



# Handbook

## 2024 - 2025

Children with disabilities, inspired to learn, grow and build on their potential.

**KidsAbility School – WATERLOO**

500 Hallmark Drive  
Waterloo, ON N2K 3P5  
**Phone: 519-886-1960**

**KidsAbility School - CAMBRIDGE**

887 Langs Drive  
Cambridge, ON N3H 5K4  
**Phone: 519-886-1960**

**ATTENDANCE LINE:**

Please call **519-886-1960**

**Each day** that your child is absent  
from KidsAbility School.





## **Welcome to KidsAbility School Authority**

KidsAbility School is one of six Section 68 public school authorities funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education and operating within a children's treatment centre.

KidsAbility School Authority Trustees govern the operations and policies of the school.

The one-year program focuses on early identification, early intervention and transition into community schools.

Therapy services from KidsAbility Centre are provided to support your child's success in the classroom.

Therapy in the classroom may involve: consulting with the education staff, trialing equipment, teaching new skills, reinforcing skills, or directing social communication in the classroom setting with peers.

### **KidsAbility School**

#### **KidsAbility School Provides:**

Education for children with communication, physical and developmental challenges.

Early identification of the child's strengths and special needs.

Early intervention to develop strategies that address the child's individual needs .

Accommodations/modifications to the Year One Kindergarten program for each child, based on the students' Individual Education Plan and the Kindergarten program document.

Support to the family in preparing for community school entry.

Communication with local school boards when transitioning students to the community school.

KidsAbility School supports students attending their community school in addition to KidsAbility School. We will work with families to determine when this best meets the needs of our students and families.



## **IMPORTANT DATES AT KIDSABILITY SCHOOL 2024 - 2025**

### **ENTRY MEETINGS**

Wednesday, September 4 to Friday, September 6, 2024

First day of school for all students, Monday, September 9, 2024

### **PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY DAYS**

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

Friday, October 11, 2024

Friday, November 1, 2024

Friday, January 17, 2025

Friday, March 31, 2025

Friday, May 30, 2025

Friday, June 27, 2025

### **HOLIDAYS**

Monday, September 2, 2024

Monday, October 14, 2024

Monday, December 23, 2024 to Friday, January 3, 2025

Monday, February 17, 2025

Monday, March 10, 2025 to Friday, March 14, 2025

Friday, April 18, 2025

Monday, April 21, 2025

Monday, May 19, 2025

Labour Day

Thanksgiving Day

Winter Break

Family Day

March Break

Good Friday

Easter Monday

Victoria Day

### **LAST DAY OF SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS**

Thursday, June 26, 2025

## School Year 2024-2025 for New Students

April	Registration at KidsAbility School for students offered placement.
May	Orientation for parents/guardians. Entry meetings held in September will be confirmed by teachers. Waterloo Region District School Board/Waterloo Catholic District School Board (WRDSB/ WCDSB) are notified of students accepting placement at KidsAbility School.
September	Entry meetings with child, parents/guardians, teacher and educational assistants.
October	Individual Education Plan (IEP) sent home. IEP Conference invitations sent to community schools.
November	IEP conference and Initial Communication of Learning Reports (parents/guardians, KidsAbility teachers and community school staff).
February	2nd term Communication of Learning sent home. Registration at community school for September for those students not yet attending. Term 2 IEP sent home.
April/May	Transition meeting with community school.
June	Final Communication of Learning.

## **Did you Move?**

Please call the KidsAbility School Office at 519-886-1960 to update your address, phone number, email or emergency contact information if/as it changes.

## **School Entry Doors**

Entry through the exterior school doors is restricted during school hours. When picking up your child, please buzz the school office at the outside school entrance doors.

## **Pick-up/Drop-off of Students**

Parents/guardians who drop off/pick-up their child at school may park in the family parking spots at the side of the building.

Children may not be picked up at school by any person other than the legal parent/guardian of the student without verbal or written consent. Anyone picking up a child from school must go to the school office to sign the child out. Photo identification is required.

