

OAK AND ORCA BIOREGIONAL SCHOOL POLICIES

Original Issue Date: July 2000

Updated: January 2008

1. ENROLMENT

1.1 Programs Offered

- a. The School offers a program of ungraded elementary education. In general, students are considered to be either primary (K-3) or intermediate (4-7). Child-directed learning, or Open Education, is the primary method of teaching and learning throughout the school. Our program emphasis is Bioregional Education with integrated disciplines including those required by the B.C. Government. Teachers are certified.
- b. Kindergarten students normally attend two or three days per week, or full time. Special Kindergarten programming may occur on specified days. Other days, Kindergarten students are welcome to join the older students in their programming. Junior Kindergarten options may be offered as a part of the Kindergarten program on certain days. A Junior Kindergarten option, if available, is not a preschool. It is the parent's responsibility to know when their child is ready to start Kindergarten and how many days per week are appropriate.
- c. Decisions are made annually about whether or not a licensed out-of-school care will be offered. If this decision needs to be changed during the school term, parents will be given at least 30 days advance notice.
- d. A distributed learning program will be offered to students learning at home or partially learning at home. This program will use the same philosophies, resources and style of education as the regular at school program. All policies will apply to children enrolled in either program with the exception of Section 8, which applies only to families enrolled through the distributed learning program.

1.2 Conditions of Enrolment

- a. Applications for enrolment may be subject to an informal interview with a school representative. Interested families should visit the school several times before applying. It is important for students to want to attend this school. We have found that students who do not want to come to school (for an extended period of time) are unable to thrive in this child-directed environment.
- b. An application for a child eight years and over will require the older child application procedure to be followed. A special application form is required, and it is requested that the child not be brought into the process until the latter steps of the procedure. Except in exceptional circumstances where the Board feels that the student will do well at the school, we generally do not accept children eight years old and over. The Board will create the older child application procedure.
- c. An application for Junior Kindergarten will require the younger child application procedure to be followed. A special application form is required. Junior Kindergarten students will only be accepted if the Board feels that the student will do well at the school, and is ready for Kindergarten. The Board reserves the right to

limit the number of Junior Kindergarten children in a class.

- d. It is important for the school to know in advance of accepting a child if s/he has special needs that will require additional resources. If a child has social, emotional, academic or behavioural needs that could affect his/her schooling, these must be identified in the application for enrolment. If another institution or professional has identified or commented on the special needs of a child, these must be outlined at the time of application.
- e. The Board reserves the right to limit the number of students with special needs, as defined in the special education policy, in attendance at the school or in a particular class.
- f. Every effort will be made to provide balance in the school as a whole and in each particular class. In striving for diversity, the Board reserves the right to refuse enrolment of a child based on the need for balance in the school or in a particular class. Factors may include gender, age, special needs, activity level of students, etc.
- g. All applications for enrolment must be signed by a parent or guardian. It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of any arrangements with respect to another parent or guardian that has not been actively involved in the enrolment of the child. The school cannot take responsibility for cases where one parent has not been involved and should, legally, have had some say in the decision to enroll the child.
- i. Parents must read and agree to these policies before the student is considered for enrolment. A signature indicating agreement with these policies is required upon registration, and from time to time thereafter.
- j. Students must read (or be read) the appropriate student policy document. Each student must be willing to abide by the age-appropriate policies outlined.

1.3 Conditions of Continued Enrolment

- a. Students and parents must continue on an ongoing basis to be willing to abide by the policies of the school.
- b. At any time, after consultation with the parent and student, the School may decide to deregister a student under the following circumstances:
 - i. The student has needs, particularly social, emotional, or behavioural needs, which the school does not have the resources to meet successfully. This particularly applies if those needs are expressed in behaviour that detracts from the quality of education for other students.
 - ii. The student demonstrates an attitude that detracts from the quality of life experienced by all the students at the school.
 - iii. It becomes clear that the student and/or parent is unable or unwilling to abide by these policies.
 - iv. The School has identified that the student has special needs that cannot be supported without additional funds, and no way can be found to obtain the necessary funds in a timely manner.

1.4 Fees and Payment of Fees

- a. All fees are determined annually. Decisions about fees for the upcoming school year

will be communicated to parents by May 1 of each year. Fees consist of, but are not limited to, the tuition fee and the activity fee.

