community Health Office (6405 Knight): 604-321-6151
- Child Care Licensing Officer – Vesna Miskin: 604-675-3847
- BC Environmental Health: 604-736-2866
- Public Health Nurse – Sonia Rasoda: 604-321-6151x3336

## 4.3 Toilet training

Pomme d'Api's preschool licence requires that children be toilet-trained before attending the Preschool. However, as children often set their own toilet training schedules, we try to accommodate children who are undergoing but have not quite completed toilet-training. Enrollment of such children is at the teachers' discretion.

Parents who have children who are prone to "accidents" should bring them to school in clean, dry pull-ups, accompanied by an extra pull-up and an extra change of clothes. Since even toilet-trained children may have "accidents" at the beginning of the school year when they may be stressed by the new routine, all parents should send a change of clothes with their children, to keep in their cubby at the preschool.

## 4.4 Accident procedures

In the event of an emergency, teachers will contact the appropriate resources without delay. For this purpose, parents are required to fill out two Emergency Consent Cards prior to or on the first day of school.

In the event of accidents requiring first aid, parents/designated caregivers may be asked to come to the preschool or in more serious cases, to the Emergency department of Children's Hospital.

For this purpose, parents must also provide an emergency contact number where they or a designated caregiver may be reached. If emergency contacts cannot be reached or cannot come immediately to the Preschool, a responsible adult will accompany the child to Children's Hospital. All deep cuts and head injuries will be taken seriously and will be examined by hospital staff.

After an injured child is out of danger, the teacher will give the parent/caregiver an official description of the accident, witnessed by another adult. The teacher will also file an accident report, as required by Vancouver Health Department regulations.

## 4.5 Clothing

Children must be provided with appropriate clothing for both indoor and outdoor activities, as the teachers take the children outdoors when weather permits. Parents are requested to ensure that their children have the appropriate indoor and outdoor clothing at all times, taking into account seasonal variations in weather. This may include boots, coats, hats, mittens, rainwear or sunscreen. Parents must provide an extra pair of shoes to be stored at Pomme d'Api.

## **4.6 Food and drink**

Snack time is an opportunity for children to learn about their own health and nutrition. Parents are requested to provide a healthy, nutritious snack for their children, as nutrition is integrated into the curriculum. As such, junk food (candies, sugar cookies, soft drinks etc) are not appropriate snacks.

Importantly, Pomme d'Api has a "no nut" policy, as nuts pose a serious allergy hazard to some children. Additional postings regarding other allergens or food hazards will be posted when appropriate. Teachers will monitor and remove snacks that pose a potential hazard to children in the class.

## **4.7 Policy regarding non-enrolled children in the classroom**

Pomme d'Api's insurance policy covers enrolled students and their immediate families. This means that we cannot allow unrelated children to attend events at the school.

Siblings of registered students are welcome to attend in-classroom events such as class potlucks. Children who are not registered students or siblings of registered students cannot attend in-classroom events.

The only exception is our annual Open House, which is held outside of regular classroom hours and is open to the public.

Children who are not registered students or siblings of registered students may attend field trips under some circumstances, because they are not held on school property and the children remain under the supervision of the adult they arrived with.

If you would like to bring a child who is not a student or sibling of a student along on a field trip, please speak to the teachers and the field trip rep ahead of time.

## **4.8 Health concerns & communicable illnesses**

Parents are required to keep their children out of the preschool if they are sick and/or have a communicable illness. The following is a common, not exhaustive list, of illnesses that are prone to circulating in any preschool community:

- Chicken Pox
- Measles, Mumps, Rubella
- Scarlet Fever
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)
- Lice
- Gastroenteritis (stomach "flu", includes nausea, vomiting, chills and diarrhea)
- Influenza

Other childhood health concerns include fever (38°C/100.4 F or higher) and colds or coughs.

For all of these, the child is required to stay home until:

- the child is no longer contagious or the illness is not communicable, and
- the child is well enough to participate in the school activities



#### **4.8.1 Guidelines for Determining if Children are Well Enough to Attend Preschool**

The following guidelines are meant to assist parents in determining whether their children are well enough to attend preschool.

##### **4.8.1.1 Vomiting and diarrhea**

Children who have been vomiting or have had diarrhea must not attend preschool for at least 24 hours after the symptoms have subsided.

##### **4.8.1.2 Communicable diseases**

Children who have a communicable disease such as chicken pox, measles, scarlet fever, mumps, or conjunctivitis (pinkeye) are not permitted to attend class during the incubation and contagious phases of the disease.

Parents must inform the preschool when their children have a communicable disease.

##### **4.8.1.3 Mucous and coughing**

Children who have cloudy or green mucous or a very bad cough should see a doctor to rule out infection, and stay home until symptoms subside, unless they have a note from the doctor indicating that they are not contagious.

Children who have a clear runny nose and light coughing, but no other symptoms, may attend preschool.

##### **4.8.1.4 Fever**

Children who have fever are contagious, as fever generally indicates that a child is fighting some kind of illness. Children must be kept away from class until 24 hours after the fever is gone and any other symptoms have subsided.

#### **4.8.2 Medication**

Parents of children who must be administered medication (prescription or non-prescription) must complete the form called "Permission to Administer Medication".

### **4.9 Parent responsibilities for health and safety**

Parents are responsible for:

- providing the school with their child's current immunization status
- keeping their children out of class if they are ill with a communicable illness, fever, or a cold/cough with green secretions and/or general malaise
- informing teachers of the reason for their child's absence from class (illness, vacation or other obligations)
- informing the school and the Health and Safety Committee the day that the rash appears in the event of Chicken Pox. A child is contagious 1-2 days prior to the appearance of the rash. This information will be given to other parents who may wish to immunize their children after exposure. The effectiveness of such immunization depends on administering the vaccine as quickly as possible after exposure

- informing the school and Health and Safety Committee if their children develop any of the other communicable illnesses listed in Section 4.7
- waiting until their child is symptom-free for 48 hours before bringing a child who has had a communicable disease back to class
  - in the case of Conjunctivitis or Scarlet Fever, where a child is taking antibiotic medication, the child cannot return to school until they have been taking this medication for at least 24 hours
  - in the case of Chicken Pox, the child cannot return to school until all the spots have crusted over, approximately 7 – 10 days after the appearance of the rash. A child may return to school after the 6th day if the blisters that have not crusted over are covered by clothing

#### **4.10 Teacher responsibilities for health and safety**

Teachers are responsible for:

- sending a child home with the parent/care giver if the child is brought to school sick. The parent/caregiver will be given information on caring for a child with the illness and preventing its spread.
- communicating health information upon being informed of illness by a parent
  - posting health information at the front school bulletin board
  - informing the Health and Safety Committee
  - putting relevant health information in each child's school box for parents to take home
  - greeting parents at the school's front door, if the illness is communicable, to inform them of the current illness and the number of children with the illness.
- informing the Environment Health Office (EHO) and Health & Safety Committee if there are more than two children absent from school with the same communicable illness.
  - teachers may ask questions or clarify their own concerns and/or ask for related materials to distribute to families
  - the EHO will investigate the cause of the outbreak. The EHO may contact families of the ill children to identify possible sources of the exposure or to obtain stool samples etc. from symptomatic children.
  - the teachers will liaise with the EHO and the Health and Safety Committee until the outbreak is declared over.
- teaching children proper handwashing technique during Safety Month
  - proper handwashing technique requires that the front and back of hands, fingers and wrists be washed for 30 seconds and faucets be turned off using a paper towel.
  - hand-outs on proper hand washing will be distributed to parents. It is recommended that parents wash their children's hands before and after pre-school as a preventive measure.

