



KELOWNA CHRISTIAN
OPEN SCHOOL

Learning begins with relationship.

Family Handbook

2008/2009

www.kcopenschool.org



Welcome from the Chief Learning Catalyst

Erin J. Hussey

A warm welcome to all of our new and returning families!

This handbook has been created to present your family with our educational philosophy and how we function as a learning community. It is my desire to ensure that the partnership between your family and Open School is one that is transparent and based on a shared passion for student learning and growth.

Kelowna Christian Open School is officially referred to as a Distributed Learning (DL) School. We are an accredited school in the province of British Columbia and serve the educational needs of students and families that do not 'fit' within the traditional 'brick and mortar' model of education. Open School is about 'fitting' school to each student, rather than each student to the school. We are affiliated with Kelowna Christian School and are governed by the Board of the Kelowna Society for Christian Education.

Our focus is learning – not schooling. One small piece of evidence of this is the fact that my title is Chief Learning Catalyst, rather than principal. My passion is to ignite learning within our community, not manage an institution which is the traditional role of a school principal.

We offer both On-campus and E-Campus learning options for our students. Students in the Kelowna area can enjoy a classroom experience in addition to the many benefits of learning at home. Our E-Campus program allows students to study anytime, anywhere with the support of contact teachers who understand the dynamics of home-learning.

As our school and your family partner together I pray that God's blessing, wisdom and guidance will rest on each of us. There is no greater calling or responsibility than raising and educating our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me at (250) 862-5750 or 1-877-778-KCOS or email me at erin.hussey@kcopenschool.org.

Sincerely yours,

Erin J. Hussey
Chief Learning Catalyst

OUR CORE BELIEFS

1. Learning begins with relationship.
2. Each student is created by God as a unique individual of infinite value and worth.

It is on these two core beliefs that everything at Open School is rooted.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Kelowna Christian Open School, we believe each student is created by God as a unique individual of infinite value and worth. God sees each child as so valuable that Jesus Christ willingly laid down His life for their salvation. We believe that if God sees each child this way, we too must see them this way. This fundamental belief shapes our learning community and philosophy of education.

Our motto, *Learning begins with relationship*, shows the centrality of relationships in all that we do. We take this model of learning from our understanding of how God engages us - through relationship. God is not a far off task master who sends us rules and assignments via divine fiat, rather He wants to know us and be known by us. The Bible is the text of our lives, but God breathes it into each of our hearts individually, not as a standardized group. We celebrate the fact that *your child is not one of many, but one of a kind*.

As a school, we base our support of learning at home on our understanding of the most important relationship in our lives.

Relationship between Parent and Child

Outside of our relationship with God, the most important relationship in life is between parent and child. It is through this relationship that the most effective learning takes place. As a school, we understand and acknowledge that God has given the primary responsibility for learning to the family. Our purpose as a school is to support and honour this relationship.

Relationship between Parent and teacher

In order to support our families each teacher must have a relationship with parents. I am not suggesting that everyone is going to become best friends, but it is not enough for a teacher to simply develop assignments, assign homework and mark tests. Both parents and teachers bring important gifts and resources to the learning of each student; without a relationship these gifts and resources will be underutilized and learning will suffer.

Relationship between teacher and Child

Just because our teachers and students are often not in the same room does not preclude the need for a learning relationship to develop between them. If a teacher is going to effectively support a child's learning and development, he or she needs to know them – a student cannot simply be a faceless email address. Our teachers become involved in the learning process, they do not simply document it.

OUR APPROACH

An important unifying characteristic of our learning community is our shared relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We approach home learning from the fundamental understanding that God is at the centre of all we do.

Our approach is personal. At Open School, your student isn't one of many, but one of a kind. This begins by assessing each student's learning style and developing a personalized learning plan around it. Parents can be

assured that their child's learning plan meets all Ministry of Education requirements and is supported by a BC certified teacher. Children have an amazing capacity to learn. Discovering a child's specific learning style will ignite their imagination and engage them more fully in their learning experience.

Personalized Learning is a distinct educational approach that tailors learning according to the individual needs of each child. Personalized Learning may be applied in a variety of ways. Learning occurs all day, every day, and more often than not, away from a desk. Daily activities become a living curriculum with teachable moments happening all day long.

A Personalized approach to learning determines each student's strongest dispositions, talents and interests, and aids in the selection of curriculum and planning methods of instruction.

