

Policies, Practices, and Procedures



WHISPERING HILLS DAY CARE SOCIETY POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROCEDURES



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Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the specific policies, practices, and procedures related to the operations of Whispering Hills Day Care Society (WHDCS). These policies are in place to uphold the mission of WHDCS and to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of all educators, families, and children in care in our programs. These policies are in affect at all three programs run by WHDCS and will be adhered to by all personnel, volunteers, families, and any other persons who may be present in our programs.

Acknowledgement

Our curriculum is guided by the concepts, goals, and dispositions outlined in *Flight: Alberta's Early Learning and Care Framework*¹. Therefore, this document contains many words and phrases that draw from this framework.

Our practice and philosophy are also heavily influenced by the Reggio Emilia Approach²

Vision

To build a healthy future with capable community leaders and too stimulates 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.

¹ Makovichuk, L., Hewes, J., Lirette, P., & Thomas, N. (2014). *Flight: Alberta's early learning and care framework*. Retrieved from flightframework.ca.

² "The Reggio Emilia Approach is an educational philosophy based on the image of a child with strong potentialities for development and a subject with rights, who learns through the hundred languages belonging to all human beings and grows in relations with others." Reggio Children Srl, retrieved from www.reggiochildren.it/en/reggio-emilia-approach/.

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Our Mission Statement

It is the mission of Whispering Hills Day Care 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.

Our 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.

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.

Goals & Objectives

Our goal is 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.

WHDCS, overall objective is to promote optimal development by allowing for equal opportunity for open child choice and educator directed activities where children can try new activities that they wouldn't otherwise try on their own. |

Membership

All parents and guardians with children enrolled in our programs, staff members and/or interested members of the community at large are eligible for membership in the Whispering Hills Day Care Society. To be a member in good standing all accounts must be kept current.

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

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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 Executive Director

WHDCS Board of Directors is a Policy Board which means they set policy and hire an Executive Director 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 Executive Director as the sole employee of the Board of Directors. They accomplish this with the assistance of a program director(s), qualified early childhood educators, other paid staff, and volunteers. For more information about the role of the WHDCS Board, please see our By-Laws.

Location and Contact

Main Office

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

2 University Drive, Athabasca, AB T9S 0A3

(780) 675-7946

Office Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Wednesday*

Email: whdaycare@telus.net

Website: www.whisperinghillsdaycare.com

Multiplex Day Care Site

2 University Drive, Athabasca, AB T9S 0A3

Program Phone: (780) 675-7946

Program Cell: (780) 689-8346

Email: whdcmulti@gmail.com

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 Phone: (780) 675-6233

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Program Cell: (780) 519-0483

Email: whdcuni@gmail.com

Enter through the main entrance and proceed following the signs to our door. There is a doorbell to use to be let into the facility.

Out of School Care Program

Room P3, Whispering Hills Primary School, 3001 Whispering Hills Drive, Athabasca, AB

Program Cell: (780) 689-8356

Access to the program is through a back door of the school nearest the gazebo and kindergarten playground. Please phone the program cell to be let into the facility.

Hours of Operation

Our University and Multiplex Day Care Sites, and our Kinder Care program operate Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Out of School Care (OSC) runs Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. On non-school days for which we provide care OSC operates 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

- Please note that educators will not be available to provide care or supervision of children prior to 7:30 a.m., 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 educators, letting your child get dressed/packed up to leave, and signing them out of the program.

Allowing a few minutes time for your child to arrive and depart the centers helps to facilitate a smooth transition for children, parents/guardians, educators, 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. To keep parent fees as low as possible, we need to manage staff time.

Our office hours are typically 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Annual Closure Dates

When a day designated as a statutory 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 Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day

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- Canada Day
- Heritage Day (civic holiday in August)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Day
- Boxing Day
- 3 business days between Christmas & New Year's Day

Open Door Policy

Whispering Hills Day Care Society 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 program(s) when their schedules permit.

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.

Commitment to Quality

Whispering Hills Day Care Society strives to provide high quality early learning and care services and, to maintain this standard, will employ several measures to inform our continual improvement. These include monitoring, the use of research-based tools for objective evaluation of our environments and practices, and the subsequent employment of improvement strategies to reflect current best practices in early learning and childcare.

Throughout the year, we send virtual surveys to families, educators, children (where appropriate), and community members to assess our services, community needs, and inform any necessary changes to our operations (such as opening and closing times). Families who exit our programs are also encouraged to complete an exit survey as part of our on-going evaluation of our programs. Survey results may be shared with our educators, Board, member base, or community where appropriate.

Each program has a suggestion box which can be utilized anonymously by parents/guardians, educators, volunteers, and other visitors. Our executive director will routinely ask for feedback by prompting questions or concerns in email and telephone correspondence. And, finally, our Open-Door Policy promotes an environment which encourages participation of all families in the program.

Our Board of Directors will engage in strategic planning once per year and participate in the on-going monitoring of the programs in partnership with the Executive Director monthly.

Our educators' commitment to quality includes participation in the use of research-based evaluation tools, opportunities to participate in decision-making processes, and the development and monitoring of their professional learning plan with the support of the executive director. For more information on how

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WHDCS promotes professional learning please see “Professional Learning Days” above or view our personnel policies at our main office.

An example of a research-based and objective program screening tool is the Child Caregiver Interaction Scale (CCIS) which is used to inform our educators’ performance evaluations.

Educators

Early Learning and Childcare is provided by educators with Early Childhood Education Certificates from the province of Alberta, and/or who are enrolled in Early Learning and Child Care courses. All educators and staff maintain current certification in Standard B First Aid and CPR. The educators routinely participate in professional learning and reflective practice individually and as a team. Each new employee is evaluated by the Executive Director following a three-month trial period and annually thereafter.

Educators are certified at minimum as Level 1 Early Childhood Educators which means they have at least one post-secondary course in child development. WHDCS will ensure at least 2 educators at the Multiplex and University sites and at least 1 educator at the After School Care Program, is certified as a Level 2 (post-secondary certificate) or Level 3 (post-secondary diploma) Early Childhood Educator.

In addition to paid educators, WHDCS facilitates students of early learning and childcare programs by providing a practicum placement. These placements may be paid or unpaid positions and are arranged through the post-secondary institute at which the student is enrolled. Secondary students in a work experience course may also be supported by WHDCS. These placements are arranged through Aspen View Schools.

Any concerns regarding a staff member’s conduct should be reported to the Executive Director in accordance with our Problem Resolution Process.

Professional Learning Days

The world of Early Childhood Education is constantly evolving. We at Whispering Hills Day Care Society support professional learning by upholding a requirement of 40 hours per year per educator. For Level 1 and Level 2 Early Childhood Educators learning activities will focus on obtaining a diploma in early learning and childcare and Level 3 certification.

As part of our commitment to quality care, we will periodically host professional learning days in which we close for the day in part or for the entire day. Families will be given no less than 30-day’s notice of these days and there will be no reduction in fees for the month as these will be regular occurrences which contribute to the quality of care we provide.

On professional learning days the educators will: engage in learning activities such as workshops, special guest speakers, collaborative learning sessions, and more; hold meetings of all staff as well as individual teams; engage in vital team building exercises; spend time completing documentation, program planning, and reorganizing of their materials and play spaces.

