

Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre –
Parent Handbook

Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre

Welcome to Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre. Your family is in for a great experience and we thank you for letting us be a part of your child's early years! At the Mulberry Bush, we believe that each child grows and excels best in a play-based environment where your child is encouraged to explore their surroundings freely. Our program supports each child with their individual development. Over the years, research has shown that the early years are the most important stages of development for a child. At the Mulberry Bush, we strive to make your child's learning a positive and loving one. With every child having their own interest and stages of development, our educators create an atmosphere that enhances each and every child's learning, through free play, engagement, exploration, play provocations, and supportive caring guidance.

Our mission at Mulberry Bush is to provide the utmost care for your child. We provide an inclusive, safe and comfortable home-like environment. Our educators believe that children are competent, capable, curious and rich in potential. We believe that your child's health, safety, nutrition and well-being is the most important and therefore it is our priority to provide the best care for each child and their individual needs. Our educators observe, engage, encourage and document your child daily. We work together with all families so that your child's experience at the Mulberry Bush is the best it can be. We accomplish this by having open communication with families through daily conversations and documentations. We truly believe that this is the key to success!

The next few pages will explain any significant information pertaining to the policies of the centre. Please feel free to ask any and all questions you may have regarding these policies or any other matters you wish to discuss.

Again, on behalf of all of the educators and myself, we welcome you to Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre. May your time with us be a positive experience for both you and your child!

Sincerely,

Stacey Aucoin, R.E.C.E

PROGRAM STATEMENT

Here at the Mulberry Bush in order to ensure that we provide high quality experiences for families and children, our programming and pedagogy is guided by the following documents –

- How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years
- Early Learning for Every Child Today
- Ontario Early Years Framework
- Think Feel Act: Lessons from Research About Young Children

We believe that every child:

- Needs to feel a sense of belonging, feel connected to others and feel that they are able to contribute to their world
- Needs to develop a strong sense of self, health and well-being
- Is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with their body, mind and senses
- Is a capable communicator who can express themselves in many different ways

At the Mulberry Bush, we provide a child-led, play-based learning environment that encourages children to explore and interact in their environments freely. We do this by giving children the freedom to pursue their personal interests through their chosen materials and activities. When children are given the ability to make their own choices they are more engaged in the activity, they are eager to explore their environment, they ask more questions, they solve problems, and they interact more with their peers, program staff, volunteers, and students.

We view children as competent, capable of complex thinking, and rich in potential. By observing the children's daily interactions and language, we learn about their interests, experiences, as well as their needs. We believe that each child deserves the proper encouragement and space to try new things, explore their new ideas and develop in their own unique way.

At the Mulberry Bush we provide an environment that fosters curiosity and allows children to explore freely. By recognizing and acting upon teachable moments, our staff engage children in activities that are meaningful and relevant to their own environment.

We believe that developing the ability to self-regulate is an essential part of a child's healthy development. Understanding and helping children to develop self-regulation skills, is a key component of the Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre. Our staff know that self-regulation develops over time with maturity, experience and with proper nurturing adult support and therefore we work continuously with our children to help them gain these skills and be able to use them as they grow.

One of our core values at Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre is to foster the relationships among children, families, staff and our community partners. We accomplish this by developing a collaborative and co-operative relationships among all of our partners. The Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre is committed to working collaboratively with all of our community partners; such as All Kids Belong, Tyke Talk and Thames Valley Children's Centre. With our community partners, we work on the mutual goal of providing the best possible child care service to all families.

We value positive and responsive relationships with families. By engaging families in a meaningful way, this partnership ensures that we are able to focus on their child's social, emotional, physical, creative and cognitive development in a holistic way.

Our educators participate in professional learning opportunities throughout the year. Our educators are warm, caring, qualified professionals who are carefully chosen through a selection process designed to determine their ability to meet the needs of children. Individually, and within learning communities, educators review, discuss, share and reflect on topics that are relevant to providing quality care for children and effective support for families.

PROGRAM GOALS AND APPROACHES

The Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre is consistent with the Minister of Education's policy statement on programming and policy (0.Reg. 137/15), aligns with our policies and procedures, and is used to guide our work with children and families.

