

# WHDCS Parent/Guardian Handbook



# WHISPERING HILLS DAY CARE SOCIETY PARENT GUARDIAN HANDBOOK



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## Introduction

Welcome to Whispering Hills Day Care Society (WHDCS) we are non-profit charitable society, in the community of Athabasca, that has been providing childcare for over 35 years, growing with the community and expanding to meet the needs of families in our area.

## Document Purpose

This Parent/Guardian handbook is a summary of policies regarding the operations of our programs and is designed to help you understand our society and childcare programs. Additional information is available from the Program Directors. This document will be updated every three years from the date on the front of the manual or as identified by the Program Directors and Board of Directors. Unforeseen circumstances not covered under these policies shall be referred to the Board of Directors for clarification, decision or policy formulation.

## Philosophy

Whispering Hills Day Care Society's programming is founded on children experiencing and learning through play in a holistic, nature-based, and inclusive environment that fosters respect, individual responsibility, and relationship building. Our Educators have a great responsibility to provide a service that offers the most caring, nurturing, educational, and fun atmosphere possible while maintaining a safe, respectful, and supportive environment. This recognizes the connection of the child's physical, emotional, intellectual, creative, spiritual, and social growth, and the importance of the practice of relationships between the family, program(s), and community.

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We believe play is an important part in early childhood education and we strive to give the children a balance of opportunities to both direct his/her own activities and have an educated, experienced Educator engage them through experimenting, discovery, feeling, seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, and imagining. We believe positive guidance techniques, such as redirecting, problem solving and giving choices whenever possible, combined with a positive attitude and love are an important part in facilitating a child's character.

## **Vision**

To build a healthy future with capable community leaders and to stimulate the children with play and social interactions that contribute to their emotional, physical, social, and intellectual development. As well as encourage the creativity within each child. Our Educators accomplish this by maintaining a 50% teacher led and 50% child led program that considers the different development, multiculturalism, abilities, and needs of each child which enables us to encourage, enhance, guide, and address them positively and consistently.

## **Mission Statement**

It is the mission of Whispering Hills Daycare Society to deliver quality early learning and care to meet the developmental needs of each child that will provide them with experience for later learning and positive relationships.

## **Board of Directors**

The Whispering Hills Day Care Society (WHDCS) is a non-profit society administered by an elected volunteer Board of Directors consisting of parents/guardians, professionals, and interested members of the public. We recognize that without the generosity of these volunteers our society and programs would not exist. Members are elected once per year at our Annual General Meeting held in March, the commitment is 2 years, and meetings are typically held once per month. The by-laws of the society are available from our main office. If you are interested in becoming a board member, please inquire with our office.

## **The Role of the Board & The Program Directors**

WHDCS Board of Directors is a Policy Board which means they set policy and hire Program Directors to manage the activities. Thus, the program operations including the development and implementation of our curriculum, staffing, management of registrants, and any other activities related to the day-to-day operations of the program(s) are the responsibility of the Program Directors as the sole employees of the Board of Directors. They accomplish this with the assistance of qualified Early Childhood Educators, other paid staff, and volunteers. For more information about the role of the WHDCS Board, please see our By-Laws.

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## **Membership**

All Parents and Guardians with children enrolled in our programs are members of the Whispering Hills Daycare Society. To be a member in good standing all accounts must be kept current. Daycare staff members and/or members of the community at large are eligible for membership in the Whispering Hills Daycare Society by applying to the Board of Directors for an honorary membership.

## **Locations and Contact**

Our Main Office is located at our Multiplex Day Care Site:

2 University Drive, Athabasca, AB T9S 0A3

(780) 675-7946

After Hours Cell: (780) 307-6177

Email: [whdaycare@telus.net](mailto:whdaycare@telus.net)

Website: [www.whisperinghillsdaycare.com](http://www.whisperinghillsdaycare.com)

Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

### **Multiplex Day Care Site**

2 University Drive, Athabasca, AB T9S 0A3

Program Cell: (780) 689-8346

Email: [whdcmulti@gmail.com](mailto:whdcmulti@gmail.com)

Program Hours: Mon-Fri 7:30 am to 5:30 pm

We have our own entrance on the East side of the Regional Multiplex off the staff parking lot. There is a loading area outside in the traffic loop. The door may be locked, please ring the bell to be let inside the facility.

### **University Day Care Site**

1 University Drive, Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3

Program Cell: (780) 519-0483

Email: [whdcuni@gmail.com](mailto:whdcuni@gmail.com)

Program Hours: Mon-Fri 7:30 am to 5:30 pm

We have our own entrance on the East side of the Athabasca University. Park in Parking Lot B and follow the yellow sidewalk to our gated playground. There is a doorbell to use to be let into the facility. OR Enter through the University main entrance and proceed following the signs to our door (Room 110). There is a doorbell to use to be let into the facility.

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## **Kinder & Out of School Care Program**

Room 231 & 232, Whispering Hills Primary School (WHPS), 3001 Whispering Hills Drive,  
Athabasca, AB

Program Cell: (780) 689-8356

Email: [whdcosc3@gmail.com](mailto:whdcosc3@gmail.com)

Kinder Program Hours: Mon-Fri 7:30 am - 5:30 pm

OSC Program Hours: Mon-Fri 7:30-8:30 am- 3:30-5:30 pm (7:30 am -5:30 pm on School PD Days)

Access to the program is through the back (East) door of the school, nearest the gazebo and kindergarten playground. Please Ring the doorbell located on the window of the door or phone the program cell to be let into the facility.

## **Hours of Operation**

Our University and Multiplex daycare Sites, as well as our Kinder care program operate Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm. Out of School Care runs Monday through Friday from 7:30-8:30 and 3:00 to 5:30 pm. On non-school days for which we provide care OSC operates 7:30 am to 5:30 pm.

Please note that staff will not be available to provide care for, or supervision of, children prior to 7:30 am; even if they are on site or just arriving for their workday.

Please arrive 10 minutes prior to closing to allow time for checking in with staff members, letting your child get dressed and packed up to leave.

Allowing a few minutes for your child to arrive and depart the centers helps facilitate a smooth transition for children, parents/guardians, staff and other children in the centers. It also assists in respecting the paid working hours of our Educators and enables them to get to their families and personal commitments in a timely manner. In an effort to keep parent fees as low as possible, we need to manage staff time.

## **Annual Closure Dates**

When a day designated as a staff holiday coincides with a Saturday or Sunday, the program will be closed on the next business day.

**All programs will be closed on the following days:**

- New Years Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Heritage Day (Civic Holiday in August)



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- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- 3 Business days between Christmas & New Years Day

Additionally, as part of our commitment to delivering quality care and responsive environments for children all Educators, including Program Directors, must complete 40 hours (about 3 days) of professional learning per calendar year. Our professional development days are held one full day every other month to better support our dedicated team of Educators, this will usually fall on a Friday. Families will be provided with a minimum of 30 days' notice regarding these closures, and there will be no reduction in fees for the month. These periodic closures contribute to maintaining the high standard of care we aim to provide. These dates and our WHDCS calendars can be found via our website at [www.whisperinghillsdaycare.com](http://www.whisperinghillsdaycare.com).

### **Open Door Policy**

Whispering Hills Daycare firmly believes in maintaining an open-door policy. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate in the daily activities and are encouraged to visit their child at the center when their schedules permits.

We also welcome and encourage parents and guardians to contribute to our program(s) and developing curriculum by engaging in conversations with our Educators, viewing the posted program planning and documentation, volunteering time and skills to the program, and attending special events both during and outside of our regular care hours.

### **Personnel Policies**

Early Learning and Child Care is provided by Educators with Early Childhood Development Certificates and/or who are enrolled in Early Learning and Child Care courses. All staff maintain current certification in Standard C First Aid and CPR and Criminal Record Checks with Vulnerable Sector Checks dated within 6 months of hire date and updated every three years. Our Educators routinely attend conferences and workshops to enhance their professional development and support the completion of their required 40 hours of Professional development per year. Each new employee is evaluated by our Program Directors following a three-month probationary period and annually thereafter.

Please feel free to ask the Educators questions about your child or the program. Any concerns regarding staff members' conduct should be reported to the Program Directors in accordance with our Problem Resolution Process.