### 4.11 Health and Safety Committee responsibilities

The Health and Safety Committee is responsible for:

- issuing, upon learning that a communicable illness has entered the school, an e-mail informing parents of such, to allow them to decide if they will bring their child to school.
  - information about childhood illnesses will be provided in the Parent Handbook and web site
  - depending on the severity of the situation, the Committee may choose to initiate the emergency phone/text list rather than send a general e-mail
- answering questions that parents may ask via phone or e-mail.
- phoning, in the event of an outbreak, any parents whose children miss school if the parents do not inform the school of the reason for the children's absence.
  - teachers may e-mail or phone the Health and Safety Committee with the names of parents that need to be contacted. This needs to be done within 24 hours of the child missing class, as the teachers must inform the EHO of the number of children missing school due to illness.
- organizing a monthly cleaning, using parent volunteers, of the school toys
  - toys are to be washed with diluted bleach
  - additional cleaning sessions will be organized in the event of communicable illness.
  - in the event of lice, play clothes are to be washed.

### 4.12 Child care during parent meetings

Because all families are required to have a representative at the two annual parent meetings (the spring parent meeting and the AGM in the fall), Pomme d'Api will supply free child care in the classroom during these meetings, which are held in the church adjacent to the classroom. This child care is provided for siblings as well as for registered Pomme d'Api students.

In order to keep the children safe, we have the following policies regarding child care during meetings:

1. All children who will be left in the classroom must be signed up ahead of the date of the meeting. There will be no last-minute additions.
2. All children must be signed in and out of child care the evening of the meeting.
  - a. No child can be left in the classroom until he or she is signed in and given a name tag.
  - b. No child may leave the classroom until he or she has been signed out. If a child becomes very upset, a caregiver will come find his or her parents, but the child will need to be signed out before being released.
3. There will be at least one caregiver for every 6 children.
4. All volunteer caregivers will wear name tags identifying them as caregivers, and one person will be designated to be in charge.
5. Once all children are inside, the classroom door will be locked. Prior to that, a volunteer will watch the door to make sure that no children wander out.

## **5 Emergency Plan**

Emergency situations may include weather-related incidents (leading to school closures), health-related incidents (serious communicable illness), disasters (fire, flood, snowstorm, mudslide, hurricane, tornado or earthquake) as well as urgent school matters or safety concerns.

### **5.1 Emergency communications**

The Health & Safety Committee will coordinate communications to all parents in the case of a health/safety concern or emergency. For non-emergency situations, the information will be communicated by email. In emergency situations, the information will be communicated via the Emergency Phone/Text Tree.

#### **5.1.1 Emergency Phone/Text Tree**

At the beginning of the school year, each class representative will ask the parents in their class to submit the phone number where they are most likely to be reached. If possible, this number should be able to receive texts. If the parent does not have a phone that can receive texts, they should notify the class rep.

The class rep will create a contact lists so that he or she can text all of the parents in the class at once. If there are any parents in the class who cannot receive texts, the class rep will make a note, along with those parents' phone numbers.

The President will also have this contact information, with a separate contact list for each class.

During the school year, as students join the class or withdraw from the class, the class rep will keep the emergency phone/text list up to date.

#### **5.1.2 Emergency notification procedure**

If there is an emergency, the class rep (or the President, if necessary) will follow this notification procedure:

6. Send a group text to all of the parents in the class with information about the emergency, requesting a return text to confirm the message was received.
7. Phone any parents who cannot receive texts, with the same information that was included in the text.
8. Keep track of responses to the text. After a reasonable amount of time, any parent who has not responded to the group text will be phoned.

If an answering machine is reached when a parent is phoned, the information should be left as a message, along with a request to call back as soon as possible to confirm that the message was received.

This phone/text tree notification procedure will also be used in non-emergency situations that require communication on short notice (such as school closures due to bad weather).

### **5.2 Evacuation**

If there is an emergency such as a fire or earthquake where the school must be evacuated, students and teachers will move to a muster point in the empty lot at the back of the church (on Gladstone just north of 44th, across the alley from the back door of the preschool).

In the event of an evacuation, parents will be contacted to come get their children. The teachers will stay with the children until they are released to a parent or other designated adult.

In the case of a prolonged emergency or if parents cannot be contacted, children may be moved to a different location. In this case, a posted message will be left on the back door of the preschool (a grey fire door facing the empty lot behind the church) with the location and contact information for each child. If possible, parents will also be phoned, texted, or emailed with the information.

### **5.3 Emergency Kit**

The preschool has an emergency kit with the following contents, in amounts meant to meet the necessities for two teachers and 20 children for a 3 day period:

- water tetra packs
- survival nutrition bars
- light sticks
- AA batteries
- survival candles
- portable toilets
- toilet paper
- an army knife
- a whistle
- a rope
- emergency all-weather blankets
- AM/FM radios
- a tarp
- waterproof matches
- a basic first aid kit
- dust masks
- “comfort kits” including small comfort items and emergency contact information for all students

The kit is kept in the outdoor storage area to the east of the playground, under the ramp leading to the church.

If the class is evacuated, the teachers will also bring along the class first aid kit, as well as the attendance form from that day.

#### **5.3.1 Emergency comfort kits**

The preschool will also store a “personal comfort kit” for each child in case of emergency. This kit will be provided by the parents at the start of each school year, and will be sent home at the end of the school year. Even students that will be returning to Pomme d'Api will have their kits sent home so parents can renew the kits and update necessary info.

Each kit will consist of a large ziplock bag with the child's name written on it in black sharpie, and will include items that the parent feels will comfort the child in case they have to wait to be reunited with the parent in case of emergency. Examples of such items include:

- a short "letter of comfort" from the parent
- pictures (for example, of the family, a pet, the child's room)
- a notepad or drawing paper
- small markers or pencil crayons
- a small stuffy, toy, playing cards, or game
- a flashlight with batteries

Each kit will also contain a copy of the child's emergency contact card which is filled in at the beginning of the school year.

The kits should not contain:

- food
- medication
- crayons (which can melt in the storage bin)
- items that will not fit in the ziplock bag

## **6 Money Handling Policies**

This section discusses Pomme d'Api's policies for handling money.

### **6.1 Reimbursement for costs/purchases**

Designated individuals (e.g., board members, purchasers, volunteers) will on occasion perform services or purchase items on behalf of the school. Costs related to school business will be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts to the Treasurer.

To be reimbursed, individuals must:

- document the amount requested and compile receipts for the items purchased or service rendered
- retain a copy of the documents for their own reference
- submit the documents to the Treasurer for reimbursement

The Treasurer will approve and submit the request to the Accountant and return a cheque to the individual requesting reimbursement.