Children have a strong sense of self, health and well-being. While at the Mulberry Bush, children are provided healthy snacks/meals daily. At our centre, food is never used as a reward or punishment. We allow and encourage children to follow cues in regard to their own hunger or fullness.

At the Mulberry Bush, we view children as competent, capable of complex thinking and rich in potential. Children are encouraged to feel powerful, independent, important and competent. They are provided with open-ended materials and sensory experiences that offer opportunities for exploration and discoveries. As competent individuals, children are active participants in resolving conflicts. At the Mulberry Bush, we continue to encourage the children to come up with their own ideas that help problem-solve their own solutions to conflicts or obstacles that might arise.

Both our outdoor and indoor environments allow for transitions, flexibility for rest periods, and periods of uninterrupted play where safe risk measures are practiced. Our program gives children the opportunities for engagement in activities of their choosing.

While at the Mulberry Bush, children actively participate in positive experiences that are based on their current interests. Children are encouraged to interact and explore their environment

freely while our educators observe and document their play. Our programs focus on an active play-based learning environment as this is the best way that children naturally learn. Play is a child's natural response to the environment they see around them. When children are manipulating objects, act out roles, or experiment with different materials, they are engaged in learning through play. Play allows them to actively construct, challenge, and expand their own understandings of things through making connections to prior experiences, thereby opening the door to new learning. Intentional play-based learning enables children to investigate, ask questions, solve problems, and engage in critical thinking. Play is responsive to each child's unique learning style and capitalizes on his or her innate curiosity and creativity.

Our educators recognize and act upon teachable moments. They engage and encourage the children in helping to plan activities so that they are more invested and eager to participate. Our educators provide open-ended activities and materials so that the children are able to be as creative as possible. We encourage children to manipulate and investigate all materials in their classroom.

At the Mulberry Bush, we believe in open communication with our families. We know that families are the experts when it comes to their children and their needs, and therefore sharing all knowledge is integral to the success of your child. Our families are valued through positive and responsive relationships and are welcomed into the program. We invite our families to participate in the planning and sharing of ideas.

Our centre aims to ensure that families have access to available, affordable, safe, reliable, high quality licensed child care for their children, which ensures parents peace of mind while their children are in the centre. Respect, care, empathy, trust and integrity are the core values in all our interactions with the children in our care as well as their families.

We believe that all children are valued and should be given the opportunity to participate with their peers, in activities that promote their emotional, physical, social and intellectual growth and development.

Our educators are warm, caring, qualified professionals. They have been carefully chosen through a selection process designed to determine their ability to meet the needs of children. Our educators participate in regularly scheduled professional learning opportunities throughout the year. Individually or within specific learning communities, educators review, discuss, share and reflect on topics that are relevant to providing quality care for children and effective support for families.

INCLUSION

The Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre is committed to providing a high quality and inclusive program that respond to individual abilities and the needs of every child. We know that children need to feel valued and feel that they belong. We provide a caring, safe environment where all children are valued and are given the opportunity to participate with their peers. They are encouraged to participate in activities that help promote their emotional, physical, social and intellectual growth and development. We help each child build a sense of belonging and self-worth through respectful and supportive relationships among staff, children, their families and the community.

Our staff collaborate with parents and special needs resource agencies, such as Thames Valley Children's Centre, Tyke Talk and All Kids Belong, to meet the individual needs of children and their families. By working with parents and resource agencies, we ensure that strategies are implemented that support each child's unique needs.

APPROACHES FOR GUIDING CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

Our goal is for the children and staff to have a safe and enjoyable time while at the Mulberry Bush. We establish reasonable limits for behaviour which are consistently monitored by all staff. These limits are appropriate to the developmental level of the child and consider the health, safety, and the rights of all individuals. We believe in a positive approach to guide the children with each situation. Our methods include: redirection, modeling, providing choices, recognizing appropriate behavior and involving children in conflict resolutions.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

At the Mulberry Bush we welcome parents' involvement in all aspects of our program. Daily communication with the program staff is a valuable method of contributing to your child's care. Family nights and special events are held during day care hours. Parents are welcome and encouraged to join in the special festivities.

