



Grace Martin 2023 - 2024 Family Handbook

Principal's Message

On behalf of the staff at Grace Martin School, it is my pleasure to extend a warm welcome to our school community.

The information in this agenda will provide details regarding our school programs, policies and procedures. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with its contents and the expectations for each student and family.

Individual student success and positive behavior are priorities at Grace Martin School. An open working relationship between school and home is vital as we strive to provide the support students require to succeed. To do this, reliable and regular communication is needed to create an environment of trust and cooperation.

Positive, respectful behavior from our entire school community is an expectation. As students learn how to socially interact with others, staff will provide guidance and direction. Support from home regarding appropriate school behavior will encourage each student to see that positive, respectful behavior is an important character trait both at home and at school.

Our fundamental, guiding principle will be kindness. We will be kind and use our words to resolve any disputes or disagreements.

If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to contact me.

Randy Witte
Principal
Grace Martin School
780.462.7121

Grace Martin School, where we continually ask ourselves "What's best for kids?" through a collaborative environment fostered through respectful relationships, communication and partnerships.

School Calendar for 2023-2024 (Approved Holidays)

First Day of Instruction	Tuesday, September 5
Professional Development Day	Monday, September 25
Thanksgiving	Monday, October 9
Professional Development Day	Friday, October 20
November Break	Thursday, Nov 9 - Monday Nov 13 (inclusive)
Professional Development Day	Tuesday, November 14
Winter Break	Monday, December 25 - Friday, January 5 (inclusive)
Professional Development Day	Wednesday, January 31
Family Day	Monday, February 19
Professional Development Day	Tuesday, February 20
Teacher's Convention	Thursday, February 29 & Friday, March 1
Professional Development Day	Monday, March 11
Spring Break	Monday, March 25 - Monday, April 1 (inclusive)
Professional Development Day	Friday, April 26
Victoria Day	Monday, May 20
May Break	Tuesday, May 21 & Wednesday, May 22
National Indigenous Peoples Day	
-Operational Day (no students)	Friday, June 21
Last Day of Instruction	Thursday, June 26

Our History

The opening of Grace Martin School on December 1, 1972, was the 70th anniversary of the opening of the first school in the Ellerslie district whose first teacher was Mrs. Grace Martin McEachern.

Mrs. McEachern played an active role in the first few years of Grace Martin School, attending special functions and joining classes on field trips. At the age of 105, she was still able to join us for a birthday party in her honor and paid a visit to our Volunteer Tea in June 1984. She passed away at the age of 109.

We are honored to carry the name of such a remarkable woman and the students and staff of this school have a constant challenge to model the courage, kindness, integrity and good citizenship that Mrs. McEachern demonstrated throughout her life.

2023-2024 Hours of Operation

Please use the following schedule to consider advanced notice to the school for any appointments your child needs to attend. Giving notice allows the school to have your child prepared as opposed to looking for them at recess or when they are in another class.

**Indicates when bell rings*

8:20 AM*	Sakinah Circle Students Warning Bell (Assembly)
8:37 AM*	School Warning Bell (all students to their classrooms for morning attendance)
8:40 AM	Morning Instructional Time (all classes begin)
10:15 AM*	Morning Recess begins
10:30 AM*	Recess ends
11:25 AM*	First half of lunch begins for Regular and Opportunity students
11:35 AM*	Regular Kindergarten ends First half of lunch begins for Sakinah Circle students
11:45 AM*	Sakinah Circle Kindergarten ends
11:55 AM*	Second half of lunch begins for all students
12:13 PM*	School Warning Bell (all students to their classrooms for afternoon attendance)
12:15 PM	Afternoon Instructional Time (all classes begin)
2:05 PM*	Afternoon Recess begins
2:20 PM*	Recess ends
2:25 PM*	<i>Early School Dismissal Thursdays, all programs (no afternoon recess)</i>
3:31 PM*	School Dismissal, all programs

Grace Martin School's Positive Behavior Plan

Grace Martin School is a safe and caring environment that promotes diversity, dignity and belonging amongst our students, staff and community. Our school environment is conducive to learning, to developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to meet the challenges of the future and to becoming responsible and productive citizens. Any behavior that infringes on the ability of others to learn and succeed is unacceptable.