- b. The tuition fee is a yearly fee, however, the fee can be paid in monthly installments. Fees paid in installments are due whether or not the student attends in that month. If the tuition fees for the entire school year are paid in full by September there is a 5% discount.
- c. Work Exchange - Families experiencing financial difficulties may “work-off” a portion of the tuition fee at an hourly rate of \$10. The work exchange must be arranged in advance by application.
 - i. The work must be work that benefits the school and would otherwise require a paid person.
 - ii. The work and the work schedule will be arranged and monitored by a representative of the board.
 - iii. To be considered as fee payment in kind, work must be professionally done and must be completed in a timely manner.
 - iv. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, families will be expected to pay at least \$50 of the tuition fee per month in the form of a financial contribution.
- d. Under special circumstances, fees may be waived for families experiencing financial hardship and difficulty completing work exchange.
- e. The activity fee is a yearly fee covering school supplies and the regular activity costs of normal trips and programs. The activity fee is not subject to work exchange.
- f. Fees for the Out of School Care program are monthly fees. Out of School Care fees are to be paid in full at the beginning of each month, for that month. No refund is available for any month in which the child has attended any portion of the month. If fees are paid in advance, a refund will be available prior to the beginning of the month(s) in question, if the child will not be attending at all during any given month.

1.5 Release of a Student

- a. Upon enrollment and any time thereafter, parents may give written consent if they wish their children to be able to leave the school with other adults. It is a parent responsibility to keep this information current. Children cannot be released to adults who are not named on the form unless the parent makes an emergency request for a certain time and day, and the person is adequately described for the caregiver to recognize. Picture identification may be requested.
- b. If there are specific instructions for a child not to be released to one parent, or for a parent to be excluded from the school property, the custodial parent must inform the school in writing including the appropriate procedures to be taken if a situation arises. The custodial parent should provide the school with a copy of any custody or court order that exists.
- c. A child will not be released to any adult who, in the opinion of the teacher/caregiver, may be incapable of providing safe care. Instead, an alternate adult from the child's file will be contacted to pick up the child. The police will be contacted if an adult who appears to be impaired insists on driving a motor vehicle. The Ministry of Social Services will be contacted if the caregiver believes the child may be in need of

protection.

2. HEALTH AND SAFETY

2.1 General Safety

a. Fire drills are conducted several times during each school year. The school is inspected yearly to ensure compliance with fire safety codes.

b. Earthquake Preparedness:

The school, with parental support, will stock emergency supplies, including water, food, first aid supplies, and blankets. Parents are required to bring several nonperishable items to school each September for the earthquake kit.

c. The school building, equipment and grounds will be used in a safe and appropriate manner at all times. Freedom and responsibility will be afforded to students based on their age, abilities and demonstrated level of commitment to respectful and responsible behaviour. The level of supervision for all group and individual student activities will depend on the students involved.

d. With prior permission or direct supervision, student may use the school grounds in a safe and responsible manner. Students are expected to remain on school property throughout the day and will have no unsupervised access to the adjacent park or roads, unless the school has prior instructions from a parent. Any supervised group leaving the school grounds is considered to be on a "field trip" and must adhere to the policies associated with field trips.

2.2 Environmental Maintenance

a. Every attempt is made to maintain a clean healthy school, inside and out. Grounds will be maintained in a manner that will create a safe and tidy area for outdoor activities. Play structures will be checked regularly. Unless absolutely necessary, renovations and painting will be conducted when the children are out of the school for an extended period of time, in order to provide a window of time to allow the new building materials to "cure," and to ventilate the area. This includes such installations as flooring and surface coatings.

b. Attention to a safe school environment includes reducing the use of hazardous chemicals wherever they are discovered. Only products that are most compatible with human health and the environment may be used in and about the school and grounds. All products and materials must be approved by a representative of the Board. This representative will attempt to take all health and safety implications into consideration and will take any controversial decisions to the Board for approval. No guarantees of health safety are implied or given.

2.3 Health

a. Allergies and sensitivities are recognized and every attempt is made to accommodate the needs of susceptible staff and students. Allergens and irritants such moulds, chemicals, perfumes, foods, etc. will be appropriately dealt with as they are discovered.

b. The school is considered to be a smoke- and perfume-free area. This contaminant-free policy extends to school functions, whether on or off school property. Parents, students, teachers and visitors will be advised of the policies and will be asked to attend school functions as unscented as possible.

- c. CRD Health offers various programs to the school, including immunization, hearing tests, information dissemination, etc. Parents are informed of the programs and must request each program if they choose it for their child. Parents may decline from the student list that is requested by the CRD each year, if they do not want any CRD programs.
- d. Parents are expected to monitor contagious or infectious conditions and keep children home if they are suffering from parasites, bad colds, the flu, etc. Periodic checks for head-lice are conducted at school after an outbreak. Parents should check their child's head for lice frequently. Parents must inform the school immediately if head-lice or any other highly contagious condition is found. The school will subsequently post a notice or provide a handout to inform parents of the appropriate signs and symptoms, and parents will need to observe their children.