ADDRESSING MATTERS OF CONCERN

Here at the Mulberry Bush, we work in partnership with our parents and community partners to help meet the individual needs of each child and their families.

We believe that open communication with parents is essential to a quality child care experience. Daily communication is a big aspect of our program. We accomplish this by either face to face communication or through the *HiMama* application. With our daily communication, we work with you and ask for your feedback to ensure your child has a positive experience while in our care. Any and all issues or concerns are taken seriously, and every effort will be made to address and resolve the issues and concerns as quickly as possible.

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of the children, their parents, and our staff. The only exception to this is when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (ie: CAS, Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators).

At the Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre, we strive to meet the needs of all children and families enrolled in our child care programs. However, in certain situations it may become necessary for a discussion regarding alternate child care options. These decisions are not taken lightly and we try and make every reasonable effort to meet each child's needs so that they can participate in a meaningful, purposeful and successful manner in the program.

Depending upon the nature of your concern, please see the steps below taken directly from our Parent Issues and Concerns Policy:

Mulberry Bush Parent Issue and Concerns Policy

General

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by the Director, and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within 3 business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

Confidentiality

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

Conduct

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the Child and Family Services Act.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidd/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

Procedures

Nature of Issue or Concern	Steps for Parent and/or Guardian to Report Issue/Concern:	Steps for Staff and/or Licensee in responding to issue/concern:
<p>Program Room-Related</p> <p><i>E.g: schedule, sleep arrangements, toilet training, indoor/outdoor program activities, feeding arrangements, etc.</i></p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the classroom staff directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Address the issue/concern at the time it is raised <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arrange for a meeting with the parent/guardian within 3 business days. <p>Document the issues/concerns in detail. Documentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the date and time the issue/concern was received;
<p>General, Centre- or Operations-Related</p> <p><i>E.g: child care fees, hours of operation, staffing, waiting lists, menus, etc.</i></p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the name of the person who received the issue/concern; - the name of the person reporting the issue/concern; - the details of the issue/concern; and - any steps taken to resolve the issue/concern and/or information given to the parent/guardian regarding next steps or referral.
<p>Staff-, Duty parent-, Supervisor-, and/or Licensee-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the individual directly <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor or licensee. <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of staff, duty parents, etc. that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide contact information for the appropriate person if the person being notified is unable to address the matter.</p> <p>Ensure the investigation of the issue/concern is initiated by the appropriate party within 3 business days or as soon as reasonably possible thereafter. Document reasons for delays in writing.</p> <p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>
<p>Student- / Volunteer-Related</p>	<p>Raise the issue or concern to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the staff responsible for supervising the volunteer or student <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the supervisor and/or licensee. <p>-</p> <p>All issues or concerns about the conduct of students and/or volunteers that puts a child's health, safety and well-being at risk should be reported to the supervisor as soon as parents/guardians become aware of the situation.</p>	<p>Provide a resolution or outcome to the parent(s)/guardian(s) who raised the issue/concern.</p>

Escalation of Issues or Concerns: *Where parents/guardians are not satisfied with the response or outcome of an issue or concern, they may escalate the issue or concern verbally or in writing to the Director.*

Issues/concerns related to compliance with requirements set out in the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 and Ontario Regulation 137/15 should be reported to the Ministry of Education's Child Care Quality Assurance and Licensing Branch.

Issues/concerns may also be reported to other relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. local public health department, police department, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Labour, fire department, College of Early Childhood Educators, Ontario College of Teachers, College of Social Workers etc.) where appropriate.

Contacts:

Director – Stacey Aucoin, RECE, 519-473-4798

Ministry of Education, Licensed Child Care Help Desk: 1-877-510-5333 or childcare_ontario@ontario.ca

College of ECE 1-416-961-8558 or toll free 1-888-961-8558

Children's Aid Society (CAS) 519-455-9000 or after hours 519-858-5998

London Police Department 519-661-5670

Should parents express an issue or concern directly with a staff member, the staff member will:

- Be attentive and listen carefully – show interest that you want to understand the issue/concern.
- Gather all information in order to identify and solve the problem together.
- If necessary, plan a mutually agreeable time to meet with parents when children are not present
- Contact their Director for support if a resolution cannot be found.
- Document the situation. This will include the issue/concern and the steps taken to resolve it.