### **6.2 Collection of money**

For field trips, photo sales or upon certain other occasions, parents will be asked to submit fees. These funds will be collected by the class representatives and transferred to the person in charge of the event or sale.

For fund-raisers, parents will be asked to submit cheques for sale orders. These funds will be collected by the fund-raising director or designated committee members.

For tuition or meeting attendance, parents will be asked to submit post-dated cheques. These funds will be collected by the Registrar.

All persons collecting or handling money are responsible for the money until it is received by the Accountant's office. Teachers are not to be designated persons for handling money. Parents will be instructed to submit any due funds to a designated representative or deposit them into a secured locked box.

### **6.3 Submission of collected money**

Class representatives shall provide collected money to the designated person in charge of an event or sale.

Persons in charge of an event or sale shall provide all collected money in person to the Treasurer or Accountant within one week (7 days) of receipt.

Cash is to be counted and verified by both the collector and the Treasurer/Accountant.

A summary of the event and money collected must be provided to the Treasurer/Accountant.

### **6.4 Fundraising procedures**

The Fundraising Director is responsible for:

- informing the Treasurer/Accounting Office of the start and completion dates for each fundraising campaign
- collecting all orders and funds
- verifying the accuracy of all orders and funds. The amount collected from each individual must correspond to his/her order

Funds are to be segregated by fund-raising campaign. Where applicable, all money collected through fundraising must be reconciled with the order forms and supplier invoices. In addition, supplier invoices must match the total of all individual orders minus the appropriate profit for the school.

All supplier invoices must be signed by the Fundraising Director and submitted with the original order form in order to be processed for payment.

Collected funds and reconciliation documentation must be submitted in person by the Fund-raising Director to either the Treasurer or Accountant within one week (7 days) of the close of a fundraising campaign.

### **6.5 Treasurer - procedures**

The Treasurer is responsible for:

- informing the Accounting Officer when to expect cash and cheque deliveries
- delivering funds to the Accountant's Office along with a list detailing the amount, payee and purpose of each cash amount or cheque

## 7 Enrollment Policies

Pomme d'Api is licensed for:

- up to 20 children per class, provided that two qualified Early Childhood Educators are present
- up to 15 children per class, provided that one qualified Early Childhood Educator and one assistant are present

Pomme d'Api follows a fair and non-discriminatory process of enrollment using the following criteria.

### 7.1 Entrance eligibility

This section describes the eligibility requirements for each of the preschool's programs.

#### 7.1.1 Two-day immersion program

Students in the two-day program must be at least 32 months of age as of September 1, in order to comply with child care licensing regulations. This also ensures that the school is able to provide age-appropriate activities, toys, and furnishings.

The two-day program is aimed at students 32-48 months of age. While there is no policy against admitting older children, we recommend that parents enroll older children into the three-day program to keep them with peers of their own age and developmental level.

#### 7.1.2 Three-day immersion program

Students in the three-day program must be at least 4 years old by December 31 of the year they start the program. This ensures that students in the program are at roughly the same developmental stage and allows teachers to adapt activities to an older group.

Because this is a policy rather than a licensing requirement, the teachers may occasionally use their discretion to allow a younger child to transfer from the two-day program into the three-day program if they feel the child is mature enough. This is particularly relevant to children who will turn four early in the new year.

#### 7.1.3 Francophone program

Students in the francophone program must be at least 32 months of age. In addition, they must meet at least one of the following three criteria from the Conseil scolaire francophone de la C.B.:

- At least one of the parents has French as a first language
- At least one parent received his or her primary school instruction in French
- A sibling has received or is receiving his primary or secondary schooling in French

In addition, families who do not meet the above qualifiers but who have had older children in the francophone program may register subsequent children in this program.

Children whose parents or siblings do not meet at least one the above criteria are not eligible for the program even if the parents have learned French as a second language and are considered bilingual. Exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Students in the francophone program should be exposed regularly to French within the home.



Students in the four-day francophone program must additionally be at least 4 years old by December 31 of the school year in which they are registered.

#### **7.1.4 Intense advanced immersion**

The advanced immersion entry into the francophone program is offered only when the francophone class enrollment is below what the annual budget requires, and enrollment in the entire school is below what the annual budget requires.

If this is the case, the Board may decide to enroll non-Francophone children into the Francophone program on August 1, prior to the start of the school year. Before this time, any open spaces will be offered only to francophone families. For this program, every effort should be made to include students who have French-language understanding and support at home.

### **7.2 Priority for admission and re-admission**

Vacant spaces will be filled according to the following priorities, in descending order:

1. Returning students
  - a. Children currently enrolled in one age group and moving to the next age group
  - b. Children moving between programs (eg. 2-day immersion to francophone)
2. Children currently attending part-time who wish to increase to full-time
3. Siblings of current students and siblings of previous students
4. Children who recently left the program
5. Children applying for admission for the first time.

No family will be discriminated against on the basis of race, language, socio-economic status, gender or sexual orientation.

### **7.3 Early enrollment and pre-registration**

Pre-registration takes place in January, for the following groups:

- students who are currently enrolled at Pomme d'Api and intend to return
- siblings of students who are currently enrolled at Pomme d'Api
- siblings of students who have been previously enrolled at Pomme d'Api

After pre-registration is complete, early enrollment in advance of the open house is allowed for the following groups, space permitting:

- children who have been previously enrolled at Pomme d'Api and intend to return to the program

### **7.4 General registration**

General registration takes place at Pomme d'Api's annual Open House, usually held in late February or early March. Parents who are interested but unable to attend may send a proxy with their registration materials. Board members may not act as proxies.

If there is space left after the Open House, parents may register their children by contacting the Registrar. If requested, a class visit may be arranged in advance of registration.

At registration, parents must complete a registration form, which includes an email address and a signed agreement acknowledging the parent participation and fundraising requirements. The completed registration form must be submitted along with cheques for the appropriate amounts. The Registrar will send out a registration package that includes a Parent Guide, a list of volunteer opportunities, and other forms that must be completed.

## **7.5 Enrollment list and waiting list**

An enrollment list will be maintained for students who are registered in the program for the upcoming school year. To be added to the enrollment list, students must have submitted a non-refundable registration fee, plus a deposit of one full month's tuition.

A waiting list is started once a program is full. Students on this list are not required to submit the registration fee until a space becomes available for them. When a space becomes available, the Registrar will contact the family of the first student on the list. The family will have a finite amount of time to provide the registration fee and tuition deposit. If these are not received within the predetermined time, the student will be placed back on the waiting list (if they are still interested in the spot) and the spot will be offered to the next student on the list.

## **7.6 Admission and Registration Procedures**

This section outlines Pomme d'Api's procedures for admission and registration.

### **7.6.1 Responding to inquiries**

This section describes our policies on responding to inquiries from families interested in registration.

#### **7.6.1.1 Telephone inquiries**

When a family phones Pomme d'Api for information and/or to register, the teachers may answer the calls and respond to questions. The Registrar or other Board Members are also required to assist in returning calls regarding registration questions.

#### **7.6.1.2 Email inquiries**

When a family emails Pomme d'Api for information, the Registrar or Registrar's Assistant is responsible for replying to the email, in English or in French as appropriate.

