

# Willowdale Policies & Guidelines

## OUR VALUES

At Willowdale, we believe in nurturing a respectful, joyful community where children, caregivers, and educators can explore and grow together. These values guide every class and interaction:

- **Child-Led Learning:** We follow the child's lead, allowing them to engage at their own pace. Guides and teachers offer gentle support while honoring each child's autonomy.
- **Respect for Others:** We expect all participants—children and adults—to treat one another with kindness. Harmful language, exclusion, or discrimination are not tolerated.
- **Respect for Nature:** We model and teach responsible exploration. Children learn to care for living things, tread lightly, and leave natural spaces as we found them.
- **Safe, Supportive Play:** We encourage risk-taking in ways that promote growth and confidence. Teachers step in if safety is a concern, while allowing children to navigate challenges.
- **Peaceful Conflict Resolution:** Disagreements are natural. We guide children in resolving conflict with empathy and respect. If concerns arise, we'll work together with families to support a positive and inclusive environment.

## AGE RANGE

Willowdale programs are designed for children ages **1.5 to 8**. Families are welcome to enroll children slightly outside this range at their discretion. All classes are mixed-age, and mobility is not required for participation.

- **Sibling Policy:** Siblings over 1.5 must be enrolled to attend. If a sibling needs to join for one class due to a schedule change (e.g., school day off), they may attend one session without enrolling — just let the guide know in advance.

## CLOTHING POLICY

Willowdale programs take place outdoors in all seasons and most weather conditions. To support safe, joyful exploration, children and caregivers must arrive dressed for the environment, activities, and forecast.

Please plan for:

- Weather-appropriate layers (warm coats, hats, mittens in cold weather)
- Rain gear and waterproof boots for wet or muddy conditions
- Sun protection when needed (hats, sunscreen applied before class)
- Closed-toe shoes suitable for uneven terrain
- Clothing that can get dirty, wet, and stained during play

Nature play often includes mud, water, paint, sap, and other natural materials. We encourage families to dress with this in mind—messy play is meaningful play.

Caregivers are responsible for ensuring their child is dressed appropriately and comfortably for the duration of class. If a child is not adequately dressed for the conditions, participation may be limited to

maintain safety and comfort.

## CLASS TRIALS

If space allows, families may try one session before committing to a full season. The drop-in rate is listed on the registration form. There's no obligation to enroll after your trial.

## REGISTRATION & REFUND POLICY

By registering, you're securing a spot for your explorer.

### Cancellations:

- Cancel **14+ days before class** → Full refund minus \$10 fee
- Cancel **within 14 days** → No refund
- Emergencies? We'll review case-by-case

### Missed Classes:

No refunds or credits are given for missed sessions due to illness or scheduling conflicts.

### All field trip registrations are non-refundable.

Because tickets are often purchased in advance and space is limited, we are unable to offer refunds for missed or canceled field trips.

### If Willowdale Cancels:

- If **more than 2 sessions** are canceled with no reschedule → you'll receive a prorated class credit
- If a **pop-up class is rescheduled** and you can't attend → class credit will be issued

### Referral Credit:

Refer a friend who registers for a full-season, and you'll receive a **\$15 class credit** as a thank-you.

## PRICING & PAYMENT

- **Pricing:** Standard rates vary by season. Drop-in rates apply when available.
- **Payment:** Full payment is due at registration unless otherwise noted. We do not accept cash.
- **Scholarships:** We offer a limited number of scholarships as funding allows.

## INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Classes may be canceled for:

- Wind gusts over 25–30 mph
- Freezing rain
- Temps (including wind chill) below 17°F
- Manchester School District closures due to unsafe road conditions

You'll be notified **at least 90 minutes before class** by email/text. We'll do our best to reschedule within the same week or extend the season.

## CREATING A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- **Supervision:** Every child (explorer) must be accompanied by a caregiver (guide). Teachers support safety and offer guidance for risky play.
- **First Aid:** Teachers carry a first aid kit and are CPR/First Aid certified.
- **Background Checks:** All leaders are required to pass a background check prior to leading their first class.
- **No Weapons:** For the safety and comfort of all families, firearms or weapons of any kind are not permitted at any Willowdale programs or events.

### Safety Reminders:

- Explorers may explore independently if they remain visible/audible to their guide.
- Risky play is encouraged—within reason. Redirection will occur if safety is compromised.
- Natural objects should not go in mouths. We'll work with caregivers to manage this safely.

## HEALTH & COVID-19 SAFETY

To keep our community healthy:

**Please stay home if your explorer (or household member) has had any of the following symptoms within the past 24–48 hours:**

- Fever
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Persistent cough or sore throat
- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- Unusual fatigue or body aches

If unsure, please **err on the side of caution**, especially during flu season. If a teacher is unwell, we will notify families and reschedule if possible.

## FOOD & SNACK POLICY

Snacks and drinks are welcome. Please be mindful of others' space and allergies.

## INSURANCE & CERTIFICATIONS

- **Insurance:** Willowdale is insured through Thimble. All class locations are listed as additional insureds.
- **Teacher Certifications:** All leaders are CPR/First Aid certified. Certification records available upon request.

## COMMUNICATIONS

- **Consent to Communicate:** By registering, you agree to receive class-related and seasonal email updates from Willowdale.
- **Emergency Contacts:** Please keep your emergency contact info updated.

- **Policy Changes:** We'll notify families in advance of any major policy updates.

## PHOTOGRAPHY & MEDIA RELEASE

During registration, you may choose to opt in or out of our media release.

- **Opted-In:** Photos/videos may be taken during class and used for Willowdale's marketing/social media.
- **Opted-Out:** No photos/videos of your child will be shared.

## INCLUSION & RESPECT

We are an LGBTQIA+ affirming program and are committed to building an inclusive, respectful environment for all. We celebrate each child and family for who they are.

If you witness or experience behavior that doesn't align with our values of equity and respect, please reach out. We want to listen, learn, and make it right.

## CAREGIVER PARTICIPATION

Willowdale's caregiver-attended programs are designed to be shared experiences, where children and their grown-ups explore, learn, and connect together. Caregivers are expected to remain on site and actively support their child's participation, safety, and regulation throughout class.

## TEACHERS & THEIR CHILDREN

Willowdale is a family-centered program, and some of our educators may bring their own children to class. These little ones are often active participants, modeling play, curiosity, and connection alongside your explorers.

With this in mind, we kindly ask that **guides extend understanding** if a teacher needs to briefly step away to care for their child. Teachers remain fully present and responsible for creating a safe, engaging learning environment for all.

## AGREEMENT

By registering for Willowdale programs, you acknowledge and agree to the policies outlined above.

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Last Revised 12/13/2025