DUTY TO REPORT

The duty to report is an ongoing obligation. If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, by law, a report must be made to the Children's Aid Society. The duty to report overrides the provision of any other provincial statute.

PROGRAMS

An Infant program is offered for children ranging in age from 3–18 months. The individual needs of each child are met promptly and sensitively, through an abundance of cuddles and stimulating learning experiences. Secure emotional attachments and strong, nurturing relationships are developed between children and program staff.

Our Toddler program offers care for children ranging in age from 18 months to 2 1/2 years. The individual needs of each child are met through the development of strong, nurturing relationships. As well as being exposed to many exciting activities daily, the children learn self-help skills such as dressing, eating and toileting.

Our Preschool program offers care for children ranging in age from 2 1/2 - 5 years. In our children's centres, we embrace the emergent curriculum approach to early childhood education. This is a child-led, adult-guided approach to learning. Within a warm, nurturing environment, children participate in positive experiences which are based on their current interest and real-life experiences. Our programs are flexible and creative and provide children opportunities for decision making and growth towards independence and responsibility.

Our home-like environments accommodate each child's needs by providing a variety of stimulating and rich learning centres. These include; writing, sensory play, dramatic play, reading, blocks, and woodworking. We ensure that ample time is provided in the learning centres so that children have enough time to develop their ideas and work on their skills.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

At the Mulberry Bush, nutritious lunches and snacks are prepared daily from scratch in house. By following Canada's Food Guide, a 6-week rotational menu was planned and posted for you to reference. At the centre we have a strict rule that no outside food may be brought in due to other's who are enrolled in the program that may have life-threatening food allergies. Under special circumstances (birthdays, social events), the Director may make acceptations to this rule. Please contact the Director directly prior to the event, if you wish to bring anything into the centre.

In partnership with parents and in collaboration with community partners, every effort will be made to accommodate your child's food allergies and/or dietary restrictions. All possible

strategies to reduce the risk of exposure to allergens is practiced, however, it is not possible to reduce the risk to zero.

HEALTH AND ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

All prescription medication must be in the original container with a prescription label that is clearly marked with your child's name, date, name of medication, and the instructions for storage and administration. Our staff can only administer medication according to the instructions on the prescription label. A medication form will also need to be filled out in full and signed by the parent, or guardian, prior to any staff administering the prescribed medicine.

For children who have an anaphylactic allergy, severe asthma, diabetes or seizures, an Individual Service Plan will be established between the parent and the Director and reviewed with program staff.

All ongoing medication information and action plans must be reviewed, signed and dated by the parent annually, or if changes are made, to ensure the information is accurate and up to date. We may ask you to follow specific guidelines to ensure the safety of all children in our care.

ILLNESS OF A CHILD

The Child Care and Early Years Act stipulates that:

- Before enrollment, each child must be immunized according to the local medical officer of health.
- When a child is ill, the parent/guardian must be contacted immediately and is required to pick up their child from the program to protect the interest of the sick child and to prevent further infection.

The Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre follows the guidelines as set out by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. If your child becomes ill during the program, and is unable to actively participate in program activities, you will be contacted immediately and will need to come and pick up your child. Care will be provided until your child can be taken home. If we are unable to contact you, the emergency contacts from your child's registration form will be contacted and requested to come and pick your child up from the centre.

OUTDOOR LEARNING

Outdoor play is very important to children and their development. At the Mulberry Bush we know that outdoor play enhances physical health, increases focus, intellectual development and emotional well-being. An outdoor learning environment provides opportunities for children to be creative, curious and gives them a different and meaningful learning environment.

At the Mulberry Bush our daily program allows children the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities for a minimum of 2 hours per day. To help your child enjoy their outdoor experience, we ask that you provide appropriate clothing each day for the all seasons and weather (ie: rain boots, raincoats and splash pants for wet days: snow pants, boots, hats, extra mittens, etc.).

We also ask that an extra set of clothing is kept on site for your child so that they have the freedom to explore and create while eliminating the stress of getting dirty or wet. All outdoor and indoor clothing items must be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name. Every effort will be made to locate misplaced or missing items; however, we are not responsible for lost items.