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## **Problem Resolution Process**

In the event a parent, guardian or staff member has a concern regarding a staff members conduct or the childcare program, the following steps need to be taken:

1. The person with the concern is to contact the Program Directors. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of parties involved (person with initial concern), please take the next steps
2. The person with concern is to arrange (with the president of the Board of Directors) for the concerns to be placed on the next Board Meeting agenda.
3. If the interested parties are not satisfied with the outcome, a complaint may be lodged with our regional child and family services authority-contact information below.

North Central Alberta Child and Family Services  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Administration Building  
5143-50 Street, Box 4742  
Barrhead, AB T7N 1A6  
Phone: 780-305-2440

This office handles complaints regarding non-compliance with the Child Care Licensing Act and Child Care Licensing Regulations. All Complaints brought to their attention are investigated. Although the concerns can be made anonymously, the identity of the concerned party is not divulged to the license holder. Written complaints submitted by the parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the center will be responded to in writing by the Regional Licensing office indicating whether the complaint was verified, and that appropriate action was taken.

Please see the **Problem Resolution Process** of our **Policies, Practices and Procedures** for a more thorough and detailed description of this process.

## **Program Registration**

To be placed on our waiting list and accepted into our program(s) each family must complete a registration form. This can be found online on our website. If you require a paper copy of the registration form, please contact our office.

## **Waiting List**

Once you have registered online, your form will be sent to the Program Directors and added to the waiting list. Registration on our waitlist does not guarantee a spot in our program(s). When a spot becomes available, the Program Directors review the waiting list and will contact the parent/guardian (s) the month prior to care to discuss enrollment type, payments, and subsidy.

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### Intake Process

Once your registration is accepted an initial interview will be set up by the Program Directors or Team Leads upon request from parent/guardian(s). This initial interview will include a tour of the center, review of the necessary paperwork (including assistance with Child Care Subsidy applications if required), and a question-and-answer period. Scheduling of further visits with the child to the program is encouraged and will be handled by the Team Lead of the applicable program following the initial interview.

### Enrollment Types

- Full-time Registration: This option maximizes the benefits of our programs and secures a dedicated space for your child(ren)'s required care days. Full-time enrollment covers all operational days throughout each calendar month. Opting for 3-5 scheduled days a week qualifies as full-time, with a base of over 100 hours of care in a month.
- Part-time Enrollment: Part-Time enrollment is exclusively offered at our University and Multiplex Daycare Sites. This enrolment type requires a commitment of 1-2 days per week, the schedule remains consistent, ensuring regular engagement in our program(s). In instances where a planned closure, such as a statutory holiday, coincides with a regular part-time enrollment day, that day will be invoiced (included in the monthly rate), mirroring the approach taken for full-time enrollment. This practice is rooted in our rate structure, which is calculated based on average attendance. Furthermore, our employees are remunerated for and may work on these planned closure dates as part of their professional development days.
- Kinder Care Program: Exclusively open to kindergarten-registered children, this full-time program operates in collaboration with WHPS Kindergarten teachers. On Kindergarten days, children seamlessly transition between before and after school care. On non-Kindergarten days, they experience full-day sessions in our classroom. Additionally, our all-day program is available on non-school days (WHPS PD Days, Staff Workdays)
- Out Of School Care Program (ASC/OSC) is only offering full-time registration options in this program. *Note: there are currently no funds available in the Alberta Affordability Grant for children who are not of kindergarten age. Additionally, subsidies for these children follow a significantly different structure and eligibility criteria than other children in kindergarten & less.*

We understand that life can be unpredictable, and family schedules may change. To ensure that we can accommodate your needs to the best of our ability, we kindly request that you inform us of any desired changes to your child's enrolment as soon as possible. Changes to enrollment types are requested to be provided to our office by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month prior to care and are subject to availability.

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Whether you are looking to increase or decrease your child's days of attendance, need to request specific care arrangements, or have any other concerns regarding their enrolment, please email the Program Directors. They will be there to assist and work closely with you to ensure your child's well-being and comfort while in our care. Our goal is to understand your needs and, whenever possible, provide support that aligns with your family's situation, this way we can support our operational program plan for the upcoming month.

### **Respite Care**

Our programs provide respite care through appropriate agencies (such as child welfare) for set periods of time. Spaces are regularly held specifically for respite care. Please note, respite care is temporary and is meant to provide support for parents or guardians to be able to register for care on their own following the respite period. For more information about respite care please contact our office:

### **Billing**

#### **Payment of Fees**

To ensure the seamless provision of childcare services, we kindly request each registrant to settle childcare fees in advance before the care occurs. Payments can be made via cheque or interact e-transfer to [whdaycare@telus.net](mailto:whdaycare@telus.net), with cheques made payable to the "Whispering Hills Day Care Society."

Failure to do so may result in the child's removal from the program.

It's important to note that parents/guardians are accountable for payment even on days booked but not attended (e.g., vacation, sick days).

For families applying for Child Care Subsidy, the first month's fees must be paid in full unless a conditional approval notice has been presented to the Program Directors. A subsidized credit will then be applied to your account, and subsequent months will reflect the regular subsidized cost.

Please be aware that rates are subject to change, and any adjustments will be communicated in writing at least one month before the effective date. We appreciate your understanding and adherence to these guidelines, fostering a cooperative and supportive childcare environment.

### **Subsidy**

Childcare subsidy is available from the Government of Alberta for those families with children in grades 1-6. Applications are available on our website as well as on [Child Care Digital Service \(alberta.ca\)](https://childcare.alberta.ca)

When applying for subsidy please make sure to put your child(ren) ensure you are supplying subsidy with our program's legal name. (Can be given by the Program Directors upon request) Subsidy rates may vary

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based on child's age, childcare program, family income, and hours attended. You will need to update your subsidy when it expires.

**Parent Portion:** The parent portion of the fee is the total fee minus the amount you receive from subsidy. This amount is due at the time of invoicing. If you are receiving funding from another source for independent welfare, please provide your social workers' name, phone number, and the office location to the Program Directors. We will give you a letter to hand to your social worker to arrange payments directly to the Program Directors; the Program Directors will also contact the social worker.

### **Provincial Affordability Grant Funding**

The Affordability Grant (AG) is provided to Licensed Child Care Programs across Alberta. Their aim is to lower fees for parents to \$10 a day by March 2026. As of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025, fees will be lowered to \$15 dollars a day. The Childcare Branch of Alberta has introduced a Flat Monthly Fee of \$326.25 for Full Time Registrants and \$230.00 for Part Time Registrants. These flat monthly rates are only applicable for families enrolled in our University, Multiplex and KinderCare program. Additionally, for those registered in our University, Multiplex and KinderCare programs, the Subsidy Program has ended, and all future applications will not be processed. Families with children in our OSC/ASC program will have the existing fees and still qualify for subsidy.

### **Custodial Agreements**

In the case of split custodial agreements, WHDCS may bill each parent/guardian separately. This arrangement must be confirmed in writing by both parties. If a legal document is available which confirms the amount of the split payments, a copy of the applicable section must be provided to our office. The child(ren) will have one registration and, unless legal documentation prevents this, details of the child's attendance and activities within our program(s) will be shared with both parents/guardians.

When childcare subsidy is in place, the subsidy will be deducted from the invoice of the parent/guardian whose name is attached to the subsidy. The parent portion will be split in accordance with the custodial agreement and the subsidy information will not be shared between parties.

WHDCS will not act as a go between for communication between families.

### **Failure to make Payments**

Invoices not paid by 1<sup>st</sup> of the month may result in the removal of your child(ren) from the program until payment is received or a payment plan is arranged with the Program Directors. Payment plans will be designed so fees are paid in full within 2 months of the billing month (e.g., original payment due by May 1, payment plan will require full payment by June 30 for May and June).

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In circumstances where a parent/guardian forecasts difficulty in prepaying the month's care, a payment plan may be made at least 1 month prior to care. Any concerns with billing can be directed to the Program Directors.

Following the first failure to make a payment, the parent/guardian will receive a statement of their account. If no arrangements have been made with the Program Directors for a payment plan, a phone call will be placed by the Program Directors as well as a second statement received via email. Failure to make a payment after the second statement will result in the account being taken to an external collections agency.

Families with outstanding accounts that have been either written off by our society or have been sent to collections (and not yet paid in full or settled) will not be permitted to return to our programs until their account has been paid in full.

### **Non-Sufficient Funds Cheques**

N.S.F. cheques are subject to a \$35 administration fee. Repeat offenders will be required to pay by certified cheque or another payment type after the second offence.

