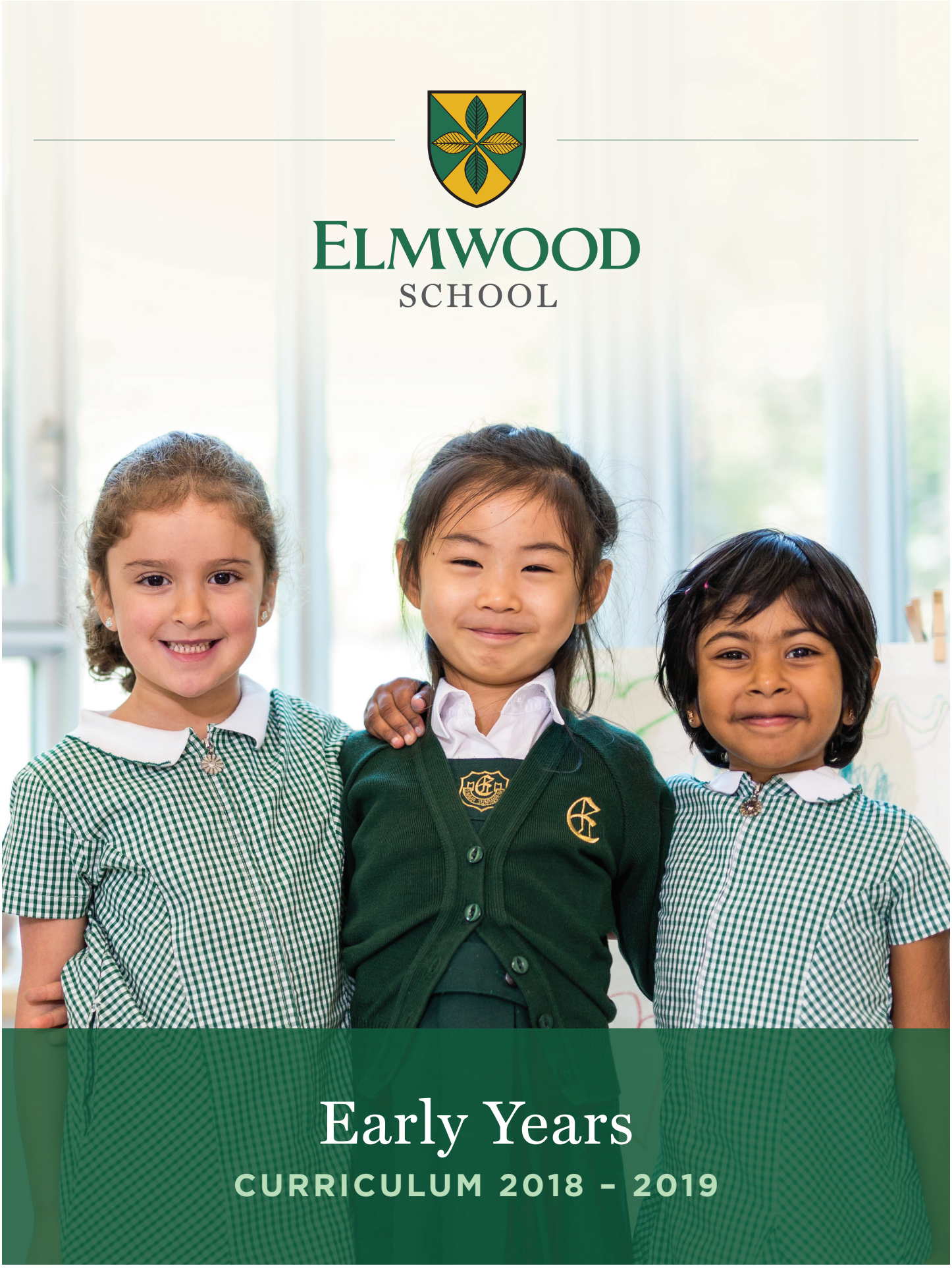
ELMWOOD
SCHOOL



Early Years

CURRICULUM 2018 – 2019

PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (PYP) UNITS OF INQUIRY FOR PRE AND JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN
PYP	I Am Special Who We Are			Let's Celebrate Where We Are in Place and Time		Play Time How We Express Ourselves		Caring for our Animal Friends How the World Works		

PYP units are transdisciplinary and are explored through major subject areas including:
Language, Reading,Writing, Science, Social Studies, Drama, Art, Health and Physical Education.

PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME

The Primary Years Programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate is an inquiry-based approach to curriculum that fosters the innate curiosity and love of learning in every child. Children are invited to construct their own understandings of the world around them, guided by their peers and adults. The PYP is transdisciplinary and holistic, focusing on the total growth of the developing child, touching hearts as well as minds, and encompassing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic development.