2.4 Nutrition

- a. Snacks and lunches - Filtered water is available at school. Parents are encouraged to provide health-promoting foods for their children's lunches. No candy, gum or pop is allowed. Sharing of food is not permitted amongst students from different families because of potential allergies and dietary restrictions.
- b. When food is prepared for a group of students, healthy foods must be used and allergies taken into consideration. If parents wish to bring in foods to share, the teachers must be consulted in advance and all intolerances taken into consideration. No child should feel left out. In some cases the proposal to bring a particular food will be denied.
- c. At school potlucks and functions, food may be shared. Parents should make an attempt to consider known allergies when preparing foods to bring. A list of ingredients should be provided so that allergens can be identified. Parents should always choose health-conscious foods for these occasions.

2.5 Garbage and packaging - lunches should contain minimal waste. Wastes that are not compostable will be sent home for recycling/disposal. As the city does not provide garbage pick-up from the school, it is imperative that students learn to take waste home. No juice boxes are allowed because they are wasteful and often messy.

2.6 Field Trip Safety

- a. Field trips and fieldwork are an integral part of the bioregional education program. Field trips will be regularly scheduled and be educational in nature. Parents will be notified of times, location and method of transport for all long distance trips. Parents may not be notified of shorter trips (within 2.5km) or trips to libraries. The mode of transportation for these shorter trips will always be on foot or cycle. A field trip release form must be signed by the parent prior to a student joining a group on a field trip.
- b. Cycling and walking are the normal modes of transportation for field trips, however with prior notice, the group may travel by bus (public or private) or in private motor vehicles using parent, teacher or regular volunteer drivers. Every student will be expected to follow the safety rules and use common safety sense whatever the mode of transportation.
- c. Cycle routes will be carefully planned to maximize both safety and learning:

- trailers, trailer-bikes and individual cycles will be used
 - lowest traffic routes will be chosen when cycling
 - well fitting helmets and other safety gear will be required for cycling trips
 - safe cycling skills will be taught to each student at an age appropriate level and students will be tested prior to the trip on the cycle they will be using
 - if no cycle is available to safely transport a child, alternate arrangements will be made with the parent
- d. Transportation Concerns- On a field trip, there are usually at least two adults supervising and available in case of accident. At least one adult will have recent Emergency First-Aid certification. Students are trained to cycle safely in single file, following all the rules of the road, with an adult leader and an adult taking up the rear. For trips that require private motor vehicles, extra insurance is held by the school to cover drivers in case of an accident. All children are required to have seat belts, with booster seats for those under eight years old and weighing less than 36 Kg (~80 lbs). Children will not ride in the front seat if there is an air bag. A first-aid kit containing emergency permission forms is carried on each trip.

2.7 Suspected Child Abuse

- a. Anyone suspecting that a child has been or is likely to be physically or sexually abused by any person is legally bound to report his or her suspicion to a child protection social worker. A designated teacher will be knowledgeable on procedures and questions associated with reporting child abuse and will always be available to discuss any situation.
- b. Suspected abuse by an adult or child within the school must be reported to the designated teacher immediately so that a plan of action can be devised. (In the case that the designated teacher is involved in the situation or is not at arms length, an arms length teacher or director should be notified.) The school will immediately appoint an official to investigate the concern and to consult with the child protection worker and police. The document "Supporting our Students," published by the Ministry of Education, will be consulted and the procedures outlined relating to the specific case will be followed.
- c. All staff should be familiar with the document "Supporting our Students," published by the Ministry of Education.

2.8. Emergency Procedures

The following emergency procedures will be posted in a prominent place:

- a. Accidents- There are usually two adults available either on or off the school grounds. In an accident situation, one adult attends to the children while the other is made available to contact the parent, phone emergency services, or take the injured child for emergency treatment. Teachers are trained in first aid and may deal directly with the injury if it is minor. The child's file and the traveling first aid kit both contain copies of signed forms authorizing school personnel to take children for emergency treatment when required.
- b. Fire- Fire drills are held at least three times per year. Meeting places having been established outside, students are trained to leave the school building promptly and quietly, meet their group and answer to a role call. In the event of a real fire, after

role is called, students will go to the nearby ball field where they will wait until they are picked up or the building is deemed safe by the fire authorities. In bad weather conditions, parents will need to pick up their children from the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre at the corner of Cedar Hill Rd and Finlayson.

- c. Earthquakes- Earthquake drills are held at least three times per year. Students are trained to find a safe spot and remain there until the all-clear signal is given. Supplies of food and blankets are stored in plastic boxes ready for an earthquake event. (Please remember to bring several nonperishable goods each September.) In the event of serious damage to the school building, the group will retreat to the Cedar Hill Recreation Centre (Cedar Hill Rd and Finlayson) until an authorized person becomes available to pick up each child.