Grace Martin's philosophy is dedicated to teaching students responsible behavior towards themselves and others. All students have a right to learn. We believe home and school share the responsibility for teaching children appropriate behavior. By working together, we increase the success of children learning responsibility and respect for others. At Grace Martin School we focus on the positive and strive to enable students to learn to their fullest potential in a safe and caring environment. There are times, however, that a student may have difficulty meeting their responsibilities. If a student misbehaves, they can expect the adult in charge to apply the most appropriate actions to ensure the safety of our school community. Our school-wide policy is designed to teach students how we are to respect each other and that safety is our number one concern.

You can learn more by reading our Students Rights and Responsibilities document found on SchoolZone or on our website.

Our Programs

Grace Martin School offers a variety of programs, including Kindergarten to Grade 6, Opportunity and Sakinah Circle which is an alternative program offering the Alberta Program of studies while providing a Qur'anic world view (Kindergarten to Grade 6).

SchoolZone

[SchoolZone](http://schoolzone.epsb.ca) (schoolzone.epsb.ca) is an information system developed by Edmonton Public Schools. This service provides parents and students with:

- online access to daily homework assignments
- attendance records
- news of school and Division events
- achievement results
- access to selected online educational resources
- ability to pay school fees online

If you have access to the internet, you have access to SchoolZone. If you do not have your login information, please contact Grace Martin School for assistance. Please note that all progress reports and newsletters will be available through SchoolZone only. No paper copies will be sent home with students unless requested by the parent.

Communication

Reliable and regular communication is needed to create an environment of trust and cooperation. Our school wide communication plan includes:

- All teachers are expected to contact parents within the first two weeks of their child beginning at our school.
- Teachers are responsible to initiate contact and arrange to meet with parents when appropriate.
- Parents can request a meeting at any time.
- Teacher and parent communication via school agendas.
- Monthly school updates via School Council meetings.
- SchoolZone and the school's website.
- Letters home.

Respectful Learning Environment

Edmonton Public Schools is committed to creating a healthy, respectful learning environment for students, staff members, trustees, parents, volunteers and contractors.

We recognize the worth of every person without discrimination. We are committed to modeling positive behavior in our school to maintain an environment that is respectful, safe, nurturing and positive for everyone. We expect all of our school community members to interact in a manner which respects the dignity and value of others.

Our fundamental, guiding principle will be kindness. We will be kind and use our words to resolve any disputes or disagreements.

“Learning to Learn” at Grace Martin School

Assessing learning provides the most leverage in terms of student growth. It is a process that helps not only to define how a child is doing, but how we are doing as teachers in teaching your child. Throughout the year, our staff will work collaboratively reviewing curriculum to determine the essential elements so that their instruction can be more focused. As well, we will Assess for Learning by incorporating a number of formative assessment strategies that *may* include:

- I Can/I am learning to statements
- Multiple Opportunities and Multiple Ways
- Descriptive and Constructive Feedback
- Exemplars, Common Rubrics and Co-Constructed Criteria
- Self-Assessment Opportunities

Teachers will collaborate to create common assessments in order to promote program continuity across the subjects and grades. To support this work, our teachers will continue to provide specific vocabulary instruction in all subjects and in all grades. As well, teachers will be supported in their continued growth toward excellence in differentiating instruction so they can better meet the needs of their students.

For more information, please read our School Assessment Plan on SchoolZone and our school's website.

Co-Curricular Programs and Special Events

Grace Martin offers a number of programs that promote school spirit, healthy lifestyles, a positive school environment and good behavior over the course of the school year. Some of these activities may include:

- Read in Week (October)
- Field trips (throughout the school year)
- Intramurals (throughout the school year)
- Clubs and special lunch hour activities (throughout the school year)
- Celebrations and Assemblies (throughout the school year)
- Buddy Classes (throughout the school year)
- Parent volunteer program (throughout the school year)
- Ramadan (April)
- Indigenous Day (June)
- Volunteer Tea (June)

Absences From School

Parents are asked to phone the school at **780-462-7121 before 8:30 am** if your child will not be attending school. **In your message please identify the students first and last name as well as their teacher and grade.** The answering machine is available 24 hours per day and you are able to leave a message anytime.

We request that this be done each day that your child is away; however, if you know that your child will be away for an extended period of time, please communicate this with a phone call and a note in the agenda identifying the dates of the absences. If your child has a medical, dental or other appointment, please send a note in the agenda the morning the absence will occur. This will allow less interruptions during class time. Please refer to the [EPSB Student Attendance Expectations and Absence Reasons](#) document for clarification on excused and unexcused absences.