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Problem Resolution Process

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

1. Person with concern to contact the Executive Director who will document the complaint. The Executive Director will then bring the concern to the involved party(s). This concern may result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the Executive Director in accordance with WHDCS Personnel Policies. The Executive Director will then contact the person with the concern to inform them of the steps taken to resolve the matter.
2. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the involved parties, the person with the concern is to arrange a meeting with the President of the Board of Directors for the concern(s) to be placed on the next Board meeting agenda. The Board will make the final decision of recourse.
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

2nd Floor, Administration Building

5143-50 Street, Box 4742

Barrhead, AB T7N 1A6

Phone: 780-305-2440

This office handles complaints regarding noncompliance with the Child Care Licensing Act and Child Care Licensing Regulations. All complaints brought to their attention are investigated. Complaints can be made anonymously however, if it is not done anonymously, the name of the complainant will still not be divulged to the license holder. Written complaints submitted by the parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the program will be responded to in writing by the Regional Licensing office indicating whether the complaint was verified, and that appropriate action has been taken.

In the event a concern arises with the Executive Director: Person with concern to bring the concern to the Executive Director in writing. If the concern is with the Executive Director, they will inform the Board about the documented concern and address the issue independently. If required, the support of the program director or a board member to mediate can be requested by either the Executive Director or the complainant. If matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the involved parties, the person with the concern will bring the concern to the Board of Directors by contacting the President. The Board will then address the concern at the next board meeting or will call an unscheduled meeting to address the concern. The Board's decision is final up to and including disciplinary action in accordance with WHDCS personnel policies.

In the event a concern arises with a member of the Board: Person with concern to bring the concern to the Board in writing. The Board will encourage involved parties to resolve the issue independently, with the support of at least one other Board member to mediate if necessary. If the matter is not resolved to

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the satisfaction of the parties involved, the Board will then address the concern at the next board meeting or will call an unscheduled meeting to address the concern. If decision making must ensue, those parties involved in the concern may be excluded from all or part of the meeting. Any action taken toward a member of the Board will be done in accordance with WHDCS By-Laws.

Registration and Operations

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.

Intake Process

Once your registration is accepted an initial interview will be set up by the Executive Director, Program Director or designate. This initial interview will include a tour of the program, 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 Site Supervisor 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. If you require care on non-scheduled days for operational support, we kindly request you email or call 24 hours in advance to schedule the extra day of care at no additional cost.
- **Part-time Enrollment:** This entails a commitment to 1-2 days per week, with a monthly base fee of \$550. 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 learning days.
- **Kinder Care Program (OSC):** Exclusively open to kindergarten-registered children, this 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, including WHPS professional development days, holidays, and staff workdays.
- **Out Of School Care Program** is now only offering full-time registration options in this program to accommodate operational needs for 2024.

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ASC(OSC) While we continue to provide this service for full-time Out of School Care, it's important to note that there are currently no funds available in the 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 15th of each month prior to care and are subject to availability.

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 Executive Director. 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.

Payment of Fees

Each registrant is required to pay childcare fees in advance of childcare being provided. Fees are payable by cheque or interact e-transfer to whdaycare@telus.net. Cheques should be made payable to the "Whispering Hills Day Care Society."

Fees are due at the time of invoicing. A parent/guardian(s) may be asked to remove their child from the program for failure to pay outstanding fees. Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of days that are booked even if the child does not attend (e.g., vacation, sick days).

Families who have applied for Child Care Subsidy may be required to pay the first month's fees in full amount unless a conditional approval notice has been provided to the Executive Director. You will have a subsidized credit applied to your account. The following month your rates will continue at regular subsidized cost.

Rates are subject to change. Any rate change will be provided, in writing, at least one month prior to the effective date.

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is available from the Government of Alberta for those families that qualify. Online applications are available at [here](#). Assistance with Child Care Subsidy applications is available, contact the Executive Director for further information.

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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 on month prior to care. Child Care Subsidy approvals are estimates and adjustments may be made by Child Care Subsidy at any time which could result in a credit or further amounts owing on your account. Please read your invoice carefully. For more information about Child Care Subsidy please contact our Executive Director.

Billing Procedure

To be as environmentally friendly as possible and reduce costs we conduct paperless billing. Invoices and statements are sent electronically to the parent/guardians on or as close to the 15th of each month before care is required. If you should require a paper copy of your invoice, please inform the Executive Director.

Monthly invoices and statements will be sent electronically via email and parents/guardians will be responsible for reporting any contact information changes. Payment can be made by email transfer to whdaycare@telus.net, via cheque, certified cheque, or money order to “Whispering Hills Day Care Society”.

Invoices are received on or around the 15th of every month and are due before the 1st of the month care is provided. If, for any reason, a family does not receive an invoice they are still obligated to pay the full fee amount.

Fees apply to all days scheduled and parents/guardians will be billed for statutory closures and professional learning days as part of the quality services we provide. There will not be refunds or credits for sick days or vacations where a child may not be in attendance.

Childcare tax receipts will be sent before the end of February each year.

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.

Third Party Payments

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 director. We will give you a letter to hand to

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your social worker to arrange payments directly to the director; the director will also contact the social worker.

Failure to make Payments.

Invoices not paid by 1st of the month may result in the removal of their child(ren) from the program until payment is received or a payment plan is arranged with the Executive Director. 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).

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 the Executive Director.

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 Executive Director for a payment plan, a phone call will be placed by the Executive Director 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.

N.S.F. 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 child care 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's care at our center. This notice should be submitted no later than the 15th, if possible, 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 Executive Director 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.

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If your circumstances change in the future, and you find yourself in need of child care services again, please know that we would be delighted to welcome your child back into our care. Your family has been an important part of our community, and we are here to support you whenever the time is

right. Extreme Behaviours & Termination of Care:

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

- physically endanger or threaten the life of another child or employee
- willfully damage or remove the property belonging to the centre, an employee, or another child.
- not abide by the bullying and racism policy

Unexpected Closure Credit Policy

This policy has been suspended for the University, Multiplex, and KinderCare programs for the operating years of 2022 and 2023 since Whispering Hills Day Care Society has signed an agreement with the Government of Alberta to reduce fees through affordability funding

WHDCS operates as a not-for-profit society and, as such, our fees are set specifically to meet our expenses which are still applicable when our program is unexpectedly closed. However, if circumstances arise which are out of our control and result in an unexpected program closure, we understand that our inability to provide care for a period of time presents a financial burden for families having to miss work or find alternate care for their children. It is our goal to support families while operating a sustainable society to be able to continue to provide high quality early learning and child care services.

As such, we will provide partial credit for the following scenarios:

- Full and/or multiple day closures (ex. no staff are available to work due to reasons beyond the Society's control, outbreak, government or licensing mandated closure, etc.)
- Voluntary removal at the request of WHDCS. In certain circumstances we may be required to operate at a reduced capacity (ex. Staffing shortage) at which point the Executive Director may request a number of volunteers to keep children out of program.

Credits will be 50% of our regular daily rate or 50% of the daily parent portion* whichever is less, applied to the following month's fees unless adequate notice has been provided by the family of their withdrawal from our services in which case a partial refund will be issued within 30 days at the same rate.

*Credits will not be applied if a family's invoice has been covered in full by Child Care Subsidy or if the parent portion per day is less than \$25. The credit amount will not exceed the amount paid by a family on the invoice for which this credit will apply.

We will not provide a credit or refund for:

- Partial day closures (heat, water, or power outage, staffing shortages resulting in an early closure, etc.)