#### **7.6.1.3 Social media inquiries**

When a family requests information through social media (for example, on our Facebook page), the Technology team member responsible for monitoring our social media accounts may reply to the query, or if necessary bring the query to the attention of the Registrar who will assist in replying to the query.

#### **7.6.1.4 Procedure for contacting parents regarding an inquiry**

When contacting interested parents prior to the annual Open House, teachers or the Registrar will:

- inform parents that registration is on a first-come, first-served basis
- inform parents that the next year's registration begins at the Open House event scheduled in late February/early March

- offer parents the opportunity to make an appointment to visit the class they intend to register their child in

If the date for the Open House has not yet been set, the Registrar will keep a list of interested families and contact them to let them know the Open House date once it has been set. There will be no waitlist priority for Registration, aside from that outlined in Section 7.2.

When contacting interested parents after the Open House has already occurred, teachers or the Registrar will:

- offer parents the opportunity to make an appointment to visit the class they intend to register their child in
- inform parents how much space is available in the class they intend to register their child in
- explain the waitlist procedure if the class they intend to register their child in is already full

The Registrar will arrange a suitable time for each visit and inform the teaching staff of all scheduled appointments.

#### **7.6.1.5 Procedure for visits to the school**

When parents interested in registration visit the school, teachers will:

- answer parents' questions and clearly state that parent participation is mandatory
- give interested parents a registration form and clearly state that a non-refundable registration fee plus a deposit consisting of the final month's tuition must be received before their children's names are added to the enrollment list. The deposit is refundable if at least one month's notice is given.
- encourage parents to contact the Registrar should they have further questions about the school's philosophy, volunteer requirements, etc.

If a given program is full, parents can submit their names, their child's name and the child's birthday, in order to be placed on the wait list and contacted when a space becomes available.

#### **7.6.2 Receiving applications**

Upon receiving applications and registration fees from parents, the Registrar will:

- give a receipt for fees received to the parents
- submit the applications and fees to the Treasurer for processing
- write and send a letter confirming registration to parents of registered children

The Registrar will maintain a list of children who enroll and forward this information to the Treasurer and other interested Board members on a regular basis.

##### **7.6.2.1 Additional tasks upon registration**

When a new family registers, the following additional tasks must be completed:

- the Parent Participation Director must assign the family to a volunteer role or roles
- the Technology committee must add the family to the relevant email lists
- the relevant class representative should be provided with an updated list in order to track the family's volunteer hours

### **7.6.3 Responsibilities of the Registrar**

The Registrar is responsible for ensuring that:

- registration fees have been paid upon registration
- registration packages including the Parent Guide, a list of volunteer positions, forms, and other information have been sent to new parents
- all required documents have been submitted and all current and post-dated cheques have been submitted when the child starts school
- a file, to be kept at the school, is opened for each child

Teachers may only accept new children into the classroom if their parents have submitted the registration fee, a tuition cheque for the first month and June, and post-dated cheques for the rest of the year.

An exception is made if parents disclose that they are planning to apply for subsidy. In this case, teaching staff will ensure parents know where to apply and will inform the Registrar and the Treasurer immediately of the parents' intention.

### **7.6.4 Part-time enrollment**

When a program is not full, part-time students may enroll. Part-time students pay a pro-rated fee.

If a new child applies for a full-time space in a full class with a part-time student, the part-time student must either become a full-time student or withdraw from the program. Notice of one week will be given to the parents of a part-time student to make this decision.

If there is more than one part-time student and only one space is required for a full-time applicant, the student who has been enrolled part-time for the shortest length of time is asked to make this decision. When all part-time students have been enrolled for the same length of time, all of them will be asked to pay the full-time fees.

An alternative arrangement may also be made, provided it is acceptable to the teaching staff. For example, two students could divide the full tuition fee and both attend part-time. Parents are responsible for organizing this type of arrangement which is only acceptable if no problems or additional responsibilities are imposed on the teaching staff.

### **7.6.5 Withdrawal**

Families may withdraw a child from any program at any time, including within the 6 week probation period. Written notice (by email or letter mail, but preferably by email) must be provided to the Registrar for ALL withdrawals.

Upon withdrawal of any child from a program, the Registrar must notify the teaching staff and the Treasurer. If the teachers are notified first, they must request a written withdrawal notice from the family, to be given to the Registrar as soon as possible.

If the withdrawal is for a new student within the 6 week probationary period, upon receiving written notice the Registrar will return the tuition deposit and all of the family's remaining post-dated cheques once the current month's tuition cheque has been cleared by the bank.

If the withdrawal is for a returning student, or for a new student after the 6 week probationary period has ended, the parents must submit one month's written notice. In this case, their tuition deposit will be applied to this final month if their account is up to date with no outstanding debts and all cheques cleared, and the remaining post-dated tuition cheques will be returned within one month. Parents who do not submit written notice will not receive a refund. There are no refunds for partial months.

If the withdrawal is at the preschool's request at any point of the school year, upon receiving written notice the Registrar will return the tuition deposit and all of the family's remaining post-dated cheques if their account is up to date with no outstanding debts and all cheques cleared. Parents will not have to give one month's notice – only written notice effective immediately.

The Registrar will update the accounts/files and inform parents of children on the waiting list that a space has become available.

#### **7.6.5.1 Additional tasks upon withdrawal**

When a student withdraws from the school, the following additional tasks must be completed:

- the Parent Participation Director must reassign the family's volunteer role or roles
- the Technology committee must remove the family from the relevant email lists
- the relevant class representative should be provided with an updated list so that they know that they no longer have to track that family's volunteer hours

## **8 Fee Payment**

Tuition fees are due, in full, on the first day of each month. Other fees, such as deposits, supply fees and parent meeting fees are due according to the schedule provided at the time of registration. Families are encouraged to contact the Board if there are extenuating circumstances that may result in the late payment or non-payment of fees.

### **8.1 Late payment of fees**

If fees are not paid by the due date, the Treasurer or nominated person will:

1. Issue a written reminder to the overdue account stating that the fees are overdue and requesting payment within seven (7) days
2. Follow up with a telephone call within five (5) days of the reminder's expiry date
  - If the family is experiencing financial difficulty, a meeting may be arranged to discuss alternate payment options and to develop and agreed payment plan
3. Issue a second and final notice stating that fees are late if payment has not been received, or an agreed payment plan has not been drawn up by the end of the first 7-day period. This notice will request payment within seven (7) days of the notice date
4. Follow the policy "Failure to remit fees" (section 8.3) if payment is not received at the end of the second 7-day period. The fees are now considered unpaid and the family's child(ren) are suspended from class until further notice.

If the payment plan drawn up and signed by both parties is not adhered to, the follow-up process will commence at step 2.

## **8.2 Repeat occurrences**

If a family's fees are late more than twice, then:

- On the third occurrence, they will only be given seven (7) days to pay before the account becomes unpaid.
- On the fourth occurrence, the account will be considered unpaid after the due date.

If a family's fees are unpaid more than once, the child(ren) will be withdrawn from the school.