## **Safe Arrival Program**

It is the policy of KidsAbility School Authority to promote and support the safe arrival of students to and from school.

Implementation of the school's Safe Arrival Policy is the joint responsibility of families and school staff.

**Caregivers are responsible for communicating pupil absences and providing the school with current emergency contact information and telephone numbers. Please contact the School Office 519-886-1960 EACH DAY that your child is going to be absent from school.**

The school is responsible for follow-up with the parent/guardian for a child's unexplained failure to arrive at school, or to make arrangements for the safe return of a child home when early dismissal is required.

## Transportation

- The transportation company, Voyago Transportation Services, arranges transportation for each child to and from school. A transportation form is completed at registration.
- In August, Voyago will send an information package indicating drop off, pick up times and locations.
  1. Drop Off and Pick Up times and locations.
  2. Release Form: Parents/guardians must identify to the school the names of individuals designated to take children off the bus.
  3. A direct contact phone line for any transportation questions/concerns.
- It is the parent/guardian responsibility to assist the child on and off the bus/van and ensure that he/she is buckled in.
- Parent/guardians or their designate are required to meet their children when students return home from school.

**If no parent or designate is present to receive the student, the bus driver will contact Transportation Dispatch who then will call the emergency number provided by the parent/guardian.**

### **\*\*PLEASE DO NOT CALL VOYAGO DIRECTLY WITH ANY CHANGES\*\***

**All changes must first go through the  
KidsAbility School office, Joanne Cotter at 519-886-1960**

**This is a 24-Hour line.**

**The school will relay all changes to Voyago.**

**\*\*Please note: there must be at least 5 working days notice for any transportation changes to be arranged. Transportation cannot be changed to accommodate a one-day change i.e. change of sitter or day-care closures.**

- If the Bus is very late and you want to know when to expect the bus, please call the designated transportation line at 226-270-4519 ext #3.
- If your child will be absent, please call the KidsAbility School Office directly at 519-886-1960. The **Bus Driver will not** relay the information to the office.
- If you know your child will be away for more than 3 days, please call the KidsAbility School Office at 519-886-1960 with as much notice as possible with the stop and restart dates. Message line is open 24 hours a day.
- If permanent changes to bussing are required, please call the KidsAbility School Office at 519-886-1960. We will relay the information to Voyago. Please have the following information ready when making your call:
  - New Address
  - Date the change is being requested for
  - Contact name and phone number



## **Transporting Children in Wheelchairs**

Parents/guardians, KidsAbility Centre and School staff, and Bus Transportation staff work together to ensure a safe and comfortable bus ride for children who must be transported in wheelchairs to KidsAbility School. The roles and responsibilities of parents/guardians and staff are outlined below.

### **Parents/guardians:**

- Maintenance of the wheelchair and seating device.
- Proper fastening of the child in the seating device and the wheelchair before loading the child onto the bus at the pick-up location.
- Reporting any concerns about how the child is sitting in his/her wheelchair to their child's occupational therapist.
- Informing the bus driver of any changes in the seating and mobility equipment (e.g., trial of a new seating and mobility system).
- Use of prescribed wheelchair headrest.

### **Primary Occupational Therapist:**

- Following up on any concerns regarding the way the child is positioned, fitting or sitting in the seating and mobility device.
- Referral to seating clinic if unable to resolve the seating and mobility issue.
- Follow-up with parents/guardians and school staff following the dispensing or modification of a seating and mobility system.

### **Seating & Mobility Occupational Therapist:**

- Addressing the identified concerns of the child's seating, positioning and mobility with the primary occupational therapist and family.
- Assessing and prescribing seating and mobility devices in partnership with the parents/guardians and primary occupational therapist.

### **KidsAbility School Staff:**

- Informing Voyago of the physical and/or medical needs of the child based on the information communicated to the school by the parent(s).
- Proper fastening of child in wheelchair before loading the child onto the bus at school.

### **Transportation Staff:**

- Securing the wheelchair in the bus using the Q-strait system.
- Making the final decision as to whether the child can be safely transported on the bus.
- Informing the Bus Driver of the physical and/or medical needs of the child based on the information communicated to the school by the parent(s).