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- Full day closures resulting from building malfunctions (ex. Heat, water, power outage) or weather-related situations (tornado, flood, blizzard, wildfire)
- General absences (ex. vacation, illness, family choice to stay home for any reason)
- WHDCS request for a child to be removed in line with our illness or incident policy
- Changes to scheduling or termination notice provided after billing has already occurred

Administrative Records

Whispering Hills Day Care society keeps up to date records on both the children attending the programs and the employees working for WHDCS.

The child records hold information that was provided by the parents at time of registration as well as documents acquired throughout the child's time in the program. These files include child's daily attendance (e.g., arrival and departure times), child's name, birthdate, and home address; Parent/guardian(s)/Emergency Contacts name, physical home address, mailing address, and telephone numbers; incident reports; medical information; medical administration forms; developmental assessments and any other document recorded while the child is in attendance.

Employee files include copies of their Child Development Certificates, First Aid Certification, Criminal and Child Intervention Record Checks, and other documents pertaining to their employment with WHDCS.

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 Executive Director immediately. Families with incomplete (including unsigned consents) or outdated registration information will be turned away until the 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, physical home address and phone number.
- the parents name, physical home address and telephone numbers (home, work, and cell)
- 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.

HiMama

We believe parents and guardians are the most important people in a child's life. To keep families engaged and informed on their child's growth and development in our programs, we utilize the software application, HiMama. Our educators use this program, primarily, as a documentation tool to create

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learning stories and engage families in our curriculum. Each year parents and guardians will be required to complete an updated form with their current email address giving permission for our educators to communicate with you through photographs, learning stories, important messages, and updates of your child's time at the program. HiMama is free to download on any device and is one of the many ways our educators will engage families in their child(ren)'s learning and development.

Confidentiality

Whispering Hills Day Care 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 to or discussed with anyone other than those authorized to receive such information, unless disclosure is authorized by law. In addition, our educators are available to discuss your child's growth and development during our hours of operation but are not able to discuss these matters outside of our programs.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Whispering Hills Day Care 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.
- 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 Day Care Society
- To evaluate parent/guardian credit worthiness or to collect accounts, and, to provide yearly childcare receipts.
- To provide services and more information about Whispering Hills Day Care Society
- For other purposes, as may be determined by Whispering Hills Day Care Society acting responsibly and/or otherwise authorized or required by law.

Parent/guardians may revoke consent to use of this information as stated above at any time in writing to the Executive Director. Failure to consent may prohibit the child from accessing the services offered by Whispering Hills Day Care Society.

In the best interest of the child, Whispering Hills Day Care Society abides by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Children First Act of Alberta.

Photograph Policies

Whispering Hills Day Care Society realizes that parents/guardians do not 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 on a regular basis. And so, all members of WHDCS including staff, members of the Board and parents/guardians will adhere to the following Photograph Policy.

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Photos of the program, children, families, and staff will be taken with cameras belonging to WHDCS for the purpose of the program's displays, licensing reports, HiMama, to enhance the indoor environment and support the children's social/emotional development and will be offered to the families electronically via USB provided by them upon termination of their services. Alternatively, these photos may be shared via Google Drive. If using the cloud option, the folder will stay active for a period of 30 days before WHDCS will delete the files.

Photos of the program, children, families, and staff will only be taken using device's that belong to, and stay at, the program. Photos and videos will NOT be taken using personal cell phones or cameras belonging to staff and parents/guardians, webcams or other devices that are not belonging to WHDCS. Nor will members of the public be permitted to take photographs of the program or children while they are in attendance in our programs.

Photographs taken of children, families or staff and acquired by WHDCS containing identifiable images of children, families or staff will NOT appear on any social media or publicly anywhere on the internet including our website or advertisements.

Photographs of the programs and activities with non-identifiable features of children and families may be posted on the Whispering Hills Day Care Website and our social media pages and/or used for advertising and presentations for WHDCS or for educational purposes.

Each parent/guardian will be required to sign photography consents located on the WHDCS Agreements Forms.

Technology Policies

Purpose:

These Technology Policies have been developed to create specific regulations about the use of technological 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 their right to freedom of speech. This policy is instead designed to ensure that WHDCS's 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 and part-time employees of WHDCS
2. Volunteers, interns, summer students, and other non-paid workers
3. Parents/Guardians, family friends and relatives in the program's at WHDCS

Program Cell Phones:

The program cell phone 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 and field trips.

The program cell phones may be used by Educator's in the following ways:

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- To take photographs for documentation
- To back up photographs to their Google Drive (while on-site in our wi-fi range)

The program cell phones shall not be used in the following ways:

- To make personal calls
- To access the internet outside of the use listed above.

The program cell phone 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 Computer/Tablet Use

The office desktop computers are to be used by administrative staff only unless permission has been granted by the Executive or Program Director for a staff member to utilize this computer for programming purposes.

The program lap top computers and tablets are to be used in the following capacities:

- by parents/guardians and staff to sign in and out each day
- by program educators for research, documentation, program emails, HiMama, worksite checklists and forms, programming for the children, professional development, and educational purposes

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 following criteria has been met:

- The video or song have been pre-viewed by the staff from start to finish to ensure it does not contain any inappropriate material including but not limited to profanity, sexual connotation, and violence.
- The video or song are relevant to the program and the children's interests.
- The justification of this video or song use has been approved by the Executive or Program Director

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 Executive and Program Directors of WHDCS. WHDCS does not use the website and social media as a replacement of 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 parents/guardians. Social Media pages shall be used for the sharing of information relating to the childcare service. This includes Photographs, video/media packages, childcare related news posts, child activity updates, parenting and/or childcare articles, fundraising and local childcare initiatives. Information, photographs, and videos posted on the WHDCS social media pages will be subject to the WHDCS Freedom of Personal Information

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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. All inappropriate posts or content shall be removed from the pages immediately and the user will be reported and blocked from the site.

Family Video Surveillance

To ensure the safety and security of all children, staff, parents, and visitors, as well as the security of our childcare Centre, Whispering Hills Day Care University and Multiplex Day Care Centre are equipped with a 24-hour video surveillance system. Security cameras have been installed in the indoor playrooms & 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 does serve as a useful and timely investigation tool in the event 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 following list is just some of the many benefits of having security cameras installed in childcare Centre

Security cameras keep children and early childhood educators safe.

Owners/Executive Directors can better monitor the entire facility and supervise/observe staff's interactions with children, parents and with other staff members effectively.

Centre cameras is a tool to help provide peace of mind to our parents and our staff members if an incident occurs when we need to investigate and/or get licensing involved.

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 Director and Licensing Officers are allowed to view our security cameras or view video footage either at the Center's Main office at the site OR live video footage may be viewed remotely by directors at a different location when not on-site.

No audio is recorded during the recordings.

Video is recorded for 31 Days then overwrites. The recordings are kept in a secure location and are accessible only by the Director of WHDCS.

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 Policy

Attendance Record and Parent/guardian(s) Responsibilities:

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

The parent/guardian(s) is responsible to remove outdoor clothing, place belongings in the locker, put indoor footwear on, and sign the child into the program. At the time of pick up, the parent/guardian(s) must sign the child out, dress the child in outdoor clothing and footwear, and collect belongings. It is especially important that the parent/guardian(s) sign the child in/out every time. This is typically done electronically but may be done in writing in some programs.