## **8.3 Failure to remit fees**

As described in section 8.2, a second failure to remit fees will result in the withdrawal of the family's child(ren) from the school. The Board will initiate legal proceedings to recoup the preschool's losses.

### **8.3.1 Debt Recovery**

The Board reserves the right to take action to recover debts owing to the preschool.

When a family owes money to the preschool, no further placements in programmes will be provided to any child in the family until all outstanding monies are paid or a written payment plan has been signed by the Board representative (Treasurer or President) and the family.

## **9 Gradual Entry**

Gradual entry is a planned process for introducing children to their new preschool environment with minimal stress on child and caregiver as the child adapts to a new routine and to new caregivers.

Gradual entry will assist parent and child to:

- feel comfortable at the preschool
- begin building a trusting relationship with the staff
- promote a positive start at the preschool and
- feel comfortable and confident about leaving the child at the school

During gradual entry, we follow a series of steps in which parents gradually reduce the amount of time their child sees them at the preschool. There are three steps, but these do not necessarily happen over the course of three visits. Timing will vary between children, because all children adapt differently.

For some children, adapting to the new preschool environment can be very difficult. However, sometimes having parents in the classroom for long periods of time can actually make adjustment more difficult. If parents are concerned about their child's adaptation, or about the gradual entry process, they are encouraged to speak with the teachers.

Parents are also encouraged to read *Coping with Separation Anxiety*, a resource sheet that is included in the summer information package which is emailed to parents well before classes start.

On the first day of preschool, a parent or other caregiver should plan to stay for the duration of the class. The duration of class, normally 2.5 hours, may be shortened during the gradual entry process. Children who are in their second year at Pomme d'Api may attend a full day; the board consults with the teachers to determine the Gradual Entry schedule for each class. For the rest of the first week, caregivers are encouraged to stay nearby and take short breaks away from the group. The duration of this step is dependent on how the child adjusts, and the teachers will help parents to determine when to go on to Step 3.

The caregiver stays briefly, helping the child become involved in the activities. When the child is settled and involved in an activity, the caregiver says good-bye and explains to the child that he/she is leaving and will come back after the class ends. This process should take a maximum of 15 minutes.

Once the child has been brought into the preschool, and coats and bags have been placed in the cloak room, the caregiver says good-bye, tells the child when he/she will be picked up, and leaves. The child spends a normal day at the preschool.

Parents are advised, if at all possible, not to bring any siblings into the classroom during gradual entry (or for any other extended time period) as the presence of extra children can disrupt the class. At no time are children who not enrolled in the program allowed to stay, unattended, in the classroom, and at no time are children who are not immediate family members of an enrolled student allowed in the classroom (see section 4.7 for more information on our policy regarding non-enrolled children in the classroom).

If the presence of siblings becomes a problem, teachers will point out to parents that the presence of additional children contravenes licensing requirements and creates added responsibility for the teachers and distraction for the students. If a parent continues to bring other children to class, teachers are to bring the matter to the attention of the Executive Board. The Board will close the matter with the parents.

If additional support is required after the scheduled time of gradual entry, the teachers will arrange to meet with parents privately.

In this consultation, teachers will help parents to establish a timeline for adaptation and identify strategies to attain this goal. Teachers will also review with parents the possibility that their child may not yet be ready for preschool.

Should parents and teachers agree that the child is not currently ready for the preschool experience, the parents may withdraw their child from the program (see Section 12).

## **9.1 Late Entry**

New students who enroll after the general September start will participate in a meeting at the family's convenience. This meeting will introduce the family to the school, its systems, rules, philosophy, and curriculum.

### **9.1.1 Late Entry Procedures**

- upon receipt of tuition cheques, the Registrar will request the Teachers to arrange a convenient time for the Teachers to meet with at least one parent and the child

- after the meeting has taken place, the Registrar will notify the Class Representative, who will take on the role of welcoming committee
- the Registrar will provide full contact information of the new student to the Board and Class Representative

## **10 Attendance**

The children are expected to attend each day of class. Parents are expected to notify the school if their child will not attend on any given day. Parents are also expected to inform the teacher if their child is absent because of a communicable disease so that other parents may be informed that their child may have been exposed to the disease.

### **10.1 Procedure for informing the school of an absence**

If their child will be absent from preschool, parents should send a text to the school's text-only absentee line at 604-877-1122 with a message in the following format:

Child's name

Class

Parent name

This will let the teachers know not to expect the child. This phone number is a text-only absentee line. Parents should not add any extra information and will not receive a confirmation text.

Parents who are unable to send texts, or need to give the teachers more information (such as informing them of a contagious illness) may also call the school at 604-800-1197 to speak to one of the teachers or leave a voicemail.

Parents who know in advance that their child will be missing one or more classes should inform the teachers in advance.

### **10.2 Responsibilities of the teachers regarding attendance**

Teachers will:

- record attendance each day of class
- inform the Registrar of any unusual circumstance (for example, a child is absent for a week and the parents have not telephoned to inform staff)
  - in these cases, teachers will also contact parents to ask why the child has not attended, and if the child is returning.
- immediately forward relevant information (complaints, communicable diseases, withdrawals, etc.) garnered from contact with parents of absent children to the Board of Directors

### **10.3 Extended absences**

No refund for time absent will be given. Tuition fees must be paid as long as a space is being held for a child, regardless of the reason for the absence.



A child's space will not be held if parents choose to withdraw him/her for extended holidays of a month or longer. It is the parents' choice to take the risk that the spot will be available when they return. In this case, no refund will be given for the month that the child was absent.

## **11 Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures**

This section details Pomme d'Api's policies and procedures regarding drop-offs and pick-ups.

### **11.1 Gates-closed policy**

Parents and caregivers, as well as teachers, must close both gates behind them as they enter and exit the church yard and the school yard on their way in and out of the preschool. These gates must be kept closed and latched at all times so that the children are safe while playing in the school yard, both during class time and before and after school.

### **11.2 Sign-in/sign-out procedure**

When dropping their child off at the preschool, parents or caregivers must sign him or her in by entering his or her name, the time, and the parent or caregiver's signature on the day's sign-in/sign-out sheet. The sign-in/sign-out sheet is kept on a table near the front door.

When picking their child up, parents or caregivers must sign him or her out by filling out the pick-up time and your signature on the sign-in/sign-out sheet. If the children are outside in the school yard at the time of pick-up, the teachers will have the sign-in/sign-out sheet outside as well.

### **11.3 Safe Release procedure**

The teachers will follow Pomme d'Api's Safe Release procedure when releasing the children after class is over. This procedure details who is authorized to pick the children up, and under what circumstances teachers may refuse to release a child.

#### **11.3.1 Authorized pick-up**

The teachers will not release a child to someone who has not been authorized by the parents. In order to authorize somebody to pick up their child, parents must follow the following procedure:

1. During the first week of class, parents must fill out a form listing the names of all persons who are permitted to pick up their child.
2. If somebody not already on the authorized list will be picking up their child, parents must notify the school and teachers in writing.
3. In a rare emergency situation, written notice can be made at the last minute via email. Notice cannot be given by phone. The school must have a written record.
4. If the person picking up the child is not known to the teachers, information about the person must be provided, including the following: name, phone number, and physical description. This person will be required to show photo ID. This includes people who are on the authorized list but that the teachers have not yet met.

