

The Dr. Eric Jackman Institute of Child Study

Visual Arts Program, 2026-2027

Early Years and Primary Grades

Philosophy

Children are born artists, and their time in Art should be a joyful process of discovery, self-expression, and the broadening of ideas and techniques. Hands-on experience is emphasized in the studio each year, and what may otherwise be seen as mistakes are instead looked at as creative opportunities. Each project is designed to further our students' understanding of different elements of art and design and their applications. Studio time is planned with an eye to the individual nature of each student group and their developmental readiness.

In keeping with our constructivist approach, student ideas play an essential role in the direction of our projects, and creative problem-solving skills are among the most valued. Inquiry topics explored within the grade classroom will be incorporated in our art wherever possible. Inquiry and knowledge-building pedagogy are also employed, and are fundamental to our process. It is of primary importance to promote a stress-free, supportive, and celebratory environment in our Art studio.

Students are encouraged to express themselves through their creations. It is hoped that their time spent engaged in their art will inspire connections between themselves and their friends, their family, and their wider world. In order to facilitate these connections, the Art program prioritizes: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists; artists representative of the Global Majority; and art from diverse and marginalized communities. We strive to ensure that everyone feels included and reflected in the Art Studio.

Class Routine

As with all classrooms, students in the Art Studio learn and practice creating and communicating responsibly and respectfully in a collaborative space. Classes will often begin with a brief story,

activity, or discussion before students embark on their exploration of technique and media. Wherever possible, there will be a choice of materials offered, allowing the students to express feelings and ideas through different media, and set the direction for their own mastery journeys. If students finish early, they will either continue to the next stage of the project, proceed to a more open-ended exploration of media at hand, or enjoy one of the many art-themed books or activities in the reading area. Each class has a developmentally appropriate clean-up routine.

Overview of Early Years and Primary Art Classes

Nursery students enjoy Art in their classroom twice a week for 30 minutes. There, I set up an exploration at one of the tables, and the students can choose to explore when they are ready. Our JK and the SK students come to the Art Studio once a week for 45 minutes. In early years classes, our goal is continued discovery and age-appropriate mastery of different techniques and artistic vocabulary.

Classes in Grades 1, 2, and 3 visit once a week for one hour. In these grades, the students continue exploring new skills and improve upon techniques previously practiced. There is increased independence in project direction, choice of media, and room responsibilities.

In all Early Years and Primary classes we explore different elements of art and principles of design throughout the year while working in collage, drawing, painting, sculpture, construction, and printmaking.

The Early Years and Primary classes have begun with explorations of a variety of techniques, and will be sharing parts of themselves and things they like with the school community. At the beginning of our learning journey, I find myself very excited when wondering what this year will hold for our students.

Tara Rousseau (she/they)
Visual Arts Teacher