Whenever the child is removed from or returned to the program, the time removed, and the time returned must be recorded (e.g., doctor appointments). This ensures the educators are aware of which children are in the program at any given time, particularly in the case of an emergency.

To receive the maximum benefits from our programs please drop-off your child by 9:00 a.m. **If your child is to be absent or late, please notify (by phone or email) the facility by 9:00 a.m.** as the children often go on outings. This is to enable the educators to know how many children they will have to thoughtfully plan for activities and meals for the day. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to bring their child to the group if they have left the facility. This includes the playground and nature walks. Educators of the Out of School Care program will notify the parent/guardian(s) via telephone if the child does not show up when expected (i.e., missed the bus). A voicemail will be left if available and an email or HiMama message will be sent if the educators cannot reach the parent/guardians after 2 attempts.

The educators of WHDCS are not responsible to take any child to appointments outside the program (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 educators in person of the changed pick-up arrangement.
- The person claiming the child must be over 18 years old unless they are the 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 the educators in person of the changed pick-up arrangement AND a signed note must also be provided.
- If the educators 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.
- Please note that in cases of separation/divorce, the educators cannot prevent either parent from picking up the child unless a copy of the legal custody order is in the files.

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- If an educator suspects the child is, or will be, in danger upon removal from the program the emergency procedure for “unfit pick up” will be implemented. See “WHDCS Emergency Preparedness Plan” for more information on this procedure.

Late Pick-up/Early Drop-off

To allow time for parents/guardians to check in with educators 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 educators if you are unable to pick up your child on time.

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

If children have not been picked-up by 5 minutes after closing, and the program has not been advised of the parent's tardiness, the following procedure will be 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 the 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.
 - Educators will not take legal responsibility for the child or shelter him/her outside the program for reasons of legal liability.
 - Should it be necessary to contact Emergency Social Services, parent(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 our opening time. At times, there may be educators within the facility, but they are not yet working.

In the case of either a late pick-up or early drop-off a charge of \$20 for every 15 minutes (or part of 15 minutes) will apply, for example if a child is picked up 20 minutes late the charge will be \$40, per program of late pick up. This is to cover our educators' overtime as well as the administration of these fees. Please respect our educator's time.

In the event there are repeated late pick-ups or early drop-offs (2 or more) the Executive Director will arrange a meeting to discuss a solution. If a solution cannot be met it will result in a termination of services and the removal of your child(ren) from our program.

Program Policies

Program Content

We, at Whispering Hills Day Care Society, believe a child learns more through play than by any other means. Our educators develop the programming collaboratively with the children and their families. Thus, each program is unique to those children, families, and educators participating within it.

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The framework describes [the] role of educator as a co-learner, a co-researcher, and a co-imaginer of possibilities. The prefix “co” reflects our belief in the importance of [the educator] co-constructing knowledge with children, their families, and colleagues, rather than only transmitting knowledge to the learners or leaving the learners to construct knowledge on their own.³

Our philosophy is rooted in holism and is put into practice through the recognition of each child’s physical, emotional, intellectual, creative, spiritual, and social growth. To achieve this, in accordance with *Flight*, our programs provide responsive environments both indoors and outdoors which provide time, space, materials, and the opportunity for participation of each child.

For example, we have many varied learning centers such as a dramatic playhouse (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, neighbourhood field trips, nature walks, special guests, and physical activities complement the different learning centers. Children learn to make their own decisions and assume responsibility by choosing at which center they will spend their time. There is a 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 educators in the room provide a variety of planned experiences in direct response to their observations of and participation in children's play. These planned activities are interest based and child guided. The educators' complete observations of children’s play and use these observations in partnership with the family, child, and their co-educators to identify interests and provide them with provocations to extend their play and learning. Occasionally, we do request items from home to support the children’s development and learning such as family photos, items for show and tell, etc. Parents and guardians are encouraged to participate in generating ideas and offering observations and insights to support the programming.

Inclusion

We welcome all families, irrespective of their gender, race, ethnic origin, home language, disability, age, nationality, national origin, LGBTQ2S+ community, religious beliefs, marital status, and/or social class. WHDCS is committed to providing diversity and equality to all individuals and community members.

Whispering Hills Day Care 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 educators, 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 educators to better meet those individual needs.

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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 behaviours; and physical disabilities. The environment is set up to meet the needs of each individual child and ensure independent access of all play materials. We will access community supports to the best of our ability and will work closely with families to ensure continuity of care between all members of each child's support group. We will assist families in seeking out referrals to access additional support within the community when necessary. Additional supports and individualized programming will be carried out within the inclusive environment during play experiences with peers.

Enhanced Ratio Agreements

Whispering Hills Day Care Society strives to have a valid Enhanced Ratio Agreement (i.e., Inclusive Child Care) in place with the Government of Alberta as long as such a contract is available and there is an identified need for enhanced ratio within our programs.

This contract will be utilized to build on the capacity of our educators to meet the needs of all children in an inclusive environment. Through this contract an inclusive childcare worker shall be on staff for a limited time, in accordance with the contract, to provide support for individually identified children, outside of ratios, to allow other educators to access professional learning, and to work with a supporting external agency to address the individual needs of those children identified with diverse needs and/or facing challenges in personal situations. The purpose is to eliminate barriers to successful inclusion of the child in daily program activities. These barriers may include but are not limited to displaying a challenging behaviour; speaking English as a second language; struggling with mental health in the family; or being diagnosed with a developmental challenge, special need, or disability.

Developmental Screening

Whispering Hills Day Care Society uses the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social Emotional (ASQ:SE) tool for screening and evaluating (reflecting on the findings) children's development and creating a support plan where appropriate. As such, at least one educator working for the society shall be trained to use this tool and will act as a mentor to untrained educators in completing these questionnaires. It is preferred that all early childhood educators are given the opportunity to be trained in the proper use of this tool; the Program Director shall facilitate these learning opportunities in consultation with the Executive Director and in accordance with the Society's professional learning policies. All parents/guardians are encouraged to complete their own questionnaire and will be permitted to view and obtain a copy of the questionnaire at any time. If there are any questions about the screening tool or concerns that come from the evaluation of the screen, WHDCS will advise parents/guardians to have further screening completed through Athabasca Community Health Services (call 780-675-2231).

Nap Time (Day Care Programs Only)

From approximately 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., there is a quiet time for all children. 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. Younger infants and toddlers will be provided more opportunities to nap in consultation

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with those individual child(ren)'s parents or guardians. To facilitate these varied nap times, educators will plan break times to maintain proper ratio in accordance with the ELCC Act and Regulation.

Lunch and Snack Times

Food/Meal Service: We will not be providing meal service for families at this time to better facilitate re-entry. Families will be required to provide 2 snacks and a lunch for their child to enjoy in our programs. All food is to be nut free and supplied in an enclosed lunch container with appropriate hot/cold storage for the day. Staff will assist children with accessing and managing their food. Families will be responsible for taking lunch kit home each day to wash containers. WHDCS can provide some suggestions for healthy lunch and snack options, including portions, to ensure children will have energy during the day.

All children are seated while eating and drinking and no beverages are provided to children while napping. All infant formulas are to be provided and prepared by the parent(s) along with appropriate equipment items and must be properly labelled and given directly to educators for proper storage. Parent(s) are responsible for washing infant and water bottles. Children self-feed and are encouraged to serve themselves when developmentally appropriate.

At least one staff member at each program holds an Alberta Food Handling Certificate

We are at 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 P.D. 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 and peanut/nut free.