### **11.3.2 Unauthorized pick-up**

If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up a child, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The child will remain under the supervision of the teacher at the preschool.
2. The teacher will speak to the individual and explain the policy that no child will be released without written authorization from the parent or guardian.
3. The parent or guardian will be contacted.
4. If difficulties arise, all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the safety of the child and of the other children. If necessary the police will be called for assistance.

### **11.3.3 Alleged impaired pickup**

The teachers at Pomme d'Api will not release a child to an authorized person who is unable to adequately care for the child. The teachers will offer to call a relative or friend to pick up the person and child.

If the person is driving a vehicle, the teacher will explain that driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol is against the law and that the teacher is obligated to ensure the safety of the child. If this person chooses to get in the car (with or without the child) the teacher will immediately notify police and provide a description of the car and direction/location headed. If the teacher believes that the child is in need of protection, the Ministry of Children and Family Development will be notified.

### **11.3.4 Custody and related court orders**

If a custody or court order exists, a copy of the order must be placed in the child's file at Pomme d'Api preschool. The guardian is responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date information concerning the legal guardianship of the child.

Without a custody or court order on file, the teachers cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent.

## **11.4 Late pick-ups**

It is the parent's responsibility to pick up their child on time at the end of each class. In an emergency, parents must make arrangements to have somebody else pick up their child.

Note: The teachers are authorized to release a child only to those people who have been designated by the child's parents (see section 11.3.1).

Parents who know that there will be a change in pick-up routine should tell the teachers ahead of time. In an emergency, parents must phone the school at 604-800-1197 to inform the teachers of the change in pick-up plans.

If a parent or other designated adult has not arrived to pick up a child 15 minutes after the scheduled class ending time, the teachers will attempt to contact the child's parent(s). If a parent cannot be reached, the teachers will then attempt to contact the child's emergency contacts.

At the discretion of the teachers:

- the first time this situation occurs there will be no penalty
- if this situation occurs a second time, a written warning will be issued

- if this situation occurs a third time, the parent will be charged \$1 per minute late (the clock starts about 10 minutes after the end of class, when the teachers go back inside with any children who have not yet been picked up).

If no resolution can be reached, the parent will be asked to withdraw their child from the preschool. This penalty may seem harsh, but late pick-ups infringe upon the teacher's time, affect the child's self-esteem, and violate licensing regulations if the child is left for too long after his or her class ends.

## **12 Probationary Period and Withdrawal**

Pomme d'Api allows parents and children a six week probationary period to allow them the opportunity to determine if the preschool is the right fit for their child, and to allow the preschool to determine whether the child is adapting well to the preschool environment.

If parents choose to withdraw within the first six weeks, they will receive their tuition deposit and all their remaining post-dated cheques back once their current month's tuition cheque has been cleared by the bank.

This probationary period applies only to new students, not returning students. Returning students must follow the regular withdrawal procedure even if they wish to withdraw during the first six weeks of school.

We do not refund partial months. If parents withdraw their child mid-way through a month, that month's tuition must be paid in full.

If parents withdraw their child after the probationary period has ended, parents must submit a month's written notice of withdrawal (by email or letter mail, but preferably by email). In this case, their tuition deposit will be applied to this final month, if their account is up to date with no outstanding debts and all cheques cleared. The remaining post-dated tuition cheques will be returned within one month. Parents who do not submit written notice will not receive a refund.

If a child is withdrawn at the preschool's request at any point in the school year, parents will not have to give a month's notice, but will receive the tuition deposit and all of their remaining post-dated cheques back as long as their account is up to date with no outstanding debts and all cheques cleared.

## **13 Children Enrolled Simultaneously in Pomme d'Api and Another Preschool or Daycare**

Because Pomme d'Api offers only part-time programs, some parents may choose to enroll their children in additional programs. Pomme d'Api policy does not restrict dual enrollment, but strongly advises parents to monitor and gauge their children's adaptation to two programs. Should parents or teachers have concerns about a child's adaptation to our program, a consultation will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time. Teachers will share their expertise with parents, and draw up a plan to assist with adaptation if required.

Pomme d'Api discourages parents from making comparisons between the two programs their child is enrolled in. All child care programs will differ in philosophies, teaching methodologies and staff

personalities. As Pomme d'Api is one of the few schools offering French Immersion and Programme Francophone, the delivery of its programs will differ from that of other programs not specializing in language acquisition. Should concerns arise from parents or teachers, a consultation will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time to work out a plan to help the child integrate.

If it becomes obvious that a child is not adapting after a reasonable amount of time, parents and teachers may choose to withdraw the child from one program until he/she is better prepared for an additional preschool experience.

## **14 Children with Extra Support Needs**

Pomme d'Api is an inclusive preschool and is located in a wheelchair-accessible building. The mutual benefit of having children with and without disabilities in the same program is recognized. However, a request to accommodate children with extra support needs must be examined carefully for its impact on the French aspect of the program.

### **14.1 Prospective students with extra support needs**

When Teachers receive a request to accept a child with extra support needs, the Teacher will inform the Executive Board. A confidential meeting will be arranged between the Teachers, the child's parent(s), the child's special assistant (if one is required) and any other person requested by the parent. The purpose of the meeting is to share expectations from all parties involved and to develop a care plan that would suit the child's individual needs.

The following questions should be addressed:

- Why have parents chosen Pomme d'Api for their child? What are their expectations for the program?
- What exactly is the child's extra support need (physically- or developmentally-challenged or other?) and what is the severity of the child's condition?
- Will the child require an assistant from Supported Childcare? If so, does that assistant have the ability to communicate to the child (and other program participants) in French?
- Is the program adaptable to the child's extra support needs? Can the teaching staff modify routines and activities so that the child can participate fully?
- What is the child's first language? Has he/she had any exposure to French? (This is particularly relevant for applications to the Francophone Program)
- What is the predicted outcome of accommodating the child with extra support needs on the language learning of the other children?
- Is this the best program for the child?

If after the initial meeting, the group agrees that the program is suitable for the child with extra support needs, the child will be accepted. Teachers and parents will communicate regularly and share ideas about how best to integrate the child.

All parties who participated in the initial meeting will meet again within the first 6 weeks of school to assess how the child is doing. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times, and information shared in the meetings will not be shared with those outside the meetings without explicit permission from all participants.

If at any point the teachers feel that they are unable to provide the child with the support he or she needs, or if supporting the child is affecting their ability to properly care for and teach the rest of the students in the class, they will call a meeting with the parents, the child's special assistant (if one exists) and any other person requested by the parents.

- if the child needs further support (such as a full-time assistant from Supported Childcare) then the parents may be asked to keep the child home until such support can be provided
- as a last resort, if all other efforts to solve the problem have failed, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the program.

## **14.2 Current students with previously unidentified extra support needs**

At any point during the school year, parents or teachers may discover that a child has previously unidentified extra support needs.

If a child is already enrolled in the school when his or her extra support needs are identified, a confidential meeting will be arranged between the Teachers, the child's parent(s), and any other person requested by the parent. The purpose of the meeting is to share expectations from all parties involved and to develop a care plan that would suit the child's individual needs.