3. BEHAVIOUR

3.1 School Jurisdiction

- a. Students are under the jurisdiction of the School at any time they are in the building or on school grounds. This means that the students are subject to the policies and guidelines of the school.
- b. Also included under the school's jurisdiction are all school-sponsored activities, whether on or off the school grounds, including field trips, student clubs, and school-sponsored social and recreational events.
- c. Supervising adults have the authority to ensure that students abide by the school's policies and guidelines at all times. It is the responsibility of the students to cooperate in every way with the requests of supervisors, particularly when safety is an issue. If there is any question as to the fairness or necessity of a request made by a supervisor, the student should discuss the issue politely with the supervisor or seek mediation from another adult or peer-mediator. The supervisor is responsible for being as fair as possible, listening to the student's issues and trying to meet the child's needs if possible. Children must understand that the supervisor is also responsible for the safety of everyone and the maintenance of a suitable learning environment.

3.2 Behaviour Guidelines

Philosophy: To arrive, through discussion, at a consensus of all members of the school community on a set of policies regarding behaviour, which create a nonviolent, peaceful, cooperative learning environment.

- a. During many discussions involving students, teachers and volunteers such a consensus has been reached on the following principles:

No violence,

Respect all life,

Respect diversity,

Respect all people,

Respect the learning environment,

Use things with care,

Enjoy learning,

Help other people learn,
Be prepared.

This list is displayed in the school

- b. Nonviolence involves actions, words, tone of voice, intention and taking responsibility for one's emotions. Respectful behaviour is required towards all other people in the school. Violence will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Appropriate and polite language is necessary at all times. Everyone should do his or her best to be responsible and cooperative.
- c. Guidelines exist for the whole school and for certain rooms. Each student must try to learn these guidelines by listening to others. Students are expected to use common sense and do their best to follow all guidelines. A few of the school guidelines follow, (not an exhaustive list):
 - i. Inside the building, running, throwing objects, and rough play are NOT permitted for safety reasons. Learning environments, including specially chosen equipment, are set at staff and community meetings. In general, personal toys, cards, etc. may NOT be brought to school. After discussion in a community meeting, if educational value can be established for a certain item, it may be permitted under certain circumstances. Children may bring educational books from home. Staff are responsible for determining if a certain type of book is educational, bearing in mind the school philosophies on advertising, nonviolence, historical accuracy, discrimination etc. Students must leave all dangerous items at home, including cap guns, fireworks, etc.
 - ii. When outdoors, students play games that are safe and fun for everyone. Everyone needs to respect other people, all equipment, and the environment. Throwing sticks, rocks, etc. is NOT permitted for safety reasons. Mock guns and other pretend weapons are NOT permitted because of their effect on others. A "hands-off" policy exists in most outdoor games and during free exploration of the grounds. Tagging games are considered safe if played appropriately. During certain organized games where "hands-off" does not apply, the rules of the game will be made clear, an adult supervisor will be present, and a debrief will take place following the game.
 - iii. Play wars, games that include pretend weapons of war, or games that include discussion of mock wars and/or weaponry are counter to the school's peaceful philosophy, and are NOT permitted unless part of an adult-supervised, structured, learning experience. Educational discussions or re-enactments of war are acceptable if they have an educational goal. Serious stories on these topics may be acceptable, but care must be taken not to scare people and not to justify, idealize or romanticize fighting or violence. Individuals may make personal drawings that include weapons of war, but these may NOT be shared in any way with other students. A designated judgment committee should look at, and judge, cases where this policy is unclear.
- d. During fire and earthquake drills, students are asked to maintain absolute silence and pay close attention to all instructions given by the teacher.

3.3 Conflict Resolution

- a. Individuals who find themselves in a conflict situation that they are unable to resolve peacefully are asked to seek help from an adult or peer-mediator. After a suitable

cooling off period a mediator will enter into a negotiation with all individuals involved. The negotiation should include, but is not limited to, hearing individual stories and feelings, determining a suitable solution by consensus, and determining ways to avoid a similar situation in the future.

- b. Usually, natural consequences will follow inappropriate behaviours (e.g.; forget a sunhat = restricted to shade, make a mess = clean up the mess, shout or run in the classroom = take a quick run outside). Individuals who exhibit repeated antisocial or disrespectful behaviours will be required to negotiate future consequences for the behaviour. Everyone needs to understand and respect the creation of a peaceful, reasonably quiet learning environment.
- c. Class Meetings will be held often to discuss and solve any problems that pertain to the group as a whole. Any individual can bring items to the agenda for these meetings. Attendance will be required at certain whole group meetings; students should participate to the best of their abilities. All meetings will be facilitated by a trained mediator and will use a consensus decision-making procedure.
- d. A Peer-Mediator Training Program is available to any student wishing to learn to mediate the negotiation of conflicts or to facilitate group meetings.
- e. Violence, either premeditated or retaliatory cannot be tolerated as it disrupts the safety of the learning environment. In isolated cases, the violence will be mediated by removing the attacker from other students, allowing for a cooling off period, and negotiating the issue. The perpetrator will need to determine better ways to deal with their feelings. Repeated acts of violence by an individual may lead to the individual being sent or kept home. A violence prevention program will then be worked out involving the whole family.