The philosophy of the PYP is a commitment to structured, purposeful inquiry as the leading vehicle for learning. The PYP draws on research and best practice from a range of national systems with a wealth of knowledge and experience from international schools to create a relevant, engaging, challenging and significant educational framework for all children.

THE IB PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME:

- Encourages international-mindedness in IB students.
- Encourages a positive attitude to learning by engaging students in inquiries and developing their
- Awareness of the process of learning so that they become lifelong learners.
- Reflects real life by encouraging learning beyond traditional subjects with meaningful, in-depth inquiries into real issues.
- Emphasizes, through the learner profile, the development of the whole student–physically, intellectually, emotionally and ethically.

The Primary Years Programme is organized into Units of Inquiry, which frame students' transdisciplinary learning and exploration. This year, we will be exploring four Units of Inquiry.

UNITS OF INQUIRY

I AM SPECIAL: Personal and Social Education, Language, Math, Science and Visual Art

Central Idea: My personal characteristics make me unique.

Lines of Inquiry:

- My physical characteristics
- My feelings, my likes and dislikes
- How I am changing and growing
- What I can do and am learning to do

LET'S CELEBRATE: Social Studies, Language, Math, Personal and Social Education and Music

Central Idea: People celebrate events that are important to them.

Lines of Inquiry:

- Family traditions and rituals
- Similarities and differences between celebrations
- Reasons why we celebrate
- What celebrations mean to us

PLAY TIME!: Language, Personal and Social Education, the Arts

Central Idea: Through art, drama and music, we are able to think, create and express ourselves.

Lines of Inquiry:

- Properties of various art materials and their uses
- Expression through drama and role play
- Creating and listening to music as a form of expression

CARING FOR OUR ANIMAL FRIENDS: Science, Language, Social Studies

Central Idea: Animals have a place in our world and people can care for them in many ways.

Lines of Inquiry:

- The role of animals in our community
- How humans and animals share our community
- Our responsibilities towards animals

SENIOR KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

The Senior Kindergarten classroom will provide many exciting learning opportunities throughout the year in a safe and nurturing environment. Our enriched academic programme, all-girls setting, and small class size foster high levels of self-esteem and increased student achievement, allowing students to become more engaged and confident in the classroom.

The areas of academic focus in Senior Kindergarten include:

LANGUAGE

Each student will progress at her own pace as she learns to read and write. A balanced literacy approach will be followed, in which several reading strategies are taught on a daily basis in order to assist the students to become proficient readers. The reading level of each student will be assessed at the beginning of the year in order for her to read books at an appropriate level. Periodic reading assessments will be carried out throughout the year to monitor progress and modify teaching methods.

MATH

The math curriculum in Senior Kindergarten is covered through a dynamic and very thorough programme, which is based on the Everyday Mathematics Programme and is an enriched version of the Ontario Curriculum. This programme provides math instruction through many different games, activities and lessons, and through its spiral design, it allows the students to revisit many of the math concepts several times in the year. Important rote math skills, such as counting by 1's, 2's, 5's, and 10's, and memorizing basic math facts (addition and subtraction), will be practised at school on a regular basis. Students will also encounter math through their daily inquiry and play, which will be supported and extended by the teachers.

PRIMARY YEARS PROGRAMME (PYP) UNITS

PYP units are transdisciplinary and are explored through major subject areas: Literacy, Science, Social Studies, the Arts, Health and Physical Education. The class will be participating in the following PYP units this year:

- Making Good Choices – learning about how good choices can optimize our learning environment
- Science or Magic? – exploring many of the aspects of the physical world through investigation and observation
- Toy Story – learning all about toys, how and where they are made, how toys have changed or stayed thesame over time, and toys around the world
- Rainbow of Emotions – learning all about our emotions and how to deal with them effectively
- Healthy, Healthy Me – exploring what it means to eat healthfully and make healthful lifestyle choices
- Water for Life – understanding that water is a limited resource and essential for humans

SPECIALIST TEACHERS

At Elmwood, we believe that our youngest students benefit from learning from specialist teachers for certain subjects. Throughout the year, the Senior Kindergarten students will be taught by specialist teachers for Music, French, and Library class. The teachers for these subjects will be:

- Music – Mrs. Evelyn Pike
- French – Mme Meaghan Iwanowski
- Library – Mrs. Christine Blackadar

We are confident that all of your daughter's academic needs will be met through this enriched and engaging academic programme.

EARLY YEARS PROGRAMME

The Early Years Programme at Elmwood School is based on the Reggio-Emilia approach to Early Childhood Education. Reggio Emilia springs from the town in Italy of the same name. The philosophy of the approach is grounded in the notion that children begin constructing their identities at an early age. Therefore, it is vital that young children explore and discover in a supportive and enriching community environment, based on the interests of the children through a self-guided curriculum.