## Inclement Weather & School Closures

When school buses are cancelled for Waterloo Region School Boards due to poor weather, KidsAbility School buses are cancelled, and KidsAbility School is **closed**.

The message will be broadcast on

- local radio stations
- the school office message phone line, 519-886-1960
- transportation website: [www.stswr.ca](http://www.stswr.ca)

There are occasions when weather conditions deteriorate throughout the day. A decision will be made by the Principal in conjunction with the bus company to cancel the routes in the outlying areas. Parents/guardians will be contacted directly by school staff if afternoon routes are cancelled.

**The subscription service allows users to receive Bus delays and cancellations to their email address.**

**Sign up for the subscription service using this link**

<https://www.stswr.ca/parents/subscription-service-instructions/>

or follow the instructions below.

### Set up an account:

1. Go to the site [here](#) and click Create Account at the bottom. You will require an email to perform this task.
2. Choose the *Subscribe* button
  1. The system will send you an email (entitled: *Email Subscription: Action Required* sent from: *geoquery\_feedback@stswr.ca*)
  2. Choose the *Confirm* link in the email
  3. Enter your preferred password twice on the page that opens

### Subscribe to Route Delays & Cancellations:

1. If you aren't logged in, login at <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx>, using your email address and chosen password
2. Under *My Subscriptions > Route Delays & Cancellations*, find the Route for your child(ren) and be sure to select both the AM and PM runs for each student (e.g., Route K9L Find -> Add Run 001(your school)). Please note the AM and PM runs your child(ren) take may be on separate Routes.
3. Choose the checkbox under *Add* for each route, and then *Subscribe*

## **Subscribe to School Closures:**

1. If you aren't logged in, login at <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx>, using your email address and chosen password
2. Under *My Subscriptions > School Closures*, select your child(ren)'s school(s) and *Subscribe* (KidsAbility School Code - KAB)

## **Subscribe to General Notices:**

1. If you aren't logged in, login at <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx>, using your email address and chosen password
2. Under *My Subscriptions > General Notices*, choose *Enabled*

## **Ensure Subscription Status is Enabled:**

1. If you aren't logged in, login at <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx>, using your email address and chosen password
2. Under *My Information > Status*, ensure *Enabled* is checked. If it isn't, check it.

## **Subscribe to SMS Text Messages:**

1. Click on 'My Information' in the menu bar to the left of the screen and select 'SMS'
2. Check off the box to receive SMS notifications and enter the phone numbers that you would like to receive SMS notifications.
3. Once you have entered your phone numbers, hit 'Save'. You can enter as many as 5 numbers for one account.

## **Changing Your Information:**

1. If you aren't logged in, login at <https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx>, using your email address and chosen password
2. Change any information (email, password, language preference) in the *My Information* tab.

## **Forgot Your Password?**

To retrieve a lost password, enter your email at

<https://bpweb.stswr.ca/Subscriptions/Login.aspx?Subscribe=1> and an email will be sent to you.

**For further assistance in set up to receive delays if you are experiencing problems please contact us at (519) 744-7575 X221**

**For updates on delays please contact Voyago at 226-270-4519 ext. #3**

## **Illness**

Children with flu symptoms including fever, cough, diarrhea and vomiting should remain at home. Symptoms should be improving for at least 24 hours, 48 hours if gastro-intestinal, before returning to school.

Children should not attend school with any conditions which may be contagious.

If your child is ill when he/she arrives at school or becomes ill at school, you will be contacted and asked to pick up your child. Please ensure that your emergency contact information is up to date.

## **Medication**

The KidsAbility School Authority approved prescription medication form (7001-A) must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian requesting the school administer the medication as outlined on the form specifying the following:

- Diagnosis for the medication,
- Medication(s) prescribed,
- Dosage,
- Time of administration,
- Possible side effects.

The medication must be in a pharmacist's container and clearly labeled with:

- Name of student,
- Name of drug,
- Administration instructions,
- Storage and safekeeping requirements.