It empowers both parents and teachers to effectively guide each student's learning.

Once the Personalized Learning Plan has been developed it becomes the road map for the student's educational journey. The term road map is used to describe the PLP because there may be 'side trips' made or different routes taken than originally planned, but the destination remains the same.

Parents and teachers work closely to monitor, assess and adjust the PLP throughout the year to ensure learning is maximized.

Our teachers, parents and students communicate regularly to ensure everyone is on the same journey and that no one gets lost.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND SCHOOL

- Parents have the God-given responsibility for raising and educating their children.
- The Ministry of Education has given the Kelowna Christian Open School the responsibility of:
 - Developing (in conjunction with parents) an educational program that is supported and supervised by a British Columbia-certified teacher.
 - Meeting provincial standards as outlined in the *Independent School Act*.
 - Provide on-going regular assessments, report cards, provincial letter grades and a permanent student record, as would a student in a neighbourhood school.

The school and parents unite to ensure both of these responsibilities are fulfilled for the benefit of our students and to the glory of God.

Areas of partnership include (but are not limited to):

1. Praying for one another,
2. Developing a Personalized Learning Plan together that meets:
 - a. the learning style and needs of the student,
 - b. the family's desire for specific curricular resources and/or teaching methodologies,
 - c. Ministry of Education prescribed learning outcomes (PLOs) as they apply to each particular student (i.e. there is flexibility beyond simply meeting the PLOs for the students 'grade level')

3. Regular and on-going communication and 'idea-sharing' between parent(s) and teacher regarding student learning. This includes monthly learning portfolios and learning logs.
4. In-person visits between teacher and family, including time with parent(s) and student(s).

LEARNING PORTFOLIO

As our students learn their work is tracked in a portfolio. Although it is impossible to 'track' all student learning, the learning samples that are kept in the portfolio represent 'physical evidence' of *some* of the learning that has occurred during the month. Each month the Learning Portfolio is reviewed against the Personalized Learning Plan and teacher(s) and parent(s) make adjustments as necessary. On average between two and four learning samples per month per subject area are included in the Learning Portfolio.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

We are committed to meeting the learning needs of all students, including those with special learning needs. Our experienced Special Needs Coordinator works directly with each family to ensure all necessary resources, services and support are available to the family to meet the goals of the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY

We need each other. In a culture that incessantly marginalizes and isolates people, we purpose to bring families together into community. Curriculum and assessment tools are excellent, but in the *end*, learning *begins* with relationship. Whether you are a home learning veteran, or a first-timer, you will receive ongoing contact and encouragement throughout the year.

OUR LOGO



The book represents the Bible.

The window on the right-page of the Bible has two meanings:

- 1) It represents the fact that we see the world and all learning through the Word of God
- 2) The middle of the window is a cross which represents the singular importance of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for us.
- 3) The sky on the left side page of the Bible represents the fact that learning takes place 'outside' the traditional classroom and is linked to the whole world around us.

CONTACTING KELOWNA CHRISTIAN OPEN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Office hours: Monday – Friday 8:30 to 3:30
Office Phone – 1-877-778-5267 or (250) 862-5750 Fax: (250) 861-4844
Office Location – 2870 Benvoulin Road

School Location – 3070 Benvoulin Road
School Phone – (Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:30 – 2:30) – 250 448-4319

Please send all mail to: 2870 Benvoulin Road Kelowna, BC V1W 2E3

Erin Hussey: *Principal/Chief Learning Catalyst*
Email: erin.hussey@kcopenschool.org
Cell phone: (250) 215-3091

Linda Montgomery: *Lead Teacher/Education Liaison*
Email: linda.montgomery@kcopenschool.org

Brenda Nettleton: *Administrative Support*
Email: brenda.nettleton@kcopenschool.org

Deborah Reinitz: *Special Education Co-ordinator*
Email: Deborah.reinitz@kcopenschool.org

Courtney Jones-Taylor: *Curriculum Consultant/Contact Parent*
Email: courtney.jones-taylor@kcopenschool.org

Sherri-Ann Rast: *Contact Parent/Local Field Trip Co-ordinator*
Email: sherri-ann.rast@kcopenschool.org

Sarah Madden: *Librarian*
Email: sarah.madden@kcopenschool.org

Michelle Seaboyer: *School Liaison/Communications*
Email: michelle.seaboyer@kcopenschool.org