3.4 Field Trip Behaviour Guidelines

- a. Excellent behaviour is a necessary priority on field trips, and students are expected to act within suitable boundaries for each environment encountered.
- b. Safety rules must be followed by students at all times. In particular students must be safe and use common sense when using roads or sidewalks. Every attempt will be made to ensure that safety requirements are understood by all students prior to, and during, the field trip.
- c. Students are expected to follow ecological guidelines and show respect for all living things. This is particularly important when visiting natural sites, parks and ecological reserves. Every effort will be made to guide students towards appropriate behaviours and to discuss the concerns associated with particular sites, including natural hazards.
- d. Students are expected to maintain quiet, respectful behaviours when visiting most places. They must learn to gauge the appropriateness of any behaviour by taking cues from the environment they are in and the leaders present.
- e. Students are expected to be courteous, polite and respectful of every field trip host and their property.
- f. If a student is unable to follow the above guidelines, he/she may not be permitted to participate in field trips. The responsibility will lie with the parent for the care of the student during the time that the group is away from the school.

4. SPECIAL EDUCATION

4.1 Needs and Special Needs

- a. Each student is considered to have individual and unique needs to be addressed and balanced with the needs of other students, staff, and the school as a whole. Every effort will be made to address student needs with the resources normally available in the classroom.
- b. Special needs include any needs that require additional resources, not normally available in the classroom.

4.2 Special needs can be identified by the School or externally by a professional.

4.3 Where a teacher has identified that additional resources are required to meet a student's social, emotional, academic or behavioural needs, the needs will be reviewed by the principal. The principal, after consulting with various parties including the teacher and parent, will determine whether the needs will be identified as special needs by the School.

4.4 Integration Into the School Community

- a. Every effort will be made to support the student's special needs without outwardly labeling or identifying the student as "special" to her/his peers.
- b. Effort will be made to ensure that the student is able to integrate as normally as possible.
- c. There will be no automatic or compulsory segregation, except in cases where the emotional or physical safety of children or staff is seen to be in jeopardy.
- d. Support staff act as aids to the entire class or school, not to any individual child.
- e. Support materials and equipment will be shared by all students where appropriate.
- f. While special considerations are often made to meet special needs, all policies and most procedures apply to all students equally.

4.5 Individual Planning

- a. The special needs of a student, as identified by the School or by an outside professional, will be reviewed by the special education team.
- b. An Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or Case Management Plan (CMP) will be drafted to guide how the special needs will be met.
- c. The parent will be consulted on each plan prior to its implementation, and on an ongoing basis as the plan changes.
- d. IEPs and CMPs are considered living documents, and supported as such.

4.6 Special Education Funding

- a. If a review indicates special needs covered by provincial special education funding, further assessment by a professional may be necessary.
- b. If the parent does not wish to have the child assessed, the family will be asked to locate funding to support the student's needs.
- c. If a parent does not wish the school to apply for special education funding, the family will be asked to locate funding to support the student's needs.

- d. If funding is not provided, the student may be required to learn at home for all or part of her/his program.
- e. All special education funding, whether provided by the School, the ministry, the parent or a donor is allocated to the special education program, and is seen as equal in the budgeting process.

4.7 Special Education Program

- a. A special education program supports all identified special needs in the School.
- b. A special education team oversees the special education program.
- c. Special education funding is allocated to the program as a whole and not directly to specific students.
- d. A special education budget is drawn up each year. Consideration is given to the needs of the School as a whole in addition to those of individual students.
- e. Where additional support staff is provided to assist in meeting the special needs of one or more students, the staff is seen and used as an aid to the entire class and school, and not to one or more individual students. This provision does not apply to a student learning at home who may have the visit of an individual aid.

5. CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS

5.1 Non-policy Concerns or Complaints

- a. In general, children and/or adults with concerns or complaints are encouraged to honestly and respectfully discuss those concerns directly with the person or persons involved.
- b. If further assistance is required to properly deal with a problem or dispute, the following steps should be taken, proceeding only if the matter has not been resolved by the previous step:
 - i. Either party, whether an individual or a group, may seek mediation from a person acceptable to both parties. If the chosen mediator is willing to accept that role, she or he will meet with both parties and attempt to help them to resolve the issue. If the parties cannot agree upon a mediator, a director who is at arms length from the situation will act as the mediator or appoint a mediator.
 - ii. Either party may seek a ruling from the Board Appeals Committee (BAC). The party seeking the ruling should write to the BAC, detailing the facts of the case, as well as efforts made to resolve the problem. The letter should clearly state the outcome sought by the party writing the letter. The BAC will meet consider the letter within two weeks of receiving it. After thoughtful consideration, the BAC may opt to seek further information from one or both parties, to make a decision, or take action. BAC decisions and/or actions will be communicated in writing to all concerned parties. Unless new information comes to light, decisions of the BAC shall be final, and are not subject to board approval.
- c. The Board Appeals Committee is made up of all members of the board who are not involved with the day-to-day operations of the school as defined by the board. The board must ensure that this committee exists at all times and that it has a minimum of 3 members.

5.2 Policy Concerns or Complaints

When the issue is a matter of policy, the person with the concern should speak to a teacher or director for clarification. A suggested change can be presented to the Board in writing or by attending a meeting. The board will decide whether or not the policy in question will be changed.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

6.1 Student Records

Student records are confidential, although students and parents may see them upon request.

6.2 Financial Information/Work Exchange Information

This information is kept in confidential files available only to school organizers and directors on an "as needed" basis.

6.3 Personal Information

The privacy of each family is respected and personal information is kept confidential.

7. PERSONNEL

7.1 Staff Responsibilities

- a. Each staff member will have a list of responsibilities outlined in a job description.
- b. Staff members are required, and supported in, modeling a bioregional lifestyle. As a supplement to their salary, staff will be compensated for up to .5 hours per day transportation time to and from school. This transportation is to be ideally by cycle, and alternately walking or by city bus.
- c. Staff is required to be present and fully attentive at all times when on duty with children. It is expected that a staff member who is otherwise engaged (by being physically or emotionally unable to be fully attentive) will seek an alternate staff member to attend to their duties, or if none are available, temporarily, a suitable volunteer. If no agreed alternative person is present, the needs of the children prevail. Examples are use of personal or school phones, illness, emotional reactivity that may impact the learning environment, etc.
- d. Safety concerns are the responsibility of each staff member. Any observed activity or event that is deemed unsafe by any staff member must immediately be ceased, until such time that a staff meeting can be held to discuss and resolve the safety concerns. Each staff member is responsible for making their concerns heard, keeping the best interests of the children and school in mind.
- e. The Lead teacher will conference monthly with staff from the various programs.
- f. The staff within each program will meet regularly to plan and evaluate their individual programs. Salaried staff are required to attend these meetings.

7.2 Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development

- a. All teachers will be formally evaluated within their first year of joining the school and at least every 3rd school year thereafter. Either an outside evaluator or a qualified administrator or director will lead the evaluation. The evaluation is intended to be an inclusive and cooperative effort. The purpose of the evaluation will be to assess each individual's teaching strategies, to assess the teaching team as a whole and to provide feedback and suggestions for bettering the teaching in the

school. The team will then report to the Board on the evaluation process. The Lead teacher will be evaluated each year by the Board, and every three years with the assistance of an external evaluator selected by the Board.

- b. Informal evaluations will take place on an ongoing basis. While these are the responsibility of the Lead Teacher, they are to be a cooperative effort amongst the staff.
- c. The school reserves the right to have an observer in any classroom at any time to observe and report on the teaching and learning that is taking place.
- d. Professional Development - Using the evaluations as a guide, the school will endeavour to provide opportunities for staff to develop in areas agreed to be helpful towards improving the quality of teaching and learning at the school. Professional development days will be chosen each year for this purpose.

7.3 Dismissal for Cause

- a. If at any time, the school board feels that the conduct of the teacher or his/her method of teaching does not meet the standards of the School, a representative will inform the teacher verbally and both parties will seek to find a solution.
- b. If, after two weeks, the problem persists, the representative will inform the teacher and school board of the problem in writing. At that time, the teacher in question, the other teachers, and a director will meet and try to resolve the issues.
- c. If, after two more weeks, the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of the school board, then the teacher will be required to leave. At that point, the teacher will receive two weeks notice, with no further financial compensation beyond those two weeks.
- d. Grave misconduct will result in suspension without pay.

8. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

8.1 Bioregional Education Association (BEA)

- a. The School is governed by the Bioregional Education Association, a BC-registered non-profit society.
- b. The directors of the BEA compose the School Board.
- c. As a federally registered Canadian charitable organization, donations to the BEA or the School may be acknowledged with income tax receipts.
- d. The Annual General Meeting of the BEA is held in the fall.