Celebrations/Events

The Society and programs hold special events and celebrations throughout the year. These are based on the children's interests as well as 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 winter 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 of 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 facilities.

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Our society aims to provide at least 90 minutes of outdoor/gross motor play per day. The children will go outside an average of 3-5 hours every day unless the weather including the wind-chill is colder than -20 Celsius, in which case the educators may reduce the amount of time spent outside using sound judgement, including determining if the children are dressed appropriately. We also generally avoid going outside when the UV index is at its highest or there is severe weather.

Children must be provided with appropriate outdoor wear each day:

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

A note on children being properly dressed outdoors:

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 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 the CSA Standards. The outdoor play area is free of toxic plants.

Guidelines for Outdoors

Activities Educators will use the following guidelines to determine if outdoor activities are appropriate for children:

Air Quality Health Index

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Excellent 0 – 19:	The air quality is ideal for most individuals; enjoy your normal outdoor activities.
Fair 20 – 49:	The air quality is generally acceptable for most individuals. However, sensitive groups may experience minor to moderate symptoms from long-term exposure
Poor 50 – 99	The air has reached a high level of pollution and is unhealthy for sensitive groups. Reduce time spent outside if you are feeling symptoms such as difficulty breathing or throat irritation.
Unhealthy 100 – 149	Health effects can be immediately felt by sensitive groups. Healthy individuals may have trouble breathing and throat irritation with prolonged exposure. Limit outdoor activity.
Very Unhealthy 150 – 249	Health effects will be immediately felt by sensitive groups and should avoid outdoor activity. Healthy individuals are likely to experience difficulty breathing and throat irritation; consider staying indoors and rescheduling
Dangerous 250+:	Any exposure to the air, even for a few minutes, can lead to serious health effects on everybody. Avoid outdoor activities.

Temperature:

- **Extreme Heat** -Temperatures of 34C or above. Outdoor activities are restricted. Children will stay indoors.
- **Heat Warning** - Temperature of 29C or above Outside activities permitted. Special accommodation may be provided for children with medical conditions. Limit outside activities to a maximum of 30 minutes. Proper hydration and UV protection is required.
- **Moderate Heat Risk** - 25C & above Outside activities permitted. Proper hydration and UV protection is required.
- **Low Heat Risk** - 24C & below No restrictions. Proper hydration and UV protection is required.
- **Extreme Cold** - Temperature of -25C or colder including the windchill Outdoor activities are restricted. Children will stay indoors.
- **Moderate Cold** - Temperature of -15C to -25C including the windchill Outside activities permitted. Special accommodation is to be provided for children with medical conditions. Limit outside activities to 30 minutes.
- **Low Cold Risk** - Warmer than -10C including the windchill Outside activities permitted.

Air Quality Index will be sourced from:

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- Current Conditions: Environment Canada - Air Quality Health Index [Athabasca, Alberta, Canada Air Quality Index | AccuWeather](#)

Temperatures and Weather Warnings will be sourced from:

- [Athabasca, AB - 7 Day Forecast - Environment Canada \(weather.gc.ca\)](#)

Precipitation

Outside activities will occur when it is raining or snowing, unless Weather Alerts indicate that outdoor activities present an elevated risk. During Weather Warnings, educators should be aware of the surroundings and ready to move indoors if conditions turn inclement or a Weather Alert is issued.

Field Trips and Program Visitors

The children and educators at our University Day Care Site and the Multiplex Day Care Site regularly go on neighborhood walks including select posted Muskeg Creek Trails directly adjacent to Athabasca University or may visit the other day care 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 to areas within walking distance of the program and after the Executive Director or designate has 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, educators will record the walk area including the time they left, the time they expect to return, and their program cell phone number at the front for all parents/guardians and educators. A map of regularly visited areas will be posted at each program for reference.

Educators will bring the program backpack containing first aid supplies, the program cell phone, camera, and portable records each time they leave the facility.

At least two educators (or more if ratio requires) including one level 2 or 3 educator must be present to leave the facility with the children.

Parent/guardian(s) are advised of any planned field trips beyond our neighbourhood 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 required ratio for the program to ensure adequate supervision. Educators will review field trip guidelines with both the children and volunteers that will be accompanying us on the trip. Educators and volunteers will ensure the children are always in sight and that they are actively engaged in the children's activities. If a parent/guardian does not permit their child to participate on a field trip they may be requested to find alternative care as all educators 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 always accounted for. The level 2 or 3 educators will carry the program cell phone and backpack containing these portable records, consent forms, the first aid kit and emergency numbers. Children will be returned to the facility at the end of the field trip, they will not be left at any other location.

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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' sign the Oath of Confidentiality for Volunteers form.

Masks are encouraged for all adults entering our facility staying longer than 15 minutes and all Volunteers are encouraged to wear a mask during outside activities as well. Educators do not need to wear a mask during work hours, so we request parents and guardians to distance themselves from other families and educators as much as possible within the facility. Please respect the space of other families.

Childcare programs can help protect the health of their educators and families during a pandemic by continuing all current health related procedures and implementing outbreak cleaning precautions (see Outbreak Management in WHDCS Policies and Procedures). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, Whispering Hills Day Care Society has created and implemented the following re-entry policies and procedures.

Child Guidance Philosophy

Our child guidance policy is based on developmentally appropriate communication methods and best practices. This philosophy is guided by practices from the Access, Support, and Participation (ASaP) model applied and developed by Getting Ready for Inclusion Today (GRIT), and the practice of relationships and role of the educator described in *Flight*. This policy is in place to promote positive self-esteem, respect, independence, and responsibility for one's actions.

Educators use active listening and I-messages to ensure each child is heard and understands the situation. Educators use verbal communication, physical cues (such as hand signals) and visuals in the room to support and guide children and promote prosocial skill building. Additionally, we have a variety of resources such as social stories, posters, fidget toys and cushions, and other sensory objects, and the environment is designed to support children who require quieter areas to play as well as those who may require more active play.

We use logical and natural consequences when dealing with challenging behaviours. Punishment, such as time outs and removal of privileges, is not a method used in our programs. Our purpose is to focus on the positive behaviour of the children rather than the negative behavior.

Children will be encouraged to use their words, hear each other's words or to recognize their facial expressions, and to offer hugs or help to correct the situation (ex. 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.

When required, educators record behaviour observations to help inform them on what is happening for the child and their challenging behaviour. We work with parents/guardians to ensure the best support is given to those children who may develop or display challenging behaviours. Families are consulted about their child's likes, dislikes, hopes, fears, beliefs, cultures, and traditions so that a bridge between home and the program is established. We encourage continuity between home and the program when dealing with challenging behaviours in children.

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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.
- Belittling and degrading statements or any other form of verbal abuse.
- Time outs, confinement, or isolation

NO FORM OF ABUSE WILL BE TOLERATED FROM STAFF OR PARENTS/GUARDIANS DIRECTED TOWARD CHILDREN OR STAFF OF WHDCS.