THE BASIC TENETS OF THE REGGIO EMILIA APPROACH INCLUDE:

- Community support and parental involvement
- Teachers as co-learners
- The classroom as the third teacher
- Long-term projects as vehicles for learning
- The hundred languages of children

Most importantly, as an educator, we believe that it is vital that all children are respected both by teachers and peers. The different perspectives and different needs of students in our diverse classroom serve as rich sites for dynamic learning, enhanced by the IB PYP philosophy of Elmwood School. In our classroom, fairness is understood, not as every student being treated the same, but as each child getting what she needs to learn, thrive and succeed.

EVERYDAY MATHEMATICS PROGRAM

Everyday Mathematics was developed by the University of Chicago to enable children in elementary grades to learn more mathematical content and become life-long mathematic thinkers. Everyday Mathematics is distinguished by its focus on real-life problem solving, balance between whole-class and self-directed learning, emphasis on communication, facilitation of school-family cooperation, and appropriate use of technology. Everyday Mathematics begins with the premise that students can, and must, learn more mathematics than has been expected of them in the past. This premise is based on research the UCSMP author team undertook prior to writing the curriculum. Some major findings of this research include:

- The typical North American mathematics curriculum is arithmetic driven, slow-paced with isolated instruction, and broad, without depth of content.
- International studies show that North American students learn much less mathematics than students in other countries.
- Children are capable of learning more mathematics in a richer curriculum.
- All children can be successful mathematical thinkers.
- Mathematics is meaningful to children when it is varied, rich, and rooted in real-world problems and applications.

The Everyday Mathematics instructional design was carefully crafted to capitalize on student interest and maximize student learning.

- High expectations for all students
- Concepts and skills developed over time and in a wide variety of contexts
- Balance among mathematical strands
- Dynamic applications
- Multiple methods and strategies for problem solving
- Concrete modeling as a pathway to abstract understanding

- Collaborative learning in partner and small-group activities
- Cross-curricular applications and connections
- Built-in professional development for teachers

LITERACY AND LANGUAGE ARTS

Our literacy activities allow students to explore language and to communicate their thinking and learning in meaningful ways both to the teacher and to their peers. Our activities provide rich, varied materials and hands-on experiences to encourage talking, reading, writing and viewing media texts. Our classroom is organized to promote discussion. Students are motivated to attempt new things— such as writing using appropriate spellings—and are encouraged to value these attempts. Assessment is on-going to determine children's learning strengths and needs in literacy in an intentional way throughout the day.

Oral language is the foundation of literacy development in Kindergarten. Through experience with oral language, children develop the ability to identify and manipulate phonemes (phonemic awareness), build vocabulary, develop awareness of meaning (semantic knowledge), and develop awareness of language structure (syntactic knowledge), and thus develop the foundations for reading and writing. Proficiency in oral language is critical to the success of literacy development. Reading and writing will be taught and developed at the same time, so that children can make connections between what they hear, say, read and write.

It is important that young children see themselves as individuals who talk, listen, read, write and view media texts in order to make sense of their world. Children need time to explore, to reflect and to make connections between what they know and what they see and read. Children will use language in all areas of learning as they participate in planned activities at various learning centres, communicating their thoughts, posing questions and investigating ideas. By using literacy materials in the learning centres, children learn to see reading and writing as integral aspects of their daily lives.

SCHOOLOGY

Elmwood uses an online learning management system called "Schoology." Different levels of the school use this program in different ways. In Kindergarten, it will serve as a class web page and forum where you will find updates, photographs, links and resources, including a calendar and useful information about upcoming events. We are really excited about using this form of social media to streamline our communication. Once all parents have their accounts and are connected, it will be important that you visit Schoology regularly so that you stay informed. We recommend that you check it every day and please also review the calendar on Schoology on a regular basis so that you don't miss anything important.

SEESAW

Seesaw is a digital portfolio that enables students and teachers to document learning at school. Please be advised that the Seesaw version we are using currently only saves documents for one school year. Therefore, at the end of each school year in June, all the photos, videos and recordings will be deleted. If you wish to save any of these files, please download the ones you want in a folder on your own personal computer or memory devise.

INQUIRY CENTRES

A variety of Inquiry Centres exist within our classroom environment. These inquiry centres provide students with a wide range of opportunities to explore, discover, practice and demonstrate knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Materials are placed with intention at each inquiry centre; yet, the open-ended framework allows students

to explore the materials freely. With this structure, educators can clearly identify where the child is in the learning process, and push her further to deepen her thinking. Inquiry centres allow children to extend their learning outside of the box as they begin to develop cultures of thinking.