All parties who participated in the initial meeting will meet again within 6 weeks to assess how the child is doing. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times, and information shared in the meetings will not be shared with those outside the meetings without explicit permission from all participants.

If at any point the teachers feel that they are unable to provide the child with the support he or she needs, or if supporting the child is affecting their ability to properly care for and teach the rest of the students in the class, they will call a meeting with the parents, the child's special assistant (if one exists) and any other person requested by the parents.

- if the child needs further support (such as a full-time assistant from Supported Childcare) then the parents may be asked to keep the child home until such support can be provided
- as a last resort, if all other efforts to solve the problem have failed, the parents may be asked to withdraw the child from the program.

## 15 Procedures for Dealing with Complaints and Grievances

Families are encouraged to discuss questions or concerns regarding any aspect of the child care program with the staff or with the Board of Directors. When an issue arises that relates to concerns about or conflict with the staff or volunteer parents conducting Pomme d'Api business, the following steps will be followed to resolve the conflict peacefully. Grievances will be handled in a respectful, confidential manner.

1. The complainant should first address the concern directly with the individual involved. Most conflicts arise from misunderstandings, and are often resolved at this step if dealt with in a direct and timely manner. Should either party feel uncomfortable discussing the matter on its own, it may choose to ask a staff or a Board member to witness the exchange. The third party must remain impartial.
2. Should the direct approach in Step 1 fail to resolve the issue satisfactorily, the complainant should formally direct his/her grievances, complaints or comments to the President or Vice President. The complainant should make an appointment for a face-to-face discussion with (a) Board member(s). An unannounced presentation at an Executive Meeting is not an appropriate method of airing a grievance. The Executive will acknowledge the parent's concern and outline the steps that will be taken to resolve the issue.
3. Two Executive members, or one Executive member and at least one teacher, will meet with the complainant to define the issues and state their point of view. The purpose of the discussion is to clarify the issue, and, possibly, to start seeking solutions. Should the tone of the meeting become aggressive and accusatory, the meeting will be immediately terminated and rescheduled when all parties are calm and ready to talk rationally. The Executive member(s) will document the content and the outcome of this meeting. If necessary, the Executive member(s) will request that the complainant document his/her grievance in a letter to the Executive. This step will always be taken if the conflict cannot be resolved in one meeting.
4. If necessary, the Executive members will gather information by interviewing witnesses. They will document their findings and the witnesses will read the reports and sign them. These findings will be summarized in a written letter to the complainant. Witnesses will not be identified without their consent. If the issue has the potential to affect the licensee, a copy of the letter and report will be sent to the licensing officer.
5. A plan will be agreed upon by the complainant and the Executive. If a plan cannot be agreed upon by all parties, other arrangements may be required.

### Addendum:

- The confidentiality of all parents and staff must be kept, and therefore, issues must not be discussed with other parents. However, if teachers are aware of conflicts that have the potential to be disruptive to the preschool, they should bring this to the Board in confidence. The Board will not approach parents directly, but may request that staff encourage the involved parties to follow the above steps to seek resolution of conflict.
- Issues on which the Executive is deadlocked must be taken to a General meeting and put to a vote. Each person will be given a limited time to explain a point of view, and the entire membership must vote on the issue at hand.

- To remove any member from an Executive position, 75% of the voting members must vote in a special resolution to remove that person. A successor must be elected to serve until the next annual general meeting.
- For grievances about the behaviour of a child/children, see the Guidelines for Dealing with Behavioural Problems.
- When Teachers have a grievance or an irresolvable conflict they will contact the President and/or the Vice President. The Executive will follow a process similar to that outlined above to resolve these conflicts. Teachers will not discuss issues with the parents as conflicts should always be resolved at the Executive level and not with the General Membership, unless it is an irresolvable conflict between staff and an Executive Member. In this case, other Executive members may choose to bring the issue to a general meeting and put it to a vote. Should a situation warrant this measure, Teachers will not discuss the issue with parents outside of the General Meeting as this behaviour is unprofessional and can serve to create further divisions and conflicts within the organization.

## 16 Personnel Policies

This section deals with our policies regarding school personnel.

### 16.1 Staff structure

Two teachers share equal status as co-teachers. One teacher is additionally charged with the position of School Administrator.

### 16.2 Hiring procedures

Recruitment of qualified bilingual staff can present a particular challenge. It is imperative that efforts are made to advertise available positions where the Francophone community may have access to it. Each hiring phase should include research to find new sources for bringing the posting into the Francophone community.

Once candidates have been identified, interviews are conducted in both French and English. All staff must be fluent in both French and English as they will be responsible for communicating with parents in both languages.

### 16.3 Documentation of new employees

Appropriate documentation must be on file prior to a new employee's first day at work. The Provincial Child Care Licensing regulation requires the following documentation:

- a completed criminal record check conducted under the Criminal Record Review Act.
  - an RCMP criminal record check is not acceptable
- a physician's letter/note indicating that the mental and physical health of the person is adequate for the job.
- character references (minimum of 3 reference checks is recommended)

In addition, all employee files must contain:

- a resume
- copies of required certificates/licenses (ECE License, First Aid Certificate and other relevant documents)

The Vancouver/Richmond Health Board also recommends that persons in the child and health care field provide written proof of vaccinations that they have received; however, employees have the right to choose whether or not to be immunized. Pomme d'Api recommends that the employee file contain either a copy of the employee's immunization record, or a written statement indicating that the employee has chosen not to follow an immunization program.

For those opting for immunization, the following vaccinations are recommended:

- Tetanus/Diphtheria (Td): A basic adult series (2 injections 2 months apart plus a booster 6 -12 months after the 2nd dose) .A reinforcement dose is required if more than 10 years have passed since the previous Diphtheria and Tetanus vaccination
- Poliomyelitis: A series of 3 IPV (2 injections 2 months apart, 3rd dose 2 months after 2nd dose) for persons who may have occupational contact with polio virus.
- Measles (or MMR): One dose of live attenuated vaccine for persons born after 1956.
- Rubella (or MMR): One dose of live attenuated vaccine or serological test (ELISA) indicating immunity.

## **16.4 Probationary period**

All new staff will be advised that they will be under a three-month probationary period prior to a permanent appointment. The rate of pay will be determined by the current Executive and will be based on the new teacher's qualifications. After the probationary period, new staff members will be given a pay increase provided they have met the probationary requirements.

During the probationary period, the designated Board Member will regularly consult with the new employee to provide feedback and guidance on job performance. After the probationary period is over, the employee will either receive a permanent appointment, an additional probationary period (if performance was questionable), or dismissal (if performance was unsatisfactory).

Under the Employment Standards Act, either party can terminate employment without notice if the employee has completed less than six consecutive months of employment. After six months of employment Pomme d'Api is required to give an employee two weeks' notice, or two weeks' pay, for dismissal.

## **16.5 Working conditions**

This section describes the staff's working conditions.

### **16.5.1 Schedule**

Pomme d'Api follows the same holiday schedule as the Vancouver School Board, with the exception of Spring Break. Pomme d'Api's Spring Break is one week long and corresponds with the second week of the Vancouver School Board's two-week Spring Break.