A safe storage area is provided for medication in a locked box in the office, or a locked cupboard in the classroom. Medication requiring refrigeration is stored in the classroom refrigerator in a secure container.

## **Plans of Care**

Please ensure the school office is aware of any medical conditions (e.g., anaphylaxis, asthma, seizure disorder, diabetes, etc.) your child may have. The Critical Medical Alert form will need to be completed so specific Plans of Care can be documented.

## **Communication with Parents/Guardians/Teacher**

The school uses a variety of ways to communicate with families:

- communication books
- telephone communication
- conferences with the parents/guardians and the school team
- technology with classroom platform

## **Special Education Liaison Teacher**

Students who attend KidsAbility School will receive special education liaison services during their transition to community schools. If you have any questions related to your child's attendance at their community school, please call Virginia Andersen at 519-886-8886 x 1327 [vandersen@kidsability.ca](mailto:vandersen@kidsability.ca).

## **Off-Site Programs**

Off-campus trips may be part of the school program. Off-site programs may include visits to the pumpkin patch, tree farm, fire station, and other locations within the Waterloo Region. Children ride the bus for off-campus activities as an extension of the school program. Parents/guardians will receive details about each trip.

From time to time throughout the school year as part of our educational program, our classes go on a nature walk on the path behind the KidsAbility Center. The path does not go near any roads. The walks are typically 20 – 30 minutes long and the education staff accompany the children at all times.

## **Allergies**

- **Peanuts and Nuts**

The School and Centre strive to be nut-free as a precaution to students and clients who may have adverse, allergic or anaphylactic reactions to peanuts and/or nuts. Snacks and lunches sent to school must be free of peanuts, peanut butter, nuts, nut products and foods containing peanut oil.

- **Latex**

The School and Centre strive to be latex-free. Latex balloons are not used in the School or Centre.

- **Scents**

Visitors to the school are asked to avoid the use of scented products when entering the school.

## **Parent Engagement**

Parent Engagement Team meets to share information and discuss programs in the school. Membership is open to parents/guardians with children who currently attend KidsAbility School. Other members include the Principal, school staff and community.

If you are interested in becoming a member of this group, please contact the Principal.

## **Fire Drills**

In partnership with KidsAbility Centre for Child Development, fire drills are scheduled throughout the school year to ensure that staff and students are prepared to evacuate the building in the event of an emergency.

## **Photographs**

Photographs of KidsAbility School students are often displayed inside KidsAbility Centre and used in displays in the community, or on the KidsAbility website as a way of communicating the work of the School and Centre. Class pictures are also taken and shared with staff and other families of children attending the school. When registering your child for school, you will be asked to give consent for the sharing of these photographs.

## **Website**

Parents/guardians are invited to visit the KidsAbility website for information about KidsAbility School, KidsAbility Centre for Child Development, and the KidsAbility Foundation. [www.kidsability.ca](http://www.kidsability.ca)

## **Caregiver Code of Conduct**

A School should be a place that promotes responsibility, respect, civility, and academic excellence in a safe learning and teaching environment. A positive school climate exists when all members of the school community feel safe, included, and accepted, and actively promote positive behaviors and interactions.

Parents and guardians have an important role in the education of their children and can help school staff in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment for all students.

Parents and guardians play this important role when they:

- are engaged in their child's schoolwork and progress
- communicate regularly with the school
- make sure their child is properly dressed and prepared for school
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time
- inform the school promptly about their child's absence or late arrival
- become familiar with the provincial code of conduct, the board's code of conduct and school rules
- encourage and help their child follow the rules of behavior
- help school staff deal with disciplinary issues involving their child

## **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION RESOURCES AND SERVICE ONTARIO PUBLICATIONS**

The Ontario Ministry of Education has resource guides and policy documents available on its website. Parents can download resources about special education, the Early Years Program, and other topics related to their children's education.

As caregivers, you are encouraged to explore as needed:

dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/parents  
[www.Ontario.ca/educationguide](http://www.Ontario.ca/educationguide)