During summer months, children must come prepared and ready to wear a hat, preferably with a wide brim or neck flap to protect their ears and neck. To reduce the risk of injury as children participate in outdoor activities, children must wear secure footwear such as running shoes or sandals with a full ankle strap and rubber grip bottoms. Flipflops are not acceptable foot wear.

We also request that a bottle of sunscreen is provided to the program to help ensure that your child is protected from the sun. Due to allergies and skin sensitivities, the sunscreen must be in the original container, clearly labelled with your child's first and last name on it. We recommend using a sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher. Please ensure your sunscreen does not contain any nut ingredients. As there is a waiting time for sunscreen to become affective, we require you apply sunscreen on your child prior to them coming to the centre.

EXCURSIONS

At the Mulberry Bush, excursions may be made throughout the year to special places of interest. A notice will be posted at the centre as well as through the Hi Mama app, in advance of the excursion, informing you of the destination, time and date. You must have a signed permission form, found in your initial enrollment package, that allows your child to participate. Failure to provide this signed form, could mean that your child will not have care for the day.

PERIODS OF REST

Periods of rest are essential for the well-being of all children at our centre. These rest times support each child's varied psychological and biological rhythms. We know that the need for sleep and/or rest time varies greatly among children. Preschool and toddler aged children may sleep for up to two hours daily. If children are unable to sleep after an hour of rest, they are able to get up from their cots to participate in quiet activities for the remainder of the rest period.

All infants under 12 months of age will be placed on their back for sleep. Any request to have your infant placed in a different position for sleep (ie: on their side or stomach) will require a written letter from your child's physician.

MONITORING COMPLIANCE AND CONTRAVENTIONS

On an ongoing basis, the Director visits each classroom to observe and document staff in order to make sure all program policies and procedures, Program Statement goals and approaches and Individual Support Plans are being implemented and followed.

PROHIBITED PRACTICES

Under No circumstances is the following permitted:

- Corporal punishment of a child.
- Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten a child or undermine his/her self- respect, dignity or self-worth.
- Deprivation of children of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding.
- Locking the exits of a child care program for the purpose of confining a child, or confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision
- Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will
- Physical restraint of a child

FIRE DRILLS

Fire drills are practiced once per month. These are recorded and signed by the Director and all staff that were in attendance. Posted in each classroom, is a detailed outline of the emergency procedures followed in case of evacuation of the centre, as well as the evacuation site.

SECURITY

In each classroom, security cameras are in place to monitor the doorways. Each camera is on a closed-circuit video feed which is automatically recorded, kept for a 12-hour period and then automatically deleted. No staff other than the Director has access to these recordings as they are password protected.

LICENSING

The Mulberry Bush is a licensed child care facility. This license is obtained through the Ministry of Education (MEDU) to operate our child care centre. The program is inspected and licensed annually, and a license is issued upon successful completion of the licensing procedure. More information about licensing is available on the Ministry website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/parents.

PROGRAM HOURS

Our child care centre operates every week day from 7:00 am – 6:00 pm. The program does not operate on statutory holidays - New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada Day, Civic Holiday, Labour Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Boxing Day.

Although we operate 7:00 am -6:00 pm daily, there are special circumstances where we may choose to close the centre early. In these cases, you will be given 2 weeks written notice prior to the day. When these days occur, please speak directly to the Director if this causes any concerns.

CENTRE CLOSING TIME

The Mulberry Bush's closing time has been established in consideration for the children and the length of their day, and to correspond with parent's needs. If an unexpected situation arises and you are unable to pick up your child by 6:00 pm, please arrange for another adult to do so. This person must be identified on your child's registration form.

SAFE ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURES

Safe arrival of children at our centre is ensured by requiring that you, or your designate, take your child directly to a staff member on duty each morning at drop off. You are required to initial and indicate the time of your arrival on the 'sign in' record as verification of your child's arrival. The duty of care is not transferred to our staff until your child is signed in.

Safe departure from our care is ensured by requiring that you, or your designate who is picking up your child, initial and indicate the time that they are leaving our care.