8.2 Membership in the BEA

- a. All regular students of the Oak and Orca School are members of the BEA. Parents are not automatically members. Anyone wishing to become a member should submit an application to the board.
- b. Applicants may be accepted or rejected at the discretion of the board.
- c. Each member in good standing is entitled to participate at any general meeting of the society.

8.3 The Board of Directors

- a. At least one representative teacher shall attend the majority of the meetings of the

Board.

- b. Directors are appointed for 2-year terms at an AGM of the BEA. Directors may also be reappointed at an AGM.
- c. Qualification for becoming a director of the BEA includes a demonstrated commitment to and interest in the School. Interested individuals should become a member and attend several meetings of the Board. The directors may make recommendations for potential new directors at the AGM.
- d. The responsibilities of the Board of Directors include, but are not limited to:
 - ensuring the purposes of the society are fulfilled according to constitution, bylaws and policies
 - ensuring financial accountability
 - hiring and firing, and contract negotiation
 - creating policy and following it up with necessary actions
 - ensuring that the school meets all legal licensing and safety requirements (including CRD, Ministry of Education, B.C. Government, City of Victoria)
 - ensuring that all required reports are submitted to various levels of government
 - making final decisions on enrolment and proposals from committees and individuals
 - taking leadership in forming committees to help fulfill the purposes of the BEA or the School
 - keeping minutes of Board meetings and communicating pertinent decisions to parents and friends of the school
- e. The Board meets at least monthly throughout the school year. Extraordinary meetings of the Board may be called by any director at any time.
- f. Non-attendance, without regrets, at several consecutive regular meetings of the Board may result in a director losing his/her position.

8.4 Committees

- a. The Board may form committees from time to time to deal with specific items.
- b. Each committee will be facilitated by a director, and in some cases, all members of the committee will be directors.
- c. From time to time, the Board may invite others to be involved in a committee.
- d. Committee members must maintain confidentiality in all matters discussed at committee meetings or privately amongst committee members.
- e. Committees may research, recommend, plan and/or make projections. Committees may make recommendations to the Board. Committees may not implement plans or projects without the approval of the Board.

8.5 Board/Parent Communication

- a. The directors will endeavour to keep parents informed about important school-related decisions, unless the decisions are confidential.

9. DISTRIBUTED LEARNING PROGRAM

9.1 Nature of the program

- a. The Bioregional Education Association operates a distributed learning school – Oak and Orca Bioregional School – DL. The program is also known as Hands-On Home-Learning for a Sustainable World.
- b. This program is made available through a partnership with the Victoria International Development Education Association.
- c. It is our aim to provide a home-learning program that parallels the regular school program. This program will be child-directed in nature.
- d. Materials and resources will be provided electronically for children to use. The learning program provided will be individualized by the teacher. Children will direct their own learning by choosing from the available activities, materials and resources.
- e. Parents are responsible for assisting students with their learning activities, as needed or as requested by the teacher.
- f. It is our hope that families will provide a learning environment comparable to the open classroom. A manual will be provided to assist in this process.

9.2 Children enrolled in the distributed learning program may either learn full-time at home or part-time in the Oak and Orca Classrooms, part-time at home. The number of spaces available for part-time students will depend on the capacity of the building and the number of students enrolled in the full-time regular school program.

9.3 Families enrolled in the distributed learning program will abide by all the Oak and Orca Bioregional School policies as they apply to a home-learning or partial home-learning program.

9.4 Communication

- a. Conferences between families (parent and/or student) and their designated teacher occur on a semi-monthly basis, in person, by telephone, or by Internet. The conference is the basis for the teacher to be able to know the child's needs, develop an individualized program of study and deliver it to the child.
- b. Some flexibility may be available if circumstances do not permit regular weekly communication, as long as the teacher is able to provide a program that meets the needs of the child. Some form of communication must be established in these circumstances.
- c. In addition to the conferences, families will need to provide evidence of work completed by the student as requested by the teacher.
- d. A representative of the school may visit a child to identify the student, assess skills, and ensure progress is being made as reported. The meeting place will be the student's home, Oak and Orca School, or another place agreed upon by both parties.

9.5 Administration of the Child-Directed Program

- a. The Oak and Orca program is a child-directed program. As a result, families are responsible for recording the activities the child chooses to do. The student will be expected to be learning for approximately 25 hours per week (15 hours per week in Kindergarten.)
- b. Activities worked on, whether they are activities provided by the school, activities recommended by the teacher, or activities created by the child/family, must be

logged in a manner agreed upon by the teacher.