Children who are too ill to go outside for recess are too ill to be at school. Children coming to school with severe colds or other illnesses are unable to function well at school, they provide a source of infection for other children and would recuperate faster at home. Parents will be called to pick up ill children. Should parents not be available, we will call the identified “emergency contact” for pick up.

Illness/Injuries

First Aid is administered to any child experiencing an injury at school. If a student becomes ill or injured while at school, we will attempt to contact the parent or the person listed for emergencies. If the illness or injury appears to be serious and we are unable to contact a responsible party, medical advice will be sought and followed.

Medication

All students requiring medication management for **physician prescribed medications** must have

a Medical Management Plan (MMP). This will include an [Authorization Form for the Administration of Prescription Medication](#) that must be filled out and signed by the student's physician. In cases where a student needs **non-prescribed medication** (allergy medicine, Tylenol) an [Authorization Form for the Administration of Non-Prescription Medication](#) is also required, but it does not have to be signed by a physician. This medication will be locked up and kept in the office.

EpiPens and life-threatening allergies

Provincial legislation requires all schools to have a minimum of one epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) for emergencies.

School EpiPens will only be used in medical emergencies when a student appears to be having an anaphylactic reaction and does not have a prescribed EpiPen. If a student has a prescription, the student's own EpiPen will be used if they experience anaphylaxis, as specified in their Medication Management Plan. Parents will always be notified if an EpiPen is used with their child.

A school EpiPen is not a replacement for a prescribed EpiPen. If a student has a prescription, they should still have their own EpiPen at school. Grace Martin staff have completed training about life-threatening allergies.

Emergency Plan

In the event of unexpected circumstances that affect the normal operation of the school, Grace Martin School has an Emergency Plan in place. Unusual circumstances may include situations such as water main breaks, fire, natural gas leaks or other incidents. The purpose of this plan is to ensure the safety and well-being of Grace Martin students and staff and to inform parents and the community of actions that will be taken in the event of unusual circumstances. Every effort will be made to provide parents and students with prompt and accurate information. Our designated relocation site is Leefield Community League at 7910 36 Avenue NW, 780-463-2456.

Parental Involvement

At Grace Martin School we enjoy and appreciate exceptional parental involvement on a variety of levels. Parents are involved as volunteers at the school working with teachers and students and in the library and on other school projects. Our Grace Martin School Council provide opportunities for parents to provide feedback about school plans and policies, to share ideas, to work on fundraising activities and share their talents for the mutual benefit of our school. Please watch for further information regarding the School Council meeting dates.

Volunteer Opportunities

Grace Martin School programs and classroom activities sometimes become difficult to run without our volunteers. If you could spare some time during the day to lend a helping hand please let your teacher know where you would like to volunteer. Also let them know your area of interest and availability. Without people like you we are unable to do all the programs or classroom activities during the school year.

Visitors and Volunteers

Visitors, whether they are parents, guests or people on official school business, are welcome in our school. We ask that all visitors immediately sign in at the office prior to going anywhere in the school. You will be given a visitor/volunteer name tag so that you can be easily identified while in the school.

Lost and Found

The school requests that all articles of clothing - boots, shoes, coats, etc. and all school supplies be clearly labeled in order to assist us in returning lost articles.

Lost and Found boxes are placed in the halls and are emptied throughout the year. Found articles should be placed in these boxes. Money, watches, rings, keys, glasses and jewelry items should be turned into the office. It has been our practice to hold the money and jewelry for a two-week period.

School Supply Lists

Please refer to [Grace Martin School's website](http://gracemartin.epsb.ca) (gracemartin.epsb.ca) for K - 6 School Supply Lists. You can also log in to SchoolZone and go to "School Resources"

Change of Address or Phone Number

It is extremely important that the school has up to date information regarding home and emergency contacts. In the event of an emergency or student illness, the school must be able to contact the parents or legal guardians. Should you have a change of residence, home phone number, or work number the school needs to be notified. We require proof of residency to change the student's address (ie. mortgage document, utility bill, property tax bill, lease agreement, bank statement).