No child will be released to someone who is not listed on their contact form in their enrollment package. However, we understand that emergency situations do arise. In those cases, written notice via email is required if someone other than the registered parent/guardian or those who are identified on the registration form is to sign out a child. All persons picking up your child, other than the parent/guardian, will be required to show picture ID. Anyone under the age of 16 years will not be permitted to pick up your child.

LATE ARRIVALS OR ABSENCES

When your child is going to be arriving late, after 9:30am, or will be absent for the day, it is the parent's responsibility to call the centre and let the Director know. Failure to do so, could mean that your child does not have care for the day as we are a ratio-based organization and staff could be sent home if we do not have the need for them. This decision is made at 9:30am.

CHANGES IN REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Any changes in your child's initial registration information must be relayed to the Director immediately. In the event of an emergency, your child's safety could depend on the accuracy of this information (ie: address, phone number, work information, emergency contacts). With any changes to this information that occur, you will be requested to sign and date the updated registration form as verification of accuracy. ** This includes ALL update to date immunizations. **

TRANSITIONS

At the Mulberry Bush, transitions from one age group to another will depend upon availability of space, as well as the age and/or developmental level of the individual child. These decisions are made by the Director.

Prior to any permanent movement of your child, the Director will contact the parents to let them know of their child's upcoming transition. At that time, any concerns or accommodations can be discussed. The Director will let the parents know of any further information that you or your child will need to be comfortable with their transition.

CENTRE CLOSURES

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the Mulberry Bush may have to be closed for the day. These reasons may include the London Transit being shut down due to severe inclement weather conditions, the centre has had a power failure, or is without water. If during the program hours the centre is not able to operate due to power failure or similar circumstances, you will be contacted immediately.

VACATION TIME

If your child is enrolled at the Mulberry Bush for a consecutive period of 12 months, you will be entitled to take two weeks' vacation with a required 50% payment. The 50% payment will be applied when taken in weekly blocks. It is your responsibility to notify the director when you want this applied to your payment. Please note that unused time may not be carried over to the next calendar year.

CHILD CARE STAFF

Our staff at the Mulberry Bush are warm and caring qualified professionals, carefully chosen through a selection process designed to determine their ability to meet the needs of young children. Our program staff have their Early Childhood Education Diploma and are a member in good standing with the College of ECE. Each staff member is required to have a valid first aid certificate, infant/child CPR, an up-to-date immunization record and a Vulnerable Sector Check prior to employment.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to ongoing professional development at the Mulberry Bush. Our staff are supported in the implementation of our innovative approach to program planning, through imbedded professional learning and participation in ongoing professional development. Each staff member is required to complete 3 professional development sessions per year in order to

have the latest information and ideas that will benefit the care that they provide to your children.

STUDENTS

At certain times throughout the year, students may come to our centre to learn from our staff. All students are required to have a Vulnerable Sector Check and they must participate in a Policy and Procedure review. All students participating in a child care opportunity will be under direct supervision of our director and staff and will never be left alone with the children. All students will participate in tasks and responsibilities that are directly related to their school curriculum.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Our centre has a detailed emergency management policy that is followed in any circumstance that is deemed an emergency. An outline of the emergency procedures that are followed in the event of evacuation, as well as information regarding the evacuation site, are posted in each program room.

If an evacuation requires the program to move to the emergency evacuation off site location, parents/guardian's will be informed by telephone as soon as it is safe to do so.

If you have any further questions or concerns regarding our centres emergency management policy or procedures, please speak directly to the director.

SERIOUS OCCURRENCE NOTIFICATION

The safety and well-being of your children is our highest priority, however, in spite of all the best precautions, incidents can sometimes happen. A "Serious Occurrence Notification Form" will be posted in a visible area on site, for 10 days, when an incident occurs that is deemed a serious occurrence, as per the government's definition. A serious occurrence does not mean that the program is out of compliance with licensing requirements or that the children are at risk at the centre.

EMERGENCY EXPENSES

All emergency expenses, such as any expense incurred in handling an emergency illness of a child, will be the financial responsibility of the parents/guardians.

ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORTS

Parents will be informed of all accidents or incidences that occur regarding their child while at the centre. Parents will be informed of what occurred and asked to review and sign an "Accident Report" or "Incident report". A copy will also be emailed to you for your records. Please inform staff as soon as possible if medical treatment was sought after an injury in our program.

SMOKE-FREE ONTARIO ACT

The smoke-free act requires licensed programs to comply with this regulation; therefore, NO PERSON may smoke or hold lighted tobacco, smoke or hold lighted medical cannabis, smoke or hold a designed product or substance, or use an electronic cigarette, while on the Mulberry Bush property, whether or not children are present.

REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION PROCEDURE

We request that you visit and tour the centre prior to enrollment in order to meet with the Director, review your registration forms and observe the program. We suggest that your child accompany you to familiarize themselves with the staff, the other children and the surroundings. The full registration package must be completed prior to your child participating in the program.

PLEASE NOTE:

- All forms must be fully completed prior to your child's start date.
- Parent / Guardian #1 on the registration form is the designated parent/guardian who will receive all written correspondence.

- Upon request, the annual income tax receipt will be given out by the end of February. If a duplicate income tax receipt is requested beyond the past calendar year, there could be a wait time.
- Payment arrangements must accompany the registration package in order to process your child's enrollment (ie. Direct deposit form filled out correctly and in full)

DETERMINING OUR FEES

All fees are set at an amount that will cover the operating costs of the program. Each year, these fees are reviewed and may increase. All increases occur at the beginning of each calendar year.

PAYMENT METHODS

Payment for your child's enrollment is due in advance of care.

- A completed Pre-Authorized Debit (P.A.D.) form is required at the time of registration. Automatic withdrawals for your child's monthly child care fees will be processed the first business day of each month
- Fees will be paid by direct debit on the first day of every month. Accounts in arrears are unacceptable and may lead to termination of this contract, your child will not be permitted to attend child care until accounts are paid in full. Any NSF (non-sufficient funds) will result in an extra charge of \$30 per transaction. On the third NSF occurrence, the extra charge will increase to \$100.

Payment is required for all statutory holidays, as well as for all days your child is scheduled to be in care, regardless of illness or absence (please refer to the "Vacation" section for exceptions).

Services may be terminated if policies are not followed, fees are not paid, or if the program is unsuitable for your child.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM

We require that you notify the Director in writing, a month prior to withdrawing your child from the program. The \$500 initial deposit will be issued towards your last month's payment. In lieu of notice, you will forfeit this deposit.

A space cannot be guaranteed if you wish to temporarily withdraw your child. In the event of a temporary withdrawal, your child's name can be placed on the waiting list, but care is not a guarantee.

CHILD CARE FEE SUBSIDY

If you are receiving child care fee subsidy, assistance will continue based on approval from your subsidy provider (City of London). You must notify your subsidy provider:

- To arrange approval if your child will be absent five (5) or more consecutive days (ie: illness or vacation)
- To arrange approval for consistent absent days (ie: every Friday)
- To arrange approval for a change in your child's enrollment, transfer to another program or care provider
- When you withdraw your child from care
- If there are changes to your address, phone number or employment information

Note: If you do not receive prior approval for any of the above situations, subsidy will not pay for these absent days or changes, and therefore you will be responsible for paying all full fees to The Mulberry Bush Child Care Centre directly. Refer to the information sheet that you received from your subsidy provider for further details.

- **Sibling Requests**

With subsidy, siblings do not automatically receive the child care fee. You will need to contact your subsidy provider, who will confirm eligibility. It is then your responsibility to notify the Director about your subsidy eligibility.

ONE LIST

The Mulberry Bush supports the utilization of London's centralized on-list child care waitlist. To provide families with quick, easy access to the one-list waitlist, the Mulberry Bush provides a direct link on our website.

Once parents have completed the on-line waitlist, our Director is notified of the request by e-mail. The Director reviews the one-list waitlist regularly and as opportunities to fulfill new applicants needs become available, families are contacted in order of application submission date and the ability to meet requested child care needs. Parents are welcome to call if they have questions, or to enquire about their status on the waitlist. Confidentiality is maintained at all times.