CONSTRUCTION

Construction is a creative and collaborative space where intricate communities and habitats are built. It is a place to extend imaginative play, to promote language development and to increase mathematical and scientific understanding. Girls are also building gross motor skills, physical strength and developing coordination.

MATERIALS: wooden blocks (various sizes and shapes), tree blocks, coloured rocks, stars and straws, mirror blocks, boxes, construction journal, writing materials for signs, names, labels, diagrams, pictures and books, props

PRODUCTION

Visual art is another form of communication. Children show what they know, wonder, dream about and are afraid of in their creations. While producing, they are making sense of the world around them, developing their fine motor skills, knowledge of artistic forms and elements and enhancing their creativity. Art permeates the Kindergarten programme as a vehicle for children to express their ideas and construct understanding.

MATERIALS: found and recycled materials (natural and man-made), paper, paint, writing utensils, glue, tape, mirrors, clay, plasticine, wire, scissors, easel

DRAMA

In Drama, complex ideas regarding daily life are played out. Many different ideas and scenarios are imagined and dramatized in this space. The girls pretend to be adults they know from their lives; parental figures, teachers, doctors, and members of the community at large.

MATERIALS: clothing, writing materials, grocery lists, message pads, child-sized furniture, dolls, fulllength mirror, props

DISCOVERY

This is a space that urges children to ask scientific questions about the world around them. It is through these questions that children grapple in their thoughts, develop theories, and ultimately come to conclusions based upon their own actions: sifting through sand; examining a variety of shells; sketching the veins in a leaf; hypothesizing about lifecycles. As we take the children outdoors, we focus on nurturing their relationship with nature and a love for their own world; consequently, bringing an understanding of the outdoors into our classroom environments.

MATERIALS: growing plants, variety of books, magnifying glasses, baskets for collections, recording materials, observation journals, found and recycled materials (natural and man-made)

GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION

Graphic Communication provides an opportunity for communication ideas, thoughts, and experiences by way of dialogue, writing, and graphic representation. In this process, writers are required to multi-task as they draw upon the many necessary skills needed in the development of their printing and writing for purpose, (for example: moving scribbles to letters and words, and beyond).

MATERIALS: variety of paper, pencils, crayons, markers, word books, alphabet books, alphabet letters, computers,

iPads, manipulatives

HANDS-ON-THINKING

Due to students' strong sensory orientation, they have to physically manipulate and explore in order to make meaning of mathematical concepts. They begin taking risks with their learning and continually are challenged with problems throughout their inquiries. Students work collaboratively, developing their social/emotional selves, while extending each other's creative thinking and ideas. Through this process they are developing their 21st-century thinking skills.

MATERIALS: math manipulatives for sorting, patterning and counting, math journals and writing tools, beads, games, dice, spinners, interlocking cubes, geometric figures and 2D shapes, sorting trays, floor and table top graphs, peg boards, hundreds charts, computers, picture books

LIGHT

At the light centre, flashlights and a light-table invite the children to experiment with light. These instruments provide experiences with cause and effect, shape, color and silhouette. The light source shines underneath the children's faces, from below rather than above and creates a new relationship with light. This is a new way to perceive light and experience transparency, luminosity and opacity.

MATERIALS: overhead projector, jewels, numbers, letters, translucent and opaque paper, stones, tracing paper, transparencies, markers, watercolours, prism block, geometric figures and flashlights.

BOOK NOOK

A cozy and inviting nook is just the place for children to foster a love and interest in books. A variety of texts will be available to students to engage with throughout the year. Looking at pictures, sharing a book with friends, chanting a poem and retelling stories with puppets are some of the events that will happen here. In addition to books, audio recordings will be available for students. The Listening and Reading area is always available as a place to slow down and snuggle up with a book.

MATERIALS: picture books, class-made books, pointers, non-fiction, big books, retelling materials, poem charts, audio books, French and other language books

SENSORY, SAND AND WATER

Rich sensory experiences are essential during the primary years, as children reply on these opportunities to make meaning and gather information. The touch and sound of these materials is powerful as children take risks to overcome challenges in their learning-based play. For example, filling and refilling a variety of containers to meet an ultimate goal, allows children to explore concepts of volume, mass, weight, and conservation. It is here that they will discover the abilities of these media and their capabilities.

MATERIALS: sand, water, snow, variety of plastic containers, lids, dishes, funnels, sieves, scoops, shovels, rakes combs, spoons, molds, pails, shakers, props such as sticks, stones, magnifiers, cars, flowers, trees, and animals, measuring cups and spoons, plastic tubing, plaster, wire whip, water wheels and pumps.bringing an understanding of the outdoors into our classroom environments.