Cold Weather Policy

During periods of inclement weather (-23°C or colder with or without wind chill) we will have an indoor recess. On occasions such as this, dismissal will remain at the normal time. There will be no early dismissal on days when outdoor recess is canceled. It is essential that students arrive at school with appropriate cold weather clothing such as a suitable jacket, snow pants, mittens and head coverings.

Electronics and Toys/Trading Cards

Students are required to leave their hand held electronic devices at home as this takes away from teaching and learning and there is a chance of these devices being lost. We understand some students use cell phones, but they are not to be out during class time and may be temporarily confiscated by the teacher. Please leave toys and other items such as trading cards at home as they are a source of conflict between students and can get lost.

Fees

Please ensure that any payments for fees are paid as per established deadlines and before any field trip or special event. **Student fees are charged for items that are not covered by the school budget.** Fees are paid through the office or online via SchoolZone. We request that all fees be paid in full by October 7, 2022.

Field Trips

Field trips can be memorable school experiences. They enhance the curriculum and make it possible for children to have firsthand experiences, thus enriching classroom learning. Parents will be notified of all field trips requiring private and public transportation before their occurrence. This field trip letter will indicate the purpose, curricular component it addresses, cost and other requirements for the field trip. Parents are required to submit the consent form and associated fees to the school **before** the field trip, otherwise students will not be permitted on the field trip. No child will be refused the right to participate in a field trip experience due to a lack of funds if the situation is brought to the attention of the teacher or principal. If a student is not able to participate in a field trip due to any other reason, they will be accommodated in other classes. Students **must** return a **parent signed permission form in order to attend the field trip before the field trip occurs.** We are unable to accept verbal consent instead of a signed permission form.

Lunch-Time Supervision Service - Information and Expectations

Our school provides a supervised lunch service on a regular or drop-in basis as a service to parents of students in grades 1 - 6. A lunch fee is mandatory for any student from grades 1 – 6 who stays for lunch (fee covers supervision costs only - food is not provided). A [Lunch-time Supervision Service Registration Form](#) needs to be filled out for all students staying at the school for lunch. However, we encourage parents to make other arrangements for lunch. Children benefit from a break in school routine. Getting away from the school environment provides a needed break – physically, mentally and socially. If your child normally goes home for lunch, we would ask that you continue this practice.

Students staying for lunch are expected to behave in a respectful, responsible manner. Students who are not cooperative will be asked to eat their lunch with another class or may be temporarily or permanently suspended from the lunch program. To ensure student safety and to respect parental expectations, elementary students must remain on school property during the lunch hour unless we receive written parent permission to leave the grounds.

- All students are expected to behave appropriately and eat lunch respectfully at their own desks.
- Students are not to share food (due to possible allergies).
- Students need to bring their own utensils for eating.
- No glass containers are to be brought to school because of the safety factor.
- Students will need to bring a cold lunch or use thermoses for hot items. Due to Occupational Health and Safety regulations, **there are NO microwaves available.**
- After eating lunch, students will clean up their own area and put any trash in the garbage and recyclables in the provided bins.
- Students will follow the lunch supervisor's directions and expectations.
- Students need to move quickly between eating and going outside or vice versa.
- Students are to remain on school grounds unless they have been signed out by a parent or guardian at the office.

The lunchroom supervisor, teacher or administrator will deal with any student who exhibits inappropriate behavior immediately. If the behavior persists, a student may have their lunch-time supervision service privileges suspended and alternate arrangements for lunch would need to be made by the parent.

“O Canada” and Morning Announcements

We start every Monday with the Treaty 6 Acknowledgement, the singing of “O Canada” and the reading of any school announcements. We expect all students, staff, parents, and guests to pause whatever they are doing and stand when they hear “O Canada” playing over the intercom. These are important school practices that contribute to a consistent routine and reflective start to the school day. Upon completion of the announcements, our teachers and students immediately begin to engage in teaching and learning.

Parking and Student Drop Off and Pick Up

Safe drop off and pick up of students is of primary importance to us. Our school is a very busy place especially before school starts and after school ends. In order to ensure the safest environment possible, we would ask you to follow these guidelines when arriving or departing our school. Please respectfully follow their instructions at all times.

Students should:

- Be aware of your surroundings. Vehicles move quickly - be on the lookout.
- When your parent or guardian comes to pick you up, let them move to the next available place in the line and wait until they stop before approaching the car. Once the car has stopped, quickly get in and buckle up so the next student can be picked up.