### **Termination of Service**

Choosing to terminate childcare services can be a significant decision, and we want to make this process as straightforward and supportive as possible for you.

### **Notice of Termination**

We kindly request that you provide written notice of your intent to terminate your child(ren)'s care at our center no later than **the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month** prior to the desired termination date. However, we understand that circumstances can change. After the above date, we encourage you to reach out to the Program Directors to discuss your reasons for termination and to explore any possible solutions or alternatives. Our goal is to understand your needs and, whenever possible, provide support that aligns with your family's situation, this way we can support our operational program plan for the upcoming month.

WHDCS reserves the right to cancel services at any time if it is in the best interest of the child or program and/or should any account be outstanding more than 30 days and alternate payment arrangements have not been made. In addition, if a pattern of late pick-ups occurs and cannot be resolved within a timely manner to the satisfaction of WHDCS, service may be terminated.

If your circumstances change in the future, and you find yourself in need of childcare services again, please know that we would be delighted to welcome your child back into our care should there be space

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available. Your family has been an important part of our community, and we are here to try and support you whenever the time is right. Please understand, that should you pull your child(ren) out of our program(s) and wish to re-register, you will be put on the waiting list however, this does not guarantee a spot in the program. The Program Directors will contact families on the waitlist when a spot becomes available.

### **Administrative Records**

Whispering Hills Daycare Society keeps up to date records on both the children attending the programs and the staff working for WHDCS. The child records hold information provided by the parents at time of registration and documents acquired throughout the child's time in the program. These files include:

- Childs Daily Attendance (e.g., arrival and departure times.)
- Childs name
- Birthdate
- Home Address
- Parent/Guardian & Emergency Contacts name
- Physical Home Address
- Mailing Address
- Telephone Numbers
- Incident Reports
- Medical Information
- Medical Administration Forms
- Developmental Assessments

Any other documents recorded while the child is in attendance

### **Staff files**

Should include the following:

- Contact Information
- Timesheets
- Child Development Certificates
- First Aid Certificates
- Criminal Record
- Annual Evaluation
- Leave Request Forms
- Tax Information

Any other documents pertaining to their employment with WHDCS.

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These files are routinely checked and updated as required. They are also used to respond quickly to emergencies, incidents or accidents involving the child or staff member. If you or your child's information changes you must inform the Program Directors immediately. Families with incomplete or outdated registration information will be turned away until necessary information is obtained.

### **Portable Records**

In addition to the administrative records on file each program must maintain an updated portable record of emergency information including the following information for each child:

- The child's name, date of birth, home address and phone number
- The parents' name, physical home address and telephone numbers (home, work, and cell if applicable)
- The name, physical address and telephone number of a **local** person who can be contacted in case of an emergency
- Any other relevant health information about the child provided by the child's parent including the child's immunization history and allergies if applicable

The telephone numbers of the local emergency response service and poison control center are also found with the portable records.

### **Lillio (HiMama)**

We believe parents and guardians are the most important people in the child's life. We utilize the software application called Lillio (HiMama). Our Educators use this program, primarily, as a documentation tool to create learning stories and engage families in our curriculum. Lillio is free to download on any device and is one of many ways Educators will engage with families in regards to their child(ren)'s learning and development.

### **Confidentiality**

Whispering Hills Daycare Society respects and acts responsibly keeping personal information confidential. All Information regarding children, parents, staff, or volunteers shall be respected and handled confidentially. And shall not be disclosed or discussed with anyone other than those authorized to receive such information unless disclosure is authorized by law.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Whispering Hills Daycare Society hereby swears to collect, use and disclose personal information, and/or information about the children and families in our care for the following purposes:

- To generate statistical and aggregated data that does not identify parents/guardians or children personally



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- To meet legal and regulatory requirements and to disclose to associated Provincial Governing bodies
- To manage, market and develop the business operations of Whispering Hills Daycare Society
- To evaluate parent/guardian credit worthiness or to collect accounts and/or to provide yearly childcare receipts.
- To provide services and more information about Whispering Hills Daycare Society
- For other purposes, as may be determined by Whispering Hills Daycare Society acting responsibly and/or otherwise authorized by law.

All information collected is kept confidential and only used as described. Parents/guardians may revoke consent at any time in writing to the Program Directors. Failure to consent may prohibit the child from accessing the services offered by Whispering Hills Daycare Society. Despite this, in the best interest of the child Whispering Hills Daycare Society abides by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Children First Act of Alberta.

### **Photograph Policies**

Whispering Hills Daycare Society realizes that parents/guardians don't always get to see some of the fun and priceless moments of their children's day in the program that the staff enjoy and experience regularly. All members of WHDCS including staff, members of the board and parents/guardians will adhere to the following Photograph Policy.

Photos of the center, children, families, and staff will be taken with cameras belonging to WHDCS for the purpose of the centers displays, licensing reports, to enhance the indoor environment and support the children's social/emotional development and will be given to the families electronically via USB or disc provided by them upon termination of their services. Families will have up to one month after termination to request the photos of their children before they are deleted.

Photos of the center, children, families, and staff will not be taken on personal cell phones, cameras belonging to staff and parents/guardians, webcams or other devices not belonging to WHDCS. Nor will members of the public be permitted to take photographs of the center or children while attending our programs. Photographs taken of children, families or staff and acquired by WHDCS containing identifiable images of children, families or staff will NOT appear in any social media or anywhere on the internet including our website or advertisements. Photographs of the program and activities with non-identifiable features of children and families may be posted on the Whispering Hills Daycare Society website and our social media pages and/or used for advertising and presentations for WHDCS or for educational purposes. Each parent/guardian must sign photography consents on the WHDCS Agreements Forms.

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### **Technology Policies**

These technology policies have been developed to create specific regulations about the use of technology devices such as the internet, social media sites and cameras. This policy is not intended to interfere with the private lives of our staff members or impinge on their right to freedom of speech. This policy is instead designed to ensure WHDCS image and branding are maintained, as is the health and safety of the staff and children under our care.

The following users are covered by this policy:

1. Full-time, part-time, and casual employees of WHDCS
2. Volunteers, interns, summer students, and other non-paid workers
3. Parents/guardians, family friends and relatives in the programs at WHDCS

### **Program Cellphones**

The program cellphones shall be charged, left on with sound and vibrate settings turned on, and always carried by an Early Childhood Educator when leaving the facility. This includes trips to the playground, indoor gym, when going for nature walks or field trips. The program cellphone numbers shall be given to parents/guardians of the children in care as well as all staff members for the purpose of communication while outside of the room. Program Cellphones may also be used to take photographs for documentation or learning stories.

### **Program Computers**

The office desktop computers are to be used by administrative staff (Program Directors & Team Leads) only unless permission has been granted by the Program Directors for a staff member to utilize this computer for programming purposes.

The program laptop computers are used to sign children in and out, research, documentation, Lillio updates to parents, emails and printing relevant paperwork pertaining to the day-to-day operations of the programs.

The program devices shall not be used for personal reasons including email, social media, web surfing or other activities not related to the program.

Educators may use the devices to show a short video clip or play sound clips if the video or song has been pre-viewed by staff from start to finish to ensure it contains appropriate material. The video or song must be relevant to the program and children's interest and must be approved by the Program Directors before viewing.

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### **Movie Days**

On special days (holidays, PD days, etc.) the Program Directors may approve the viewing of an age appropriate, children's interest led movie. A permission form will be sent out prior to the day of the movie with the date, time of playing and name of the movie. For any parent/guardian(s) that do not approve of the movie, a room with separate activities and supervision will be provided. Staff will follow the indoor supervision policies required in both classrooms.

### **Website/Social Media**

Website and Social Media pages (i.e, Facebook, Instagram) may be run for THE society and managed by a Board Member as well as the Program Directors of WHDCS. WHDCS does not use the website and social media as a replacement for already established communication methods with parents. The website and social media pages are an extension of the childcare services provided by WHDCS and shall not be used for personal communication for staff, board members or parent/guardians. Social Media pages shall be used for the sharing of information relating to the childcare service. WHDCS social media pages will be subject to the WHDCS Freedom of Personal Information and Photograph Policies and will not have any identifiable features of the children unless prior consent has been given by the individual child's parent or guardian in writing

### **Family Video Surveillance**

To ensure the safety and security of all children, staff, parents and visitors, as well as the security of our childcare center, Whispering Hills Daycare University and Multiplex Daycare Centre are equipped with a 24-hour video surveillance system. Security cameras have been installed in the indoor playrooms and in front of the entrance of each center.

