

Dear Families,

My name is Jen Malone and I have been a Kindergarten teacher for many years. I am so excited to have your family join me in my class. It will be a year filled with joy, new relationships, tremendous growth and learning. As we begin, I'd like to let you know a little about myself and my program. It is my goal to help foster in my students a lifelong love of learning and respect for the self, others and the environment. I see us as a team in your child's growth and development and look forward to getting to know you over the weeks and months to come.

My educational background is in Imaginative Education and Place-Based Learning. You will have a chance to see these philosophies in action during our weekly "Community Connection" walks, parents are always welcome and needed. Activities on these walks may include: designing an imaginary playground out of found materials on the beach, a focused sensory experience of a tree, visiting the local bank to learn about money, or releasing salmon fry that we've raised in the classroom. I believe that our community must be understood as more than just the people we meet. Our community involves all the people and places (natural and built) we encounter. Your child will have regular opportunities to experience, learn from and contribute to our larger community through play, inquiry and action.

I believe that all children are good and want to do their best. I know that this can look very different in all of my students. As such, I keep an open mind and heart while building a trusting and respectful relationship with your child. I use positive reinforcement strategies, like praising desirable choices and actions. I model effective conflict resolution skills to help my students find better ways to negotiate conflict as it arises with their peers. And, I offer multiple ways for children to demonstrate their learning.

Using the Big Ideas in the BC curriculum, I plan units that incorporate student interests and required concepts. I use the model of "Know, Understand & Do" when envisioning my program which is focused on process rather than product. The beginning of the year is about building relationships and developing an understanding of self in my students. In the Fall we also begin our year-long inquiry of the seasons. As the year progresses, we transfer

our attention to how we fit into our community, and our roles and responsibilities as members of it. We learn about plant and animal life cycles and how they relate to the seasons. Of course, we cover Literacy, Numeracy and other aspects of the curriculum. However, we do so in relation to these other topics, not as separate entities. We raise salmon, create dramatic plays, draw, contemplate, make mistakes (lots of them!) tell stories and find joy in learning together throughout the year.

As an educator, I know that play is key to effective learning. There are many types of play, each with its own merits and limitations for guiding student learning. Ours is a classroom with play at its core. Don't be surprised if you come to the room and find me on the floor with a group of kids building a block structure - we might be in the middle of a sophisticated physics lesson! Every concept we learn is introduced through play, developed through play and ultimately, understood through play. I am always mindful to challenge my students to try their best and persevere when things get hard.

I thank you in advance for entrusting me with your child's Kindergarten education. It's a job I love and take very seriously. I look forward to getting to know you and your child this year. Don't forget that you can always reach me via email, jmalone@vsb.bc.ca or at our door for pick up and drop off.

With Gratitude,

Jen Malone