Suggestions to help make coming to school and getting home easier:

- Walk or bike to school.
- Carpool - share a ride to school.
- If you must drive, ask your parent or guardian to park a block or so from the school and walk with you the rest of the way.
- Please take extra care when crossing the street by looking both ways before you cross and only crossing at designated crosswalks.

It is an expectation that *parents will drop off students no earlier than 8:15 AM for Sakinah Circle* and 8:20 AM for all other students as there is no supervision provided before this time. All remaining students will enter the school at the 8:37 AM bell. Regular Kindergarten students are required to be **promptly** picked up at **11:35 AM** and Sakinah Circle Kindergarten students at **11:45 AM**. All Grade 1 - 6 students are required to be promptly picked up at **3:31 PM (2:25 PM on Thursdays)**. The school will immediately make phone calls home or to the emergency contact if students remain past these dismissal times in order to make pick up arrangements. If parents consistently fail to promptly pick up their child at dismissal, a conversation will happen with school administration to ensure adherence to these expectations.

[City of Edmonton - Bylaw Services - School Parking Enforcement](#)

Safety and Security

Student safety is of utmost importance at Grace Martin School. The following procedures have been put into place to ensure safety and security for all who are in our building:

- *All school doors will remain locked throughout the day.* Please press the buzzer at the front entrance to be let in.
- All visitors and volunteers are asked to enter the school building through the front entrance and to report to the school office upon entering and leaving the school.
- All visitors and volunteers are asked to wear a visitor/volunteer badge while they are in the school and to sign in and out in the office. All volunteers must complete the [Division's Volunteer Registration Form](#) prior to working within the school or supervising a field trip.
- Staff members have keys to access the school during the day from any door. During supervision, staff wear reflective vests to identify themselves as school personnel to our students.
- Students who arrive late must enter the building through the front door and report to the school office.
- Any students who are to be excused from school prior to regular dismissal time (doctor, dentist appointments, etc.) will be met by their parent/guardian at the front doors. No student will be allowed to leave school early without a note or call from a parent/guardian.

Security procedures are designed to keep the school population safe, calm and organized while the situation is being investigated and resolved. In security situations, we work with relevant authorities and communicate with parents and other stakeholders as needed. In accordance with the Division's Emergency Response Plan, each school in the Division has approximately six emergency evacuation (fire) drills and three security alert drills each year. If you have any questions about our Emergency Response Plan or school security alerts, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher or the school administration.

2023-2024 Division Calendar

*subject to change

The school year calendar for 2023-24 for Edmonton Public Schools. This calendar includes spring, summer and winter break, holidays, first and last day of classes, PD days, days-in-lieu and Board-approved non-instructional days.

2023-24 Division Calendar epsb.ca

AUGUST • 2023

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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SEPTEMBER • 2023

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OCTOBER • 2023

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APPROVED HOLIDAYS

Labour Day	September 4
The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	September 30
Thanksgiving	October 9
Remembrance Day	November 11
Christmas Day	December 25
Boxing Day	December 26
Winter Break	Dec. 25–Jan. 5
New Year's Day	January 1
Family Day	February 19
Teachers' Convention	February 29–March 1
Spring Break	March 25–29
Good Friday	March 29
Easter Monday	April 1
Victoria Day	May 20

NOVEMBER • 2023

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DECEMBER • 2023

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JANUARY • 2024

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FEBRUARY • 2024

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MARCH • 2024

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APRIL • 2024

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First Operational Day (No Students)	September 1
First Day of Classes	September 5
Last Day of Classes	June 26
Last Operational Day	June 27

MAY • 2024

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JUNE • 2024

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DATES OF SIGNIFICANCE

Yom Kippur	September 25
Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas	November 12
Lunar New Year	February 10
Eid al-Fitr	April 10
Eid al-Adha	June 17
Summer Solstice and National Indigenous Peoples Day	June 21

LEGEND

- PUBLIC HOLIDAY
- PD DAY (NO STUDENTS)
- FIRST/LAST DAY OF CLASSES
- OPERATIONAL DAY (NO STUDENTS)
- TEACHERS' CONVENTION
- TEACHERS' DAY IN LIEU (NO TEACHERS OR STUDENTS)
- BOARD APPROVED NON-INSTRUCTIONAL DAY (NO TEACHERS OR STUDENTS)
- WINTER/SPRING BREAK