Examples of Child Guidance Practices

Infants/Toddlers (0 to 36 months):

- Adults will model acceptable behaviour.
- Child guidance will be caring and consistent.
- Praise appropriate behaviours.
- Educators will recognize children's need for individual attention or quiet one to one activity and will observe children's demeanors throughout the day.
- Natural consequences should be immediate, predictable, reasonable, and consistent.
- Acceptable consequences include but are not limited to redirecting and providing alternatives.
- Respond to needs promptly by encouragement, comfort, new props, additional space, etc.
- Speak directly to the child(ren) requesting specific behaviour.
- Allow the child an opportunity to respond appropriately. Give support if necessary.
- Set limits and expectations.
- Biting and hitting are developmentally appropriate behaviours in this age group and educators will involve parent(s) in problem solving.
- Educators will use visuals, social stories, and sensory objects to support the development of self-regulation skills.

36 months and over:

- Child guidance will be firm, caring, and consistent.
- Praise appropriate behaviours.
- Explain why certain behaviours are inappropriate.
- Educators encourage independent problem solving between children.

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- Use natural consequences with loving/helpful attitude.
- Give children choices.
- Consequences of inappropriate behaviours must be natural and respect the child's spiritual, emotional and physical well-being.
- Natural consequences should be immediate, predictable, reasonable, and consistent.
- Acceptable consequences include but are not limited to redirecting and providing alternatives.
- Educators will recognize children's need for individual attention, quiet one to one activity and observe children's moods, problems etc.
- Children will be taught to express feelings verbally.
- Respond to needs promptly by encouragement, comfort, new props, additional space, etc.
- Speak directly to the child(ren) requesting specific behaviour.
- Allow the child an opportunity to respond appropriately. Give support if necessary.
- Set limits and expectations.
- Biting and hitting are developmentally appropriate behaviours in this age group and educators will involve parent(s) in developing an action plan.
- Educators will use visuals, social stories, and sensory objects to support the development of self-regulation skills.
- Educators use language which promotes positive self-talk.

School-aged:

- Child guidance will be firm, caring, and consistent.
- Respond to needs promptly by encouragement, comfort, new props, additional space, etc.
- Speak directly to the child(ren) requesting specific behaviour.
- Allow the child an opportunity to respond appropriately. Give support if necessary.
- Set limits and expectations.
- Educators will encourage independent problem solving between children.
- Educators will involve parent/guardian(s) in developing an action plan.
- No form of Bullying or other discriminating behavior will be tolerated.
- Educators use language which promotes positive self-talk.

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Removal of the Child:

Discussions with the child's parents or guardians, the child care center's staff, and possibly external professionals (e.g., child psychologists or social workers), to support the collaboration of creating a behaviour plan. After a behaviour plan have been put in place and all possible avenues have been explored, in the best interest of the classroom a decision to remove the child from the program may be made. This could include factors such as behavioral issues, health concerns, non-compliance with center policies, or endangering the safety of themselves or others.

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 serves to protect 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 bit occurs.

Why a child may bite

- **Teething:** Babies and toddlers may bite to alleviate the discomfort and pain associated with teething. Biting can provide pressure on the gums, which might temporarily relieve the discomfort.
- **Exploration:** Young children often use their mouths to explore their environment. Biting might be a way for them to learn about textures, tastes, and the physical world around them.
- **Communication:** Children who have not yet developed advanced language skills might resort to biting as a way to communicate their needs, frustrations, or desires. They might bite when they're hungry, tired, or want attention.
- **Expression of Emotions:** Children might bite as a way to express emotions like anger, frustration, or excitement. They might not yet have the verbal skills to convey these emotions effectively.
- **Social Interaction:** Some children may bite in social situations to get a reaction from others. This could be a way of testing boundaries or seeking attention, even if it's negative attention.

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- **Imitating:** Children often imitate the behavior of those around them, including adults and peers. If they see someone else biting, they might try it themselves.
- **Sensory Stimulation:** Biting might offer sensory input that is satisfying or soothing to some children. The act of biting down can provide sensory feedback that they find enjoyable.
- **Lack of Self-Control:** Young children are still developing self-control and emotional regulation. Biting might occur when they are overwhelmed by emotions and haven't yet learned healthier ways to cope.
- **Exploration of Boundaries:** Biting can also be a way for children to test boundaries and see how others respond to their behavior. They may be curious to see how far they can push limits.
- **Attention-Seeking:** Children might bite if they believe it will get them attention from caregivers or peers, even if it's negative attention.

When Biting Does Occur:

Our Educator strongly disapproves of biting. The Educator job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

For the child that was bitten:

- 1. The Educator will comfort the child. First aid is given to the bite. Ice will be provided, and the area is to be cleaned with soap and water and covered with a bandage if needed.
- 2. The Educator will immediately notify office staff, at which time parents are notified.
- 3. An Incident Report will be completed, documenting the incident.
- 4. Parents may request a conference with the Director to discuss any concerns/questions.

For the child that bit:

- 1. The Educator will tell the child "ouch that hurts our friend, you can bite this (give an alternative) and show the child how he/she hurt their friend.
- 2. The child may be remove from the play to reflect on what happened and will be reintroduced to the group once their bodies have calmed down.
- 3. The parents are notified on Himama
- 4. An Incident Report will be completed, documenting the incident.

When Biting Continues:

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1. If Educator is available, the child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom Educator to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause.
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behaviour.
4. The child will be provided with a teething ring or other appropriate teething toy.
5. The Directors will ensure the Educator has adequate resources and training necessary to keep the children active and engaged in supervised activities.
6. The Directors will evaluate the biting log to determine the cause of the biting and make suggestions to the parent and teacher to stop the biting. The Directors will provide literature to the parents and determine whether or not the Educator needs additional training. The Director will document all the information.
7. The Directors will schedule a meeting with the parents of the child who is biting to develop a plan for the home and the center to stop the biting to help us understand the full picture. Is this happening at home as well, has there been changes that might have occurred in the child's routine/daily life recently. This gives us more of the opportunity to support the child.

When Biting Becomes Excessive:

1. If a child bites through-out the day, more than 2 times in which a child skin has been broken an Educator will call the parent to pick up the child for the remainder of the day (no refund)
2. After all preventative steps have been tried by the staff members, if the child continues to bite routinely the Director when Chronic biting may require that a child be suspended from enrollment for a period of time. If a child is suspended, the parent will be informed that the child may return to the center as soon as the biting once the program is equipped to provide further support such as further intervention from a specialist or an additional staff member is able to work with the child.
3. If the child returns to the center, continues to bite, and is endangering the other children, the child may be terminated from the program.

Working with External Agencies and Supports

To provide the best support for families and children in care, Whispering Hills Day Care 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 pamphlets and posters, on our website, and upon request.

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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 experience difficulty accessing community resources and services. We will facilitate the delivery of supports and services within the childcare program so the parent/guardian 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 during professional dealings with Whispering Hills Day Care Society, in accordance with the Society's privacy policies.

Families working with WHDCS, and external agencies will sign a document for the consent to release specific information and to whom. These agreements will be subject to WHDCS privacy policies.

When necessary, WHDCS will consult with community organizations, cultural groups and representatives, and other human services agencies 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 Procedure

Indoor Supervision

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

Each program has a phone for educators to call if assistance is needed from the Program or Executive Director.

Educators complete head counts regularly to ensure the number of children matches the number on the whiteboard or clipboard. A clipboard containing the day's attendance and headcount checklist must be

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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 educators complete a head count 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 are always safe. This is recorded on the designated clipboard containing the day's attendance and head count checklist.

The last educator in the room/area will do a complete check of the room before leaving even after completing the final headcount.

One educator will oversee checking the playground or field house/gymnasium for any potential hazards or potential dangers before the children enter the space. The playground checklist will be filled out by this educator at the time of arrival to the playground/field house/gymnasium.