Video surveillance devices are not a guarantee for a person's individual safety or protection and will not replace the physical supervision of children and staff. However, video surveillance serves as a useful and timely investigation tool in case of incidents or other concerns. We may conduct video surveillance of any portion of our premises at any time, the only exception being private areas of washrooms. Our video/security cameras have been positioned in appropriate places within and around the childcare facilities and are used to help promote the safety and security of people and property.

The privacy of all children, families, and staff in our facility is important to us at Whispering Hills Day Care Society. Our 24-hour video surveillance system/security cameras are for internal purposes only. ONLY the Program Directors and Licensing Officers are allowed to view our security cameras or view video footage at any of the program locations.

No audio is recorded during the recordings.

A video surveillance/recording consent form is to be agreed on and signed prior to your child(ren) enrolling at our daycare center and are a condition of enrollment on our agreement's forms.

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## Attendance

### Attendance Record and Parent/Guardian(s) Responsibilities:

The Whispering Hills Daycare Society does not assume responsibility for the health and safety of the child until parent/guardian(s) have signed the child into the center.

The parent/guardian(s) is responsible for removing outdoor clothing, placing belongings in the locker, putting footwear on and alerting the Educator of your child's arrival. At the time of pick-up parent/guardian(s) are responsible for dressing the child in outdoor clothing, footwear, collecting all belongings to bring home checking in with Educator regarding child's day and sign any forms pertaining to your child's care (i.e. incident/accident forms, permission forms.) It is the Educator's responsibility to sign children in and out as they arrive and depart the program. This is typically done electronically but may be done in writing in some programs.

To receive the maximum benefits from our programs please drop off your child by 9:00 am. If your child is absent or late, please notify (by phone or email) the facility by 9:00 am as the children often go on outings. This is to enable the staff to know how many children they will have to properly plan for activities and meals for the day. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to bring their child to the group if they have left the center. This includes the playground and nature walks. Staff members of the Out of School Care program will attempt to contact the parent/guardian(s) if the child does not show up when expected (. i.e., missed the bus).

The staff members of WHDCS are not responsible for taking any child to appointments outside the center (e.g. doctor or dentist.)

### Pick Up

- No child may be picked up by anyone other than the parent/guardian(s) unless the person claiming the child is listed on the registration form:
- The parent/guardian(s) must telephone or advise the staff in person of the changed pick-up arrangement.
- The person claiming the child must be over 18 years old unless they're legal parent/guardian of the child.
- If the person claiming the child is not listed on the Registration Form:  
The Parent/Guardian(s) must telephone or advise staff in person of changed pick-up arrangement AND a signed note must also be provided.
- If the staff members are not certain of the identity of the adult designated to pick up the child, then picture identification will be required before the child is released.

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- Please note that in cases of separation/divorce, the staff cannot prevent either parent from picking up the child unless a copy of the legal custody order is in the files.

### **Late Pick-up Early Drop-off**

To allow time for parents/guardian to check in with staff members and get their child dressed to leave at the end of the day we ask that you arrive to pick up your child at least 10 minutes prior to closing time. Please phone the program and advise the staff if you are unable to pick up your child on time.

- Please note if you arrive at the center to pick up your child on time but you fail to leave the center prior to closing time it is still considered a late pick-up as our staff are required to stay until all the children and families have left the premises.

If children have not been picked up by 5 minutes after closing, and the center has not been advised of the parents' tardiness the following procedure is employed.

- Parent/Guardian(s) will be phoned at home and at work and asked to pick up the child.
- In the event the parent/guardian(s) cannot be located, the emergency contact(s) named on the registration form will be phoned and asked to claim the child.
- If neither parent/guardian(s) nor the emergency contact can be reached Emergency Social Services (Child Protective Services) will be phoned and asked to take custody of the child.
- Staff will not take legal responsibility for the child or shelter him/her outside of the center for reasons of legal liability.
- Should it be necessary to contact Emergency Social Services, Parents(s) will be informed that their child can be located through Emergency Social Services and/or the RCMP.

Please observe our program opening time. You may not enter the facility or leave your child(ren) before 7:30 am. At times, there may be Educators within the facility, but they are not yet working. In the event there are repeated late pick-ups or early drop-offs (2 or more) the Program Directors will arrange a meeting to discuss a solution. If a solution cannot be met it will result in the termination of services and the removal of your child(ren) from our program.

### **Program Policies**

### **Program Content**

Our programs implement philosophies and guidelines set out by Alberta's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework: Play, Participation, and Possibilities (2014 Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette, and Thomas).

We believe a child learns more through play than by any other means. We have many varied; learning centers such as dramatic play (for imagination), water table, block play (for large and small motor movements), arts and crafts center (for freedom of self-expression), book/quiet area and more. Experiences in cooking, field trips, special guests, and physical activities complement the different learning centers. Children learn to make their own decisions and assume responsibility by choosing at

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which center they will spend their time. There is balance between child-directed and Educator-directed activities to provide opportunities for the child to reach their fullest potential.

The children choose activities that are interesting to them throughout the day. The Early Childhood Educators in the room provide a variety of planned experiences that the children can participate in if they choose. These planned activities are interest based, and child guided. The staff complete observations of children's play to identify these interests and provide them with provocations to assess their interest and guide them in their earnings. The staff continue to plan around an interest bringing in new materials and activities to support the Children's learning and curiosity until the observed okay indicates a new interest. Occasionally, we o request special things from home to support the children's development and learning in the program such as family photos, items for show and tell, etc. The program planning sheet will be posted at each center for families to see and parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in generating more ideas to support this planning.

It is our belief that fresh air and an opportunity for physical activity are necessary for a child outside two times every day and take learning experiences outdoors as much as possible, weather permitting.

To ensure that children are protected, safety drills are practiced routinely. In case of an emergency, portable records, first aid kits, extra clothes, etc. are carried in the program backpack each time the children leave the center.

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### Consent Forms

Our Educators plan for a variety of activities and treats for special or themed days – some of which require parent/guardian consent. We understand that every family has different views on what is and is not acceptable for their child(ren), and we ask that if you are ever unsure about an activity that you let your child(ren)'s Educator know your concerns. A parent/guardian can ask to have their signature removed from the consent form at any time.

By signing the consent form, they are acknowledging that their child does not have any food or skin allergies, nor have any history of allergic reactions to any products that they are aware of (known allergies are posted in each classroom for Educators).

Each of our sites will periodically ask parent/guardians to resign the permission form for their child(ren) to participate in the following, but not limited to, activities:

#### ✓ Sunscreen

We ask that families provide their child(ren) with sunscreen for our Educators to apply – this is on the agreement form that parent/guardian(s) are asked to sign as part of their enrollment agreement. However, if a child(ren)'s sunscreen is not brought in, has run out, or expired, we have daycare sunscreen that parents must agree to before it is applied.

Currently the daycare provides **water resistant Coppertone Sunscreen for Kids, SPF 50**. It is free of octinoxate, dyes & PABA. It is rated for adults and children over 6 months of age.

#### ✓ Lotion & Vaseline

We ask that families provide their child(ren) with fragrance free lotion for their child(ren) if they need it for dry skin or eczema, and lip chap for chapped lips. Please make sure that if it is medicated that an Educator is aware of it, and that the proper Medication Forms are filled out. If a child comes to us requesting lotion because their hands or lips are dry, the daycare has fragrance free lotion and Vaseline that we can provide (Vaseline can be used as lip chap using a single use Q-Tip).

#### ✓ Face Painting, Temporary Tattoos

Face paint and tattoo art is based off the child(ren)'s interests (i.e. superheroes, animals). Educators will not paint or apply anything on a child's skin that they deem inappropriate.

Any face paint or tattoo materials used by the daycare is non-toxic and hypo allergenic.

#### ✓ Hair Play

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Hair Play benefits children by fostering social skills, language development, and fine motor skills. It encourages interaction, communication, creativity, and cooperation. Role playing helps children develop problem solving abilities and helps them learn about real-life situations.

Hair play includes but is not limited to – children using brushes, combs, elastics, clips, hats, scrunchies, and water spray in a mannequins', their own, an Educators', or a classmates' hair. Temporary hair color chalk (non-toxic) may also be used.

It does not include hair cutting, the addition of soaps, shampoos, or hairsprays, or the use of any permanent dye.