- c. Daily and weekly routines may be logged once, and not again until they change.
- d. The normal method for logging activities and routines is using the provided Internet form. If this is not possible, an alternative logging method will be provided/agreed upon.
- e. Unless other arrangements have been made, completed logs will be collected on a weekly basis.
- f. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the teacher is aware of all the child's learning activities.

9.6 Submissions

- a. In addition to logs, families are responsible for submitting any forms, questionnaires, information and student work requested by the teacher to the school.
- b. Portfolios are used to track and assess student learning. Items chosen by the child or requested by the teacher for the portfolio must be copied and mailed or scanned and emailed to the school in a timely manner.
- c. All submissions will be kept on file with the teacher. A student's file will be considered up-to-date at any time that it contains all logs and submissions required and requested at that time.

9.7 Expense Budget

- a. An expense budget is available for items needed for the program, workshops and courses of relevance to the child's learning program, and other resources/activities that are part of the child's educational program. The school will pay companies/service providers directly for any authorized expense.
- b. Parents should discuss each potential expense with the teacher prior to arranging the transaction to ensure that the expense is acceptable as part of the educational program.
- c. In cases where there is a dispute between teacher and parent as to the educational value of an expense, the Board Appeals Committee (BAC) will receive written information from both parties and make a final decision. Decisions of the BAC will be final, with no avenue for appeal.
- d. In order to receive payment for an expense, companies/service providers must submit an invoice, which clearly shows the expense to be for educational supplies or programming.
- e. Expense budget amounts and schedules will be provided each year by the school. The amount and timing of the expense budget will depend on how much and when funding is received for that student.
- f. Kindergarten students will receive half the expense budget of an equivalent ungraded elementary student because the program is half time (half-funding.)
- h. Expenses will not be authorized for a child whose file is not up-to-date with the school according to the submissions policy.

10. PERSONAL INFORMATION

10.1 The school meets the privacy standards established by British Columbia's Personal

Information Protection Act (PIPA) through the following policies.

10.2 The administrator of the school shall act as the privacy officer, and shall be available to discuss any privacy related concerns or complaints.

10.3 Purpose of Information Collection

a. Under normal circumstances, personal information is used:

- to communicate with parents and students, process applications and ultimately to provide students with the educational services;
- to enable the school to operate its administrative function, including payment of school fees and maintenance of non-educational school programs including parent and volunteer participation and fundraising; and
- to provide certain specialized services (e.g. health, psychological, or legal information) or as adjunct information in delivering educational services.

b. The school shall make all effort to indicate the other purposes for which any personal information is being used at the time the information is being collected.

10.4 Consent for Release of Information

a. Prior to release of any personal information, meaning any information about an individual, but excluding information that is publicly available about the person, the school shall obtain consent to do so from the individual, or in the case of a child, the custodial parent or guardian of the child.

b. Consent may be express, implied (including through use of "opt-out" consent where appropriate), or deemed. For example, if an individual provides his/her mailing address and requests information regarding a particular service, consent to use the address to provide the requested information may be implied.

c. An individual may withdraw consent at any time by informing the school in writing. Except where the disclosure, use or collection of information is required or permitted by law, a request to withdraw consent shall be honoured in a timely fashion.

10.5 Collection of Information

a. The school collects and uses personal information, as needed, to provide educational services.

b. Information collected comes from parents, students or is gathered by teachers and administrators during school activities. If a parent or student is unclear about the purpose of a given piece of personal information collected, they are encouraged to ask a teacher or administrator.

c. The school will limit the personal information collected to that information deemed necessary for the purposes identified by the school.

10.6 The school will pass on permanent student records, including information added to the record as a result of the student's attendance at this school, to the first school the student enrolls in after attending Oak and Orca.

10.7 Use of Information

a. Contact information may be used to enable the school to provide the para-educational and administrative services usually operated by the school. These

services include phoning committees, participation groups, parent meetings, fundraising, events, annual general meetings, etc.

- b. Information may also be used in medical or legal situations.
- c. The type of information the school is legally required to disclose most often relates to family court issues, legal proceedings, court orders and government tax reporting requirements.
- d. Student information as per Form 1701 is annually filed with the Ministry of Education.
- e. Only the information specifically requested is disclosed and the school takes precautions to satisfy itself that the authorities making the request have legitimate grounds to do so.
- f. The school will not sell, lease or trade information about individuals to other parties.

10.8 Retention of Information

- a. Personal information will only be retained for the period of time required to fulfill the purpose for which it was collected. Once the personal information is no longer required to be retained to fulfill the purposes for which it was collected and is no longer required or permitted to be retained for legal or business purposes, it will be destroyed or made anonymous.
- b. Student records will be retained by the school until such time as another school has enrolled the child and requested the records in writing. At this time the records will be forwarded to the enrolling school.