Outdoor Supervision

There needs to be at least two educators when **leaving the facility with children** (or more if needed to maintain ratio) **including at least one level 2 or 3 Educator**. The educators 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. Educators must take the backpack containing portable records and first aid supplies and the program cell phone when leaving the facility with children. This cell phone must be charged, on vibrate and ring, and, on the Level 2 or 3 educator always when outside of the facility.

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

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

Groups must always stay together when on an off-site walk/field trip. No educator 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, a level 2 or 3 educator needs to be with each group and all 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).

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Incident Reporting Procedure

Educators will fill out a basic incident/accident form for each child involved whenever an incident/accident should occur at the program. Incident/accidents include but are not limited to physical disputes between children or any injury a child may obtain such as a scraped knee or fall. Educators will sign this form; parents will review and sign the form as soon as possible and it will be returned to the Executive Director to review and sign. This form will then be filed in the administrative files.

All incidents should be assessed as to whether it is considered a 'reportable incident.' The twelve critical incidents are posted at each program and include: death; injury; allegation 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; and child left on premises after hours. If an incident is reportable the Executive Director or designate is to be informed and the parent/guardian and our Licensing officer is to be contacted immediately.

If any type of head injury should occur an incident report is to be filed and the parent/guardian and Executive Director or designate are to be contacted immediately. The Executive or designate will then determine whether it is deemed reportable based upon the twelve types of incidents.

Immediately following a reportable incident, the Executive Director or designate and the educators involved will file the "Incident Report" for Child Care Licensing not more than 48 hours following the incident.

WHDCS reports on all 'reportable incidents' at the end of each calendar year using the Incident Reporting Annual Summary and Analysis Report found on the Alberta Human Services Website.

Missing Child Procedure

The following information is a general response to a missing or abducted child:

If a child is not accounted for at any time, the educators are to notify the executive director, program director or designate immediately. And proceed with the following:

- Assign educators to stay with the children who are left.
- The other educators are to complete a search of the immediate surroundings. Any area that a child could potentially hide should be searched as well as the outdoor areas of the facility.
- If the child is found during this initial search the director or designate will contact the child's parent/guardians and Child Care Licensing to report the incident and a report needs to be filed with Child Care Licensing.
- If the child is not located after all potential hiding spots and immediate outdoor areas have been searched, the facility director or designate will contact the child's parent/guardians, Child Care Licensing and the RCMP.
- Begin the lock down procedure. All exits should be monitored by employees letting no one in or out of the facility/area.

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- The child's information sheet and picture should be brought out and shown to authorities upon arrival. The following information should also be written down: a description of the clothing the child is wearing that day; the time in which the child was noticed to be missing; if child abduction is suspected were any suspicious vehicles or persons located around the facility? If so, give a description of the person or vehicle.
- The facility director or designate will always remain onsite until the child has been found or until otherwise directed by authorities.
- Directly following this an Incident Report needs to be filed with Child Care Licensing. See Incident Reporting Procedure.

Health and Safety Related Policies and Procedures

Potential Health Risks

The Whispering Hills Day Care Society strongly believes that we will all work together to stop all potential health risks and outbreaks by using the following procedures: wash hands with warm water after changing from such activities as playing in the sand or outside, wiping of noses, sneezing, toileting. Parents/guardians 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
- undiagnosed rash/skin condition or cough.
- 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 disease we see children being sent home for:

- Has a continuous runny nose. Severe runny noses can indicate that the child may be infectious or too ill to be at the centre.
 - Head lice
 - Hand, foot, and mouth
 - Pinkeye
 - Strep throat
 - Ringworm
 - Whooping cough
 - Croup
 - Chicken pox
 - Irritable, continuous cry, or requires more attention than an employee can provide without affecting the health and safety of other children in the centre.
- Minimum 24-hour absence from the program

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- Clear of signs and symptoms and can fully participate in all activities including outdoor activities
- Meet the requirements as outlined by Alberta Health Service

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

If a child is observed to have these symptoms the educator involved will contact the parent/guardian(s) immediately to withdraw the child from the program. 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 as soon as possible. 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 parents/guardians arrive.

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 the Executive Director or designate immediately. Then the Executive Director will contact the Director (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 director forthwith in the manner required by the director.

When a child is ill the educators will use an illness log form and record the following: children who are ill including the name of the child, date the child was observed to be ill, name of educator who identified the child was ill, time the parent was initially contacted, name of educator 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 obtaining medical assistance for the injured child, (i.e., ambulance) the cost will be paid for by the parent/guardians. Health care will only be given to a child when 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 Executive Director if a medical slip is required for re-admission to the program.

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 (about 2 days)).

The program supervisor or Executive Director must report all suspected Outbreaks to the local Health Unit and their recommendations will be followed precisely. During an outbreak, we are responsible to submit line lists daily to Alberta Health Services who will follow up with families and assess the situation. Whispering Hills Day Care Society will discontinue the use of communal play equipment (e.g., water play tables, sand play tables, sensory tables (e.g., confetti, paper, etc.), playdough, and other materials that cannot be readily cleaned until the outbreak is over.

The program supervisor or Executive Director will give written notice to all parents/guardians within twenty-four (24) hours if a communicable disease breaks out in the program. Parent/guardian(s) shall be required to notify the program within twenty-four (24) hours if a communicable disease breaks out in

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their home. If a child is suspected of having a communicable disease in the program, the program supervisor or Executive Director will contact the parents/guardian(s) to have the child immediately removed. The parent/guardian(s) will be asked to take the child for a medical examination to confirm suspected illness.

In the case of an Outbreak the child may not return to the program until all symptoms have ceased for a period of not less than 48 hours.

Care for Essential Service Workers

In the event a program closure is sustained due to a staffing shortage the Executive Director 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.

Meals may or may not be provided on these days and will be dependent on which facility is providing care and the availability of cook staff.

Parents and guardians must confirm their attendance and their job position with the executive director 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
- 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

Administration of Medicine

If a child requires medication either short term or long term the parent/guardian(s) must complete a Medical Consent Form before educators can administer the medication. This form must indicate the time the medication is to be given to the child and, if appropriate, the symptoms that need to be present for the medication to be administered. They must send all medications for their child in the original container, clearly labeled with the physician’s name, child’s name, date of issue, when it was last given, and instructions for administration. If the medication instructions and the instructions given by the parent do not match the medication will NOT be administered. The educators will document the time and method of administration, the amount administered and the initials of the person who administered the

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medication on the Medical Consent Form. Non-prescribed medications will not be administered at the program. 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 educators). When finished, all medication will be given back to the parent for proper disposal.

Special Situation

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

Smoke Free Environment

Whispering Hills Day Care Society programs are all located 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.

Hand-Washing Procedure

Each educator and/or volunteer will follow the Hand-Washing Procedure for themselves and children: before and after preparing, serving, or eating snacks and meals; after using the washroom or diapering; after wiping or blowing noses or coughing; after playing in the sand or other sensory table; and as needed whenever hands become soiled.

- Wet hands under warm water
- Apply Soap and lather thoroughly.
- Rub palms, spaces between fingers, backs of hands and wrists.
- Rub fingers, fingertips, and thumbs
- Rinse under warm running water
- Pat hands dry with a paper towel.
- Turn off tap with paper towel.

For infants and toddlers, educators will wash using the 'hand over hand' method.