Educators are aware of the risk of lice – and will routinely clean and disinfect brushes, combs, and hair accessories between uses. These activities will not be provided for free play if there has been a recently confirmed case of lice in the center.

### ✓ **Nail Polish**

The coloring and decorating of nails can help with the development of fine motor and hand-eye coordination skills, as well as color and pattern recognition. This activity evokes a child's creativity, self-expression, and encourages social interaction through open ended dramatic play (i.e. superheroes with color related superpowers, grown-up role play).

Any nail polish or markers used by the daycare is non-toxic and kid friendly and would be applied in a well-ventilated space. Educators do not clip children's nails.

### ✓ **Edible Treats**

Please check with Educators before bringing in any food or treats for your child(ren)'s class to share. They will know of any allergies present in their classrooms, and can provide you with appropriate times for sharing. Any food items that are brought into the daycare to be shared must be: restaurant or store bought and sealed to ensure that the food was prepared and stored according to food safety standards.

For special occasions (i.e. Trick or Treating, Valentine's Day, Birthday Treat Bags) where there may be many treats coming from multiple sources, our Educators encourage children to take those treats home for consumption.

Sometimes a less healthy snack is offered by the daycare for a themed activity or holiday (i.e. popsicles or ice-cream, pudding, cookies, cupcakes). These are generally provided after last snack – and children are always encouraged to finish their healthy snack/packed lunch first.

\*Our daycare provides healthy snacks in case a child ever runs out of food in their lunch (i.e. apple sauce, crackers, granola bars). These are generally only given to a child if they run out of food – not because they do not like something in their lunch.



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### **Inclusion**

Whispering Hills Daycare Society resolves to provide care and ensure access for all children regardless of abilities and free from prejudice as stated in our Societal Philosophy. With trained and dedicated staff members we provide the best care to meet the needs of each individual child in an inclusive environment and, when required, will seek out training for staff members to better meet those individual needs. We provide care and early learning opportunities based on each child's individual developmental level of understanding and physical abilities including but not limited to language barriers, developmental delays challenging behaviors, and physical disabilities. The environment is set up to meet the needs of each individual child and ensure independent access to all play materials. We will access community support to the best of our ability and will work closely with families to ensure continuity of care between all members of the child's support group. We will assist families seeking referrals to access additional support within the community when necessary. Additional support and individualized programming will be carried out within the inclusive environment during play experiences with peers.

### **Developmental Screening**

Whispering Hills Daycare Society uses the ages and stages developmental assessment tool for evaluating children's development. All parents/guardians are encouraged to complete their own assessment at tool for evaluating children's development. All parents/guardian(s) are encouraged to complete their own assessment as well and will be permitted to view and obtain a copy of the assessment at any time. If there are any questions about the assessment or concerns that come from the assessment, WHDCS will advise parents/guardians to have further screening completed through Athabasca Community Health Services (call 780-675-2231).

### **Naptime (Daycare Programs Only)**

From approximately 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm for our Multiplex site and 11:30-1:30 pm for our University site there is a quiet time for all children. Our University naptime was altered to accommodate the various individual sleep schedules of the younger children in our care. During rest periods, Educators may respond to children's individual needs. Those children who nap may sleep for as long as they wish. Older children may also lie down, or they can choose to participate in quiet activities.

### **Lunch time and Snack Time**

Parents are required to supply at least two snacks and a lunch for their child(ren) each day. Snack time is 9:00 am and 3:00 pm with an 11:00 am lunch in between. All children are seated while eating and drinking, no beverages are supplied to children while napping. All infant formulas are to be provided by the parent(s) along with appropriate equipment items and must be properly labelled and given directly to staff for proper preparation and storage. Parents are responsible for taking lunch kits and bottles home

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each day and water bottles home once a week for washing. The daycare will sanitize water bottles each day, but we ask that parents take them home over the weekend to wash. Children self-feed and are encouraged to serve themselves when developmentally appropriate. We do have back up snacks at each site location to ensure all children in our care are getting enough nutrients throughout the day.

We are a nut friendly facility, we will continue to monitor the situation closely, and if circumstances change in the future, we will revisit our nut policy accordingly, pre-program based where the nut allergies are located.

At the Out of School Care program, we provide supplementary snacks on all regular school days which are available for children to take independently. We do not provide meals on the All-Day Care days – such as school PD days and school breaks – or during Summer Care. On these days, Parents and Guardians are responsible for providing their child with a morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack that is healthy.

### **Bottle Plan**

We understand that when children first start at daycare it can be a rough transition, particularly at nap time. If a child is used to laying down for nap with a bottle, we will discuss starting a Bottle Plan with their parent/guardian(s) to start weaning their child off the bottle on their bed.

To stay consistent with home, and to help the child settle into the daycare routine easier, an Educator will give the child their bottle at naptime and stay with them while they drink it to ensure no choking, removing it from the bed once the child is finished, or is falling asleep.

When the child has settled into the daycare routine a bit more, the Educator will start to offer the bottle at the lunch table before nap. They will start to offer it less at the bed, and more so at the table or in the Educator's lap beside their bed- helping the child with a natural transition away from drinking on their bed. This is an open-communication process with parent/guardian(s)- Educators are encouraged to ask for feedback and tips throughout the Bottle Plan, possibly working with the family to introduce a comfort item such as a pacifier, stuffy, or blanket to remove the need for the bottle. Our goal is to have no bottle on the bed after 2 months from the start date, preferably 1 month.

### **Clothing**

Please ensure that the child has at least one complete change of clothing left at the center and more if toilet training. The staff is not responsible for unmarked clothing. For your own convenience *please label* clothing, footwear, and bottles so that they are clearly identifiable as belonging to your child.

Parent/guardian(s) are requested to supply a blanket if the child is used to resting, these will be sent home to be laundered on a weekly basis. Please also ensure your child has appropriate clothing for outdoor activities. The children go outside every day and although we do have some extra winter items and sun hats, if your child is not properly dressed to go outside, they will miss out on important outings

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and/or the parent/guardian may be called to bring the appropriate clothing. We request that the children wear indoor shoes at the center for health and safety reasons.

Dirty or soiled clothing will not be washed at the center. Caregivers will put soiled clothing including cloth diapers into plastic bags to be picked up at the end of the day. This policy protects the health of the children and staff at the center. Soiled diapers, soiled linen and garbage are stored in closed containers. If applicable please remember to bring clothing, diapers and wipes each week or when necessary. WHDCS operates play-based programs, and we encourage the staff and children to participate in "messy play." As such, **we recommend that your children not wear their best clothing to the program.** The children may get corn starch, glue, paint etc. on their clothing even with the precaution of wearing a paint shirt. This sort of messy play is encouraged, and our staff take precautions to ensure the children are not painting themselves. We use non-toxic washable paint and add soap to the paint when mixed so it should easily come out of most fabrics. The only thing that we use that may stain is food coloring. Food coloring easily comes out of most fabrics but may temporarily transfer to skin. We encourage the children to play freely, use their imagination and not limit expression while in play.

### **Items from Home**

Special comfort toys such as cuddly toys or blankets are acceptable items to bring from home to help ease a child into the Daycare environment. These are to stay in their locker until nap/rest time to prevent items from becoming lost or broken. Otherwise, do not send treats, toys, or electronics from home. Exceptions may be discussed with the staff. WHDCS will not be responsible for lost or broken toys or other items brought from home.

### **Celebrations/Events**

The society and programs hold special events and celebrations throughout the year. These are based on the children's interests, community and family celebrations and are held within each program. Families are always invited to join in these special events and are encouraged to share any information on any occasions they celebrate throughout the year. These events can include celebrations. Monthly birthdays, family picnics, and cultural events. A newsletter or invitation is sent to the parent/guardian(s) with more details on these special occasions as they occur.

### **Outdoor/Environment Policies and Procedures**

It is our belief that fresh air and an opportunity for physical activity are necessary for a child's healthy development. We believe in solidifying the child's connection with the natural world to promote a healthy, active lifestyle and an appreciation and attitude for care for the environment. The children typically go outside in the morning and again in the afternoon to explore the playground and abundance of nature surrounding our centers. Our society aims to provide at least 90 minutes of outdoor/gross motor play per/day. The children will go outside everyday unless the weather including wind chill is colder

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than –20 Celsius. We also generally avoid going outside when the UV index is at its highest or there is severe weather.

Children must be properly dressed before going outside.

- Proper winter dress includes jacket, ski pants, snowsuit, hat or hood that covers ears, boots and mittens (preferably waterproof)
- In the wet and muddy season children should have extra mitts, socks, pants, rubber boots and splash pants
- Proper summer dress includes shorts and a hat to protect them from the sun, in summertime parents/guardians need to provide hats, sunscreen, and appropriate clothing for the weather so that the staff can still take the children outside for walks regardless of the weather.
- Staff will apply sunscreen as provided by the parent/guardian and bug spray at the center or as provided by the parent guardian and bug spray at the center or as provided by the parent/guardian for the appropriate uses.

We use natural consequences as a method of child guidance within our programs. If a child is refusing to wear items of outdoor wear (within reason) the Educators will prompt them to choose to carry the item outside. This will give them the option of discovering the natural consequence: if I do not wear my outdoor clothing, I will be cold and then will put the item on. Additionally, children tend to become warm very quickly in comparison to adults as they exert energy outdoors. This means, you may find your child outdoors without mittens (with mittens always available) or without their jacket during a time when you believe they should be wearing these items. Our Educators use their best judgement and encouragement to allow children to follow their body's signals indicating when they are too warm or too cold. If a child is very warm after exerting themselves, they may remove their jacket and when they become cool again, they will always have the option of putting the jacket back on. If you have concerns or questions about this practice, please contact our office.

All outdoor play structures comply with CSA standards. The outdoor play area is free of toxic plants.

### **Field Trips and In-Centre Visitors**

The children and staff at our University Daycare site and the Multiplex Daycare site regularly go on neighborhood walks including select posted Muskeg Creek Trail directly adjacent to Athabasca University or may visit the other daycare site weather permitting. The Out of School Care program participates in neighborhood walks surrounding Whispering Hills Primary School including but not limited to the Cornwall area. Off-site walks will only be taken in areas within walking distance of the program and after the Program Directors or Team Lead have completed a walkthrough of the area and approved the area for an off-site walk or field trip. When each program is on a neighborhood walk or field trip, staff will record the walk area including the time they left, the time they expect to return, and their program

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cellphone, camera, and portable records each time they leave the center. At least two staff members, or more if ratio requires—including a level 2 or 3, must be present in order to leave the center with the children.

Parent/Guardian(s) are advised of any planned field trips beyond our neighborhood walks and are required to sign a consent including transportation approval when bussing is required. Additional adults may be required to accompany the group above the regulated ratio for the program to ensure adequate supervision. Staff will review field trip guidelines with both the children and volunteers will be accompanying us on the trip. Staff and volunteers will ensure the children are in sight at all times and that they are actively engaged in the children's activities. If a parent/guardian doesn't permit their child to participate in a field trip they may be requested to find alternative care as all staff and children in the specified program will be attending the trip. The Early Childhood Educators (ECE) will be responsible for ensuring all children have signed consent forms and portable records and are accounted for at all times. The ECE staff will carry the program cellphone and backpack containing these portable records, consent forms, the First Aid Kit and emergency numbers. Children will be returned to the center at the end of the field trip, they will not be left at any other location. Special guests are invited into the programs to enrich the activities and experiences.

Volunteering parent/guardian(s) who intend to attend a field trip will be required to comply with Whispering Hills Day Care Society's Policies, Practices, and Procedures, as well as sign the Oath of Confidentiality for Volunteers form.

### **Program Evaluations**

Parent/Guardians will regularly receive surveys to complete to assist us in quality assurance and to ensure we are meeting the needs of the families and children we serve.

### **Child Guidance Policy**

Our child guidance policy is based on developmentally appropriate communication methods and best practices. Staff use active listening and I-messages to ensure each child is heard and understands the situation. Our child guidance policy is in place to promote positive self-esteem, respect, independence and responsibility for one's actions. We use logical and natural consequences when dealing with challenging behaviors.

When required, staff will record behavior observations to help inform them on what is happening with the child and their challenging behavior. We work with parent/guardian(s) to ensure the best support is given to those children who may develop or display challenging behaviors. Families are consulted about their child's likes, dislikes, hopes, fears, beliefs, cultures and traditions so that a bridge between home

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and the program is established. We encourage continuity between home and the center when dealing with challenging behaviors in children.

Our purpose is to focus on the positive behavior of the children rather than the negative behavior. Children will be redirected to different areas when displaying repetitive negative behavior in an area. Children will be encouraged to use their words, hear each other's words or to recognize their facial expressions, and to offer hugs or to help correct the situation (i.e. Return the toy and ask for a turn, help rebuild a structure etc.) to develop a sense of empathy and responsibility. Any form of child guidance must be reasonable in the circumstance.

Approaches NOT used:

- Physical punishment: striking, shaking, shoving, spanking, restraint or any other form of aggressive contact.
- Verbal or Physical degradation or emotional deprivation
- Withdrawal or threaten withdrawal of necessities such as: food, clothing, shelter or activity.
- Time outs, confinement or isolation

NO FORM OF ABUSE WILL BE TOLLERATED FROM STAFF OR PARENT/GUARDIAN(S) DIRECTED TOWARD CHILDREN OR STAFF IN THE CENTRE.

### **Removal of a Child**

We may consider the removal of a child over factors such as: behavioral issues, health concerns, non-compliance with center policies, or endangering the safety of themselves or others. WHDCS will always try to accommodate children's needs to the best of our abilities, whether that be implementing a Behavior Intervention Plan, Professional Development for our Educators, or possibly bringing in external professionals (e.g., child psychologists or social workers), to help support a child in the program. All avenues will be through collaboration and discussion with the child's parent/guardian(s)

After a behavior plan has been put in place, and all possible avenues have been explored, if a child's behavior is not in the best interest of the classroom a decision to remove the child from the program may be made.

### **Extreme Behaviors & Termination of Care:**

The center reserves the right to terminate without notice.

The repetition of a child failing to control their behavior, despite the joint efforts of the Educators and parents/guardians, and the occurrence of extreme behaviors, the center reserves the right to terminate without notice any services for children who have been found to:

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- physically endanger or threaten the life of another child or employee
- willfully damage or remove the property belonging to the center, an employee, or another child
- continuous bullying or racist behavior
- engage in extreme behavior that is hindering the care and supervision of other children

We as a program will do everything in our power to ensure all children can attend our programs- however, the safety of our staff and other children is absolute.

### **Biting Policy**

Biting is, unfortunately, a behavior seen in many children aged 0-3 and can less commonly occur in children over age 3. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to staff. This biting policy has been developed with both ideas in mind.

Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy protects the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, which can be for many reasons such as, tension, stress released, cause and effect, testing boundaries, speaks a different language or no words to express themselves. Parents will be contacted if a bite occurs.

Please see our Biting Policy in our Policies, Practices and Procedures, available on our website, for more information.

### **Working with External Agencies and Supports**

In order to provide the best support for families and children in care, Whispering Hills Daycare Society will make all efforts to connect with community resources when necessary.

We will maintain information on community resources and services for children and families accessing our programs. This information will be provided to families at the front entrance of each childcare program in the form of pamphlet and posters, on our website and upon request. We will work with various community organizations and participate in partnerships and coalitions with community organizations and professional groups working with families with young children in the Athabasca area.

When able to, WHDCS will break barriers for families who have trouble accessing community resources and services. We will facilitate the delivery of support and services within the childcare program so the parent/guardian(s) may continue to work and have access to these supports for their child. We will act as a liaison between the external agency and family to ensure continuity of information between all parties. All agencies working with WHDCS will sign an oath of confidentiality of information obtained in the course of professional dealings with Whispering Hills Daycare Society, in accordance with the Society's privacy policies. Families working with WHDCS and external agencies will sign a document for their consent to release specific information and to whom. These agreements will be subject to WHDCS privacy policy.

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When necessary, WHDCS will consult with community organizations, cultural groups and representatives to ensure programming is inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of our member base.

### **Interprofessional Education (IPE)**

Whispering Hills Day Care Society recognizes the scope of work our Educators are involved in. As such, our involvement with external agencies, community partners, and regional supports will extend beyond direct support for families and children and will provide indirect support through interprofessional education (IPE). By engaging in IPE, where possible, Educators and administrators at WHDCS will gain an understanding of relevant health, safety, and social service practices to inform their work with children and families in Athabasca. By collaborating with local, regional, and provincial agencies, WHDCS will be better equipped to support the needs of families in our area as well as the needs of our community.

## **Supervision Policies and Procedures**

### **Indoor Supervision**

Staff members maintain room awareness and position themselves to ensure they have a clear visual of the whole room as well as the area they are directly supervising—they can see where the children are and what they are doing at all times. The staff members move their bodies around the room and are actively engaged in play and conversation with children to ensure best/most effective supervision. One staff member will be in each area of the room where children are playing, at no time should staff be sitting or standing together in the room.

Each program has a phone for staff to call if assistance is needed from the Program Directors. Staff complete head counts regularly to ensure the number of children matches the number on the whiteboard or clipboard. A clipboard containing the days attendance and headcount checklist must be kept in the assigned place in the room, filled out multiple times throughout the day and taken when leaving the room including to go outside or to the indoor gym.

### **Supervision during Transitions**

The staff complete a headcount to make sure all children are accounted for before leaving the room and before leaving the field house or the playground to ensure all children are accounted for and safe at all times. This is recorded on the designated clipboard containing the days attendance and headcount checklist. The last staff in the room/area will do a complete check of the room before leaving even after the completed headcount. One staff member will be in charge of checking the playground or field house/gymnasium for any potential hazards or dangers before the children enter the space. The playground checklist will be filled out by this staff member at the time of arrival at the playground.



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### **Outdoor Supervision**

There needs to be at least two staff when leaving the center with children (or more if needed to maintain ratio) including at least one level 2 or 3. The staff will use the whiteboard to record where the group is going so, they can be located if parents or the program needs to locate them. Staff must take the backpack containing portable records and first aid supplies and the program cellphone when leaving the center with children. This cellphone must be charged, vibrate and ring and on an early Childhood Educator at all times when outside of the center.

The staff members must always be aware of where the children are and what they are doing. The staff must position themselves appropriately (body facing the children, moving around as the children do) to provide the best/most effective supervision. Staff will be interacting and engaged in play/conversation with the children at their level during active supervision.

Staff will complete multiple headcounts on outings with the children including but not limited to: prior to leaving the center, while walking, upon arrival to the play area, during okay, prior to leaving the area (including a sweep of the area completed by the last staff member to leave), while walking back, and upon arrival to the daycare. The headcount checklist must be filled out when headcounts are administered prior to leaving and upon arrival at each place.

Groups must stay together at all times when on an off-site walk/field trip. No staff member shall be left with a group of children alone while off-site. If two groups are formed during the day two separate attendance sheets are to be filled out, a primary staff person needs to be with each group and all the steps above apply to each group. Note: Whispering Hills Daycare Society does not transport children in vehicles unless it is a school bus hired for a field trip with signed permission from parent/guardian(s).

### **Incident Reporting Procedure**

Educators will fill out an Incident Form (Injury & First Aid, or Behavior) for each child involved whenever an incident should occur at the program. Incidents include, but are not limited to, physical disputes between children; accidental injuries a child may obtain (i.e. a scraped knee or fall); behavior that caused something to break (i.e. destruction of WHDCS property). Educators will sign this form and present it to the parent/guardian(s) to review and sign as soon as possible. The incident report must always stay on site. Once it has been signed by the Educator and parent/guardian it will go to the Program Director(s) to review and sign. This report will then be filed in the child(ren)'s administrative files. If families would like a copy of the form, a photocopy can be made of the signed original (their signature must be on it before copying).

If any type of head injury should occur an incident report is to be filled out and the parent/guardian(s) and Program Director(s) are to be contacted immediately while the child is monitored for concussion symptoms. The Program Director(s) or designate will then determine whether it is deemed reportable based upon the twelve types of critical incidents (see below).

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Any large cuts, bruises, bumps, rashes, splinters, blisters or notable injuries should be photographed by a WHDCS phone and sent on Lillio (HiMama) to the parent/guardian(s) before pick-up, so they are aware of the injury's appearance and/or severeness.

If there are five or more Incident Reports of the same nature with the same child within a month, the Program Director(s) will become involved and investigate further. They will then help center staff implement a plan to avoid the reoccurrence of more incidents (redirection strategies, increase supervision, change of classroom layout, a sit down with parent/guardian(s), implement a Behavior Intervention Plan, set up a professional development training, etc.)

### **First Aid for Splinters & Tick Removal**

Staff with their certified First Aid may remove splinters from children if the splinter is attainable with tweezers and then treat/clean the wound afterwards as a cut. They will not cut the child's skin further for easier access to the splinter. If they cannot get it, they will monitor it, and alert parent/guardian(s) via Lillio/Himama and at pickup. Staff should try to take pictures of the splinter before and after removal (for Lillio/Himama), as well as document what the splinter is made of in the incident report.

Ticks are an arachnid that survive on blood by biting and digging into the flesh. They are common across Canada, and are often found in wooded areas, tall grass, or leaf litter – though they can be found anywhere. Ticks have been known to carry diseases like Lyme Disease, and any time one is removed from a person, that person should monitor for symptoms.

All our center's emergency backpacks/first aid kits contain a tick removal kit for First Aid certified staff to use in the case of a tick being found on a staff member or child(ren).

### **Serious Accident/Incident or Illness**

If there is a serious illness or accident/incident, an Educator with a valid First Aid Certificate will apply first aid appropriate to the situation and/or Call 911. If required, an ambulance will be called, and the parent/guardian(s) will be contacted by a Program Director or Team Lead immediately. Then the Program Director will contact our Licensing Officer and Regional Child Care Office (Child Care Connect) to inform them about the situation. The proper paperwork will be filled out and sent to the licensing forthwith in the manner required.

\*WHDCS is not responsible for any cost incurred as a result of obtaining medical assistance for the injured child, (i.e., ambulance) the cost will be paid for by the parent/guardian(s). Health care will only be given to a child when the written consent of the child's parent/guardian(s) has been obtained (i.e. medication forms) or the health care provided is basic first aid. It is at the discretion of the Program Director if a medical slip is required for re-admission to the program.

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## Reportable Incidents

All incidents should be assessed as to whether it is considered a 'reportable incident.' The twelve critical incidents to be reported are posted at each program and include:

- Death
- Serious injury
- Allegations of abuse
- Missing/lost child
- Young persons involved in a crime
- Child removed from program without permission
- Emergency evacuation
- Unexpected program closure
- Intruder on premises
- Illness/injury requiring emergency medical services and hospitalization
- Error in administration of medication
- Child left on premises after hours

If an incident is reportable the Program Director(s) or Team Lead is to be informed, and the parent/guardian(s) and our Licensing Officer are to be contacted. Following the reportable incident, the Program Directors, Team Lead, and the Educators involved will file the Critical Incident to Child Care Connect (Alberta Licensing) not more than 48 hours following the incident.

If you ever have any complaints or concerns in this regard that you would like investigated by licensing, you can contact them at Child Care Connect.

General Email: [cs.childcareconnect@gov.ab.ca](mailto:cs.childcareconnect@gov.ab.ca)

Toll-Free Number: 1-844-644-5165

## Missing Child Procedure

If a child is not accounted for at any time, the Educators are to notify the Program Directors or Team Lead immediately and Educator will assign Educators to stay with the children who are present while the other Educators re completing a search of the immediate surroundings and any areas that a child could potentially hide .

If the child is found during the initial search the Program Director or Team Lead will contact the child parent/guardians and Child Care Licensing to report the incident, and a report will be filed with Child Care Licensing.

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If the child is not located after all potential hiding spots and immediate outdoor areas have been searched, the facility Program Director or Team Lead will contact child's parent/guardians, Child Care Licensing and RCMP. Educators will begin the lock down procedure, all exits will be monitored by employees letting no one in or out of the facility. The child's information and picture should be brought out and shown to authorities upon arrival.

The facility Program Director or Team Lead will always remain onsite until the child has been found or until otherwise directed by authorities.

Directly following this a Critical Incident Report needs to be filed with Child Care Licensing.

## **Health and Safety Related Policies and Procedures**

### **Potential Health Risks**

The Whispering Hills Daycare Society strongly believes that we will all work together to stop all potential health risks and outbreaks by using the following procedures:

- Proper and frequent hand washing with warm soapy water
- Proper toileting/diapering hygiene
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, toys and equipment
- Safe food handling procedures
- Staying home if ill

Parents /guardian(s) are required to keep their child at home if ill in any way or he/she is displaying any of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 100.4 degrees (38 degrees Celsius)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting (2 or more episodes within a 24-hour period)
- Undiagnosed rash/skin condition
- Open or oozing blisters
- Communicable disease
- Obviously infected discharge (thick and colored, e.g. greenish-yellow discharge from the nose)
- Lethargy and irritability
- Persistent pain
- Cough (frequent bouts, especially if choking or vomiting)

Common diseases we see children being sent home for:

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- Has a continuous runny nose, severe runny noses can indicate that the child may be infectious or too ill to be at the center
- Head Lice
- Hand, Foot, and Mouth (HFM)
- Pinkeye
- Strep Throat
- Ringworm
- Whooping cough
- Croup
- Chicken pox
- Roseola
- Impetigo
- Irritable, continuous cry, and/or requires more attention than an employee can provide without affecting the health and safety of the other children in the program.

If a child is observed to have these symptoms the Educator involved will contact the Director(s), who will give the go ahead to notify parent/guardian(s) to withdraw the child from the program as soon as possible. If parents are unable to pick up their child within 2 hours of receiving the phone call the emergency contacts will be called so that child is removed from the program immediately. Educators will keep the ill child away from other children until they are removed. They will stay with the child in a designated area and monitor until a parent/guardian(s) arrives.

WHDCS will follow Alberta Health Services guidelines and restrictions regarding communicable diseases and outbreak prevention. It will be at the Director's discretion when the child may return to the center.

If there is a serious illness or accident/incident, a staff member with a valid First Aid Certificate will apply first aid appropriate to the situation and/or contact Program Directors or Team Lead to call 911. If required, an ambulance will be called, and the parent/guardian(s) will be contacted by the Program Director or Team Lead immediately. The Program Directors will contact the Licensing Officer and Regional Child Care Office to inform them about the situation immediately. The prescribed form will be filled out and sent to the Program Director forthwith in the manner required by the Program Director.

When a child is ill the staff will use an illness log form to record the following: children who are ill including the name of the child, date the child was observed to be ill, name of staff member who identified the child was ill, time the parent initially contacted, name of staff member who contacted the parent, time the child was removed from the program and the date the child returned to the program.

*WHDCS is not responsible for any cost incurred as a result of medical assistance for the injured child, (i.e. ambulance) the cost will be paid by the parent/guardian(s). Health care will only be given to a child when*

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*the written consent of the child's parent has been obtained or the health care provided is first aid. It is at the discretion of the Program Directors if a medical slip is needed for re-admission to the center.*

For a more detailed illness policy and description of each communicable disease listed above please see our 'Health, Illness, and Safety Related Policies and Procedures' found in our 'Policies, Practices and Procedures' manual. This can be found on our website, at each site, or hard copy available upon request.

### **Outbreak Management**

An "Outbreak" is considered a time when two or more employees, contractors, visitors, and/or children display the same or similar symptoms (cough and fever, for example) within a set period (usually 48 hours).

The Program Directors must report all suspected outbreaks to the local Health Unit and their recommendations will be followed precisely. The Program Directors will give written notice to all parents/guardians within twenty-four hours if a communicable disease breaks out in the program. Parents/guardians shall be required to notify the center within twenty-four hours if a communicable disease breaks out in their home. If a child is suspected of having a communicable disease in the program, the Program Directors will contact parent/guardian(s) to have the child removed immediately. The parent/guardian(s) will be asked to take the child for a medical examination to confirm suspected illness. In an outbreak, the child may not return to the program until all symptoms have ceased for at least forty-eight hours.

### **Administration of Medicine**

If a child requires medication while in care, the parent/guardian(s) must complete a Medication Record Form (Over the Counter, Short, Long Term) before Educators can administer the medication. This form must indicate:

- Child's name
- Date the form was signed, as well as medication start and end date
- Name of medication (*as it is written on the prescription/container*)
- Dosage of medication
- Last time of dosage and by whom
- Time the medication is to be given to the child (short term & over-the-counter need exact times based off the medication's directions (i.e. every 4, 6, 8 hours)- **not to be** "as needed")
- Symptoms that need to be present for the medication to be administered
- Special instructions for the administration
- Signature of staff who went over the form/medication with parent/guardian (staff must be certified in first aid)
- Signature of parent/guardian

Medications must be in the original container, clearly labeled with the physician's name (if prescribed), child's name, date of issue, when it was last given, dosage amount, and instructions for administration.

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*\*If the medication instructions and the instructions given by the parent/guardian on the Medication Record form do not match, the medication will NOT be administered.*

Non-prescribed or over-the-counter medications will only be used at the discretion of the Program Director(s) in scenarios like teething (i.e. Children's Tylenol, Advil, Motrin) or when doctor prescribed for things like allergies (i.e. Benadryl, ointments, eyedrops for dry eyes). This medication will not be used for any other potential health risk symptoms like fever, pink eye, sore throat, etc. The dosage and time of these medications will strictly adhere to the medications' instructions unless stated otherwise in a doctor's note.

Please note, unless the medication is prescribed otherwise WHDCS will not be administering over-the-counter medication for any longer than 2 consecutive days (48 hours). If there are other symptoms that are concerning, the use of over-the-counter medication may be denied by a Director until a doctor's note can be attained. **(This medication policy has been approved by our licensing officer Melanie Lubemsky, November 2024.)**

Medications are kept in a locked cabinet (or locked container in fridge if appropriate and any emergency medication- i.e. epi-pen, insulin – is stored in a place that is inaccessible to children but easily accessible to the staff). When finished, all medication will be given back to the parent for proper disposal.

### **Special Situation**

If a child needs special health considerations (i.e. feeding tube, epilepsy) WHDCS will ensure that staff are trained in the proper medical instruction to handle the day-to-day care of the individual. This training is documented in the staff's file and the child's file.

### **Care for Essential Service Workers in Event of Program Closure**

In the event a program closure is sustained due to a staffing shortage the Program Director(s) may open one facility to provide care for essential service workers. This will be dependent on the availability of Educators to ensure ratio is met and keeping in mind the cohorts of children from separate programs.

The provision of care for essential service providers will be completed with the support and consultation of Child Care Licensing and Alberta Health Services.

Parents and guardians must confirm their attendance and their job position with the Program Directors at least the night before this type of care is provided. Parents and guardians who are not deemed to be essential service workers will be denied care in these instances.

The Federal Government defines essential workers as "critical to preserving life, health and basic societal functioning". This includes:

- first responders

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- health-care workers
- critical infrastructure workers
- hydro and natural gas workers
- workers who are essential to supplying society with critical goods, such as food and medicine

## **Smoke Free Environment**

Whispering Hills Daycare Society programs are all found in non-smoking buildings and follow provincial laws and regulations. No staff member, parent/guardian or other persons shall smoke where childcare is being provided.

## **Play Spaces**

The Whispering Hills Daycare Society will make sure that all play structures will comply with CSA guidelines for children's play spaces and equipment. Our play environments are also in compliance with standards set Alberta Health Services and the Child Care Licensing Regulation and Act.

## **Sanitization within the Center**

The Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Support Staff will ensure that regular disinfecting of furnishings, equipment and play materials is noted on a daily/weekly/monthly checklist. All children will use one-time paper towel to dry their hands to stop cross contamination from children using the same towels. Surfaces are disinfected with a bleach solution of 100 ppm before and after meal/snack times as well as before/after diaper changing each child.

## **Inspection Reports**

Recent childcare licensing inspection reports are posted on the bulletin board. Older reports can be made available upon request. These reports are also available online at

<http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/oldfusion/ChildCareLookup.cfm>

## **Emergency Procedures**

Safety drills (e.g. fire, indoor/outdoor evacuation) are held on a regular basis. For detailed information on these procedures see the Whispering Hills Daycare Society Emergency Preparedness Plan located at each program.

## **Emergency Evacuations**

Multiplex Daycare Program Evacuation Site:

- Muster Point: marked by an orange triangle in the parking lot or baseball diamonds.

University Daycare Program Evacuation Site:



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- Muster Point: behind the playground fence by the Muster Point Sign

Out of School Care Program Evacuation Site:

- Muster Point: South Playground where the black bars are marked with white duct tape

## Capacity

The program capacity will depend on the ages and specific needs of the children attending and current staffing. The following minimum staff/child ratio is maintained:

Age of Child	Primary Staff/Child Ratio	Max group size
0-12 m	1:3	6
12-19 m	1:4	8
19m- 3 yrs.	1:6	12
3-4.5 yrs.	1:8	16
5-12 yrs.	1:10	20
Kinder & OSC Programing	1:15	30