Staff is paid for all Statutory holidays, the Christmas/Winter break and the Spring break.

### **16.5.2 Hours**

Currently staff is paid for the requisite number of hours worked, as agreed to between the board and the teachers and documented in the contract. Staff are required to remain on site during the scheduled hours. The work schedule will be discussed at the outset of each year, and may vary from the above. In addition, staff will be paid for attending meetings and events that they have been requested to attend by the Executive (see section 16.5.3).

### **16.5.3 Meetings**

Staff may be requested to attend General Meetings, Board Meetings, Parent-Teacher Conferences and other events such as the Open House. Pomme d'Api policy requires staff to be paid either for four hours or for the accumulated overtime, whichever is greater. The preschool will also pay for reasonable taxi fare if staff does not have transportation after evening meetings or events.

### **16.5.4 Program planning**

Staff may choose two program-planning days per working year on which they may plan activities, prepare materials, rearrange layouts and hold parent conferences. Staff will inform parents of the dates well in advance and should choose alternating days so that the planning day does not always affect one program. (For example, if staff choose Monday for the first planning day a Tuesday or Thursday is preferable for the second planning day.) Staff is required to be on the premises for the entire day that they will be paid for, unless otherwise arranged in advance with one of the Executive members.

### **16.5.5 Parent Conferences**

Teachers will accommodate requests for Parent-Teacher conferences. Preferably, these will be scheduled on the afternoons that classes are not in session (i.e., Tuesdays) or during planning days. If required, staff will accommodate parents after classes on other days; however, conferences are to be scheduled such that Teachers do not work more than eight hours per day. Due to budget constraints, overtime is to be used sparingly.

### **16.5.6 Inclement weather**

In cases of inclement weather, Pomme d'Api may close at the discretion of the board with appropriate input.

### **16.5.7 Power shortages**

Occasionally we are informed in advance of planned power cut-offs. Should this occur, the school will close as the lack of a telephone and lighting in the building presents opportunities for accidents to take place.

Upon receiving advance warning of power cut-offs, staff will immediately contact an Executive member and the class representatives. The class representatives will be instructed to use the Emergency Phone/Text Tree (see section 5.1.1) to contact the parents of the class. If class reps cannot be contacted, it is the staff's responsibility to contact parents and tell them that class has been cancelled.

### **16.5.8 Professional development**

The staff is encouraged to keep up-to-date in their field, and the Executive will support reasonable conference/course costs. An education amount for each staff member is budgeted in the yearly financial planning process. In addition, the staff is entitled to take two professional days per year to attend conferences and workshops. Staff are responsible for obtaining approval of the Board for leave of absences prior to taking professional development and for ensuring that a substitute has been arranged for the duration. Staff must also seek approval from the Board before attending a course or event if they intend to seek financial reimbursement for it.

### **16.5.9 Evaluations**

The Executive will endeavour to coordinate an evaluation process for the staff before the end of each school year. The purpose of the evaluation is to examine strengths and weaknesses and to set professional goals for the upcoming year. The process consists of several components:

- Self-evaluation
- Peer-evaluation
- Evaluation of Staff by Executive
- Evaluation of Program from parents

The Executive will review the information and meet with each staff member on an individual basis to give constructive feedback. This is also an opportunity for the Executive to gain valuable feedback and insights from the staff.

### **16.5.10 Terminations**

Pomme d'Api Executive members will endeavour to monitor potential problems with staff and will provide appropriate feedback in order to correct gaps in expected performance. However, should a staff member's performance be unsatisfactory, the Executive will terminate his/her employment.

According to labour standards, if the staff member is still on probation the preschool is not required to give notice or severance pay in lieu of notice. However, once a staff member has passed the probationary period, the preschool is required to give at least two weeks' notice of termination, or two weeks' severance pay (the choice is made by the Executive on the basis of the best interests of the children and preschool).

For major infractions, the staff member's service contract will be immediately terminated and they will receive two week's severance pay in lieu of notice.

### **16.5.11 Substitute teachers**

In the event that one or both of the teachers is absent (e.g. due to illness) a substitute teacher will be hired to ensure that the classroom ratio of 1 teacher per 10 students is maintained.

If one teacher is a fully qualified ECE-licensed teacher, then the substitute is not required to be fully licensed, but should be in training towards an ECE, or equivalent, license.

It is the responsibility of the Teachers to maintain a list of qualified substitutes, and arrange for their own substitutes.

Substitute teachers will be paid according to their level of completion of ECE training, and their ability to speak French, as follows:

- Level 1 – No French, in training for ECE license
- Level 2 – Fluent in French, in training for ECE license
- Level 3 – ECE license. No French
- Level 4 – ECE license, Fluent in French

## **17 Pomme d'Api Discipline Statement**

Pomme d'Api believes that discipline must be appropriate for the age and developmental level of the child. Our policy is to promote cooperation, support autonomy and encourage development of each child's unique self-expression. We recognize that limits must be set and reinforced; however, our goal is to shape behaviour in a positive and educational manner. We help children learn how to share, we encourage them to express their feelings and we use diversion when necessary.

### **17.1 Guidelines for Dealing with Behavioural Problems**

The following are guidelines to be followed by Pomme d'Api when there is concern about the behaviour of a child:

1. The Executive Board, staff members and the parents/guardians of the child will meet to discuss the problem and make a plan to improve the situation. The strategy may include discussions with outside resources.
2. If the problem persists, the Executive Board and/or staff will observe and document the child's behaviour.
3. The Executive Board, staff and parent/guardian will meet again and discuss the problem, clarifying the behaviour with written documentation. If the parent/guardian refuses to recognize the problem and work towards a solution, the Executive Board will inform him/her that the appropriate authorities will be contacted (i.e., Vancouver Health Department, MHR, etc.)
4. If all positive efforts to resolve the problem have been exhausted, the family may be asked to withdraw the child from the Preschool. This option will only be exercised when staff believe that keeping the child in the program will be to the detriment of other children enrolled in the Preschool.
5. If there is a concern for the well-being of a child, the Executive Board or Staff will immediately make contact with the proper authorities.

## **18 Confidentiality**

This is Pomme d'Api's general confidentiality policy. Any specific confidentiality rules are contained in the policies to which they apply.

By default, information that parents share with the teachers and the school is confidential. This confidentiality can be waived by parents for specific information (for example, many parents check the box that allows us to share their email addresses with other parents).

### **18.1 Confidentiality of medical information**

Parents are encouraged to share pertinent medical information with the teachers, as this will help the teachers to best take care of the child's needs.

- If parents disclose medical information about their child to the teachers, this information will not be shared in such a way that identifies the child involved, even with the Board, without permission.
- If parents disclose medical information about their child to a Board member, this information will not be shared in a way that identifies the child involved, even with other Board members, without permission.

Personalized medical information will never be shared without permission, but some medical information will sometimes be shared as necessary, without identifying the individual involved.

For example, if a child comes down with chicken pox, all parents will be informed that a child in the school has chicken pox, but will not be given the name of the child or any identifying information beyond what class he or she is in.