All children will use one-time use paper towels to dry their hands to prevent cross contamination.

Sanitization within the Facility

The educators will ensure that regular disinfecting of furnishings, equipment and play materials is noted on a daily/weekly/monthly checklist. 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.

Diaper Changing Procedure

Diaper changing can result in the contamination of the environment and hands (educator/volunteer/parent/guardian/child) with disease-causing microorganisms found in feces. To prevent the spread of illness in our Day Care programs, the following procedure is to be followed:

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- Wash hands and organize needed supplies.
- Place a disposable covering (paper towel) on the diaper changing table.
- Educators must use single use gloves, put them on now.
- Hold the child away from your body and lay the child on the paper towel.
- Prevent falls by fastening child with safety belt or ensuring that an appropriate guard is in place on the table.
- Remove the soiled diaper (and soiled clothes if necessary) and discard disposable diaper in a plastic -receptacle OR put soiled re-usable diapers and/or soiled clothes, without rinsing, in a plastic bag to be given to parents.
- Clean child's bottom with the child's own pre-moistened disposable towelette or a dampened, single-use disposable towel. Discard soiled towelette/towel in a plastic-lined receptacle.
- If applying ointment, use a disposable wooden applicator or Q-tip.
- Remove the disposable covering (paper towel) from beneath the child.
- Diaper and dress the child. Only use diapers belonging to that child. If diapers are not available and the child is not toilet trained, a phone call should be placed to the parent/guardian for permission to temporarily use diapers and/or wipes that have been donated to or purchased by the childcare program.
- Remove and dispose of gloves in the plastic-lined receptacle.
- Wash the child's hands with soap, warm running water and use paper towels to dry.
- Return the child to the activity area. Clean and disinfect the diapering area, all equipment or supplies that were touched and soiled (including crib or cot if needed.)
- Wash your hands using soap, warm running water, and paper towels.

Protocol for Handling Suspected Child Abuse

Child abuse is defined as any act of maltreatment by a parent or guardian that results in injury or harm. Child abuse includes but is not limited to neglect, emotional injury, physical abuse, and sexual abuse.

You are obligated to report suspected child abuse regardless of advice or direction not to report.

The protocol for handling suspected child abuse is as follows:

- DON'T approach the parent or guardian with your suspicions if you believe the child(ren) is being abused.
- Document suspicions and share this documentation with the Executive Director.
- Contact our local Child and Family Services Authority at 780-675-2243 or our region's main office at 780-305-2440 or call the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-387-5473
- Provide as much detailed information as possible about the child and your suspicions.
- Continue to observe and record suspicions. No one aside from an intervention worker from Child and Family Services should interview the child.
- Follow up with an intervention worker who may come to the facility to interview the child.

Reports of abuse are confidential. See WHDCS Code of Ethics and job descriptions for further information on confidentiality in our programs.

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EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Fire Department	9-1-1
Ambulance	9-1-1
Police Department	9-1-1
Athabasca RCMP	780-675-4252
Poison & Drug Information Service	1-800-332-1414
North Central Alberta Child & Family Services	1-780-305-2444
Child Abuse Hotline	1-800-387-5437
Athabasca Disaster Services	780-675-2063
Athabasca Healthcare Centre (Hospital)	780-675-6000
Athabasca Community Health Services	780-675-2231
Insurance Agency: The Co-operators Policy # 03295371	780-675-5100
Alberta Fish & Wildlife, Athabasca	780-675-2419

Multiplex Day Care Program Evacuation Site

- Muster Point: marked by a green sign in the parking lot or the baseball diamonds.

University Day Care Program Evacuation Site

- Muster Point: tree line adjacent to the playground

Out of School Care Program Evacuation Site

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

WHISPERING HILLS DAY CARE SOCIETY

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Purpose

We have developed this emergency preparedness plan to provide safe care for our children should an emergency or disaster occur during the program day. A copy of this plan is always available for review at all three program locations. Employees are introduced to this plan during orientation. We review the plan with all employees annually.

Roles and Responsibilities

Everyone has a role in Disaster Planning and Response

WHDCS Executive Director, Program Director, and/or Alternate Site Supervisor

- Conducts a hazard vulnerability analysis of the area and identifies potential disaster situations.
- Coordinates repairs of potential dangers identified with management and facility maintenance.
- Develops (with the help of a planning team) the facility disaster plan in conjunction with local emergency management officials.
- Assures that staff and children are trained.
- Assigns emergency responsibilities to staff members. (Assign a specific person to maintain and transport pertinent files which include children's names and contact information, medical information, photos as well as employee emergency information in the event of an evacuation.)
- Secures necessary training for staff members (CPR and First Aid)
- Conducts drills and initiates plan revisions based on drill evaluations.
- Keeps parents and staff members informed of emergency plan revisions.
- Conducts periodic safety checks of the physical facility and equipment.

WHDCS Staff

- Participates in developing the emergency plan.
- Knows and understands their role and responsibilities during an emergency.
- Participates in emergency preparedness training and drills.
- Assumes responsibility for taking emergency supplies packs with them in the event of an evacuation.
- Helps children develop confidence in their ability to care for themselves.
- Conducts headcounts and assists children in carrying out the plan (i.e., evacuation, lock-down, etc.) in the event of an emergency or drill.

Facility Maintenance Personnel

- Conducts periodic safety inspections of the facility according to policy.
- Identifies shut off valves and switches for gas, oil, water, and electricity.
- Shuts-off ventilating system in an emergency.
- Practices Lock Down procedures

WHISPERING HILLS DAY CARE SOCIETY

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Facility Food Service Personnel

- Maintains seventy-two hours of supplies of non-perishable food and water for emergency use.
- Labels stockpiled food/water with date stored. Replenish stocked supplies every six months.

Parents/Guardians

- Become familiar with the emergency plan and procedures they need to follow.
- Assist facility manager in developing the plan.
- Provide facility with emergency phone numbers and information regarding time required to pick up child in the event of an emergency.

The Executive Director, Program Director and educators are considered responsible for the safety of children and will coordinate actions with the community's public safety officials, landlords, and families of the children in their program. We recognize that the safety and well-being of children and educators shall always take priority over all other considerations. If a childcare program is in a larger building which has its own emergency response plan, their plan should be incorporated into the larger response plan. Emergency instructions and direction will be taken from the local emergency agency in charge of the event. The Executive Director, Program Director, Site Supervisor or designate will oversee the situation at their facility. The Executive Director should follow all requests from emergency personnel on scene, i.e., Fire, Police and EMS. In the Executive Director's absence, the Program Director, Site Supervisor or designate will oversee the emergency response.

Emergency Plan

In the event of an emergency this Emergency Plan will be activated.

Causes for activation of the emergency plan include but are not limited to fire, bomb threat, explosion, flood, severe thunderstorm, severe winter storm, hurricane, tornado, toxic fumes, electrical, heat, water, and structural failure.

Possible scenarios include Shelter-in-place, on-site evacuation, and off-site evacuation.

Evacuation routes are posted in each area and in public view showing exits and directional paths for traffic flow. Copies of the floor plan shall be given to the local Fire Department and the local Emergency Management Agency.

In the event of a major environmental hazard that necessitates a large evacuation such as several neighborhoods, a city/town or geographical area, due to a large non-confined hazard, the local government agency will determine the mass shelter location. All employees are to accompany their assigned children to the shelter and remain with them while family/guardian/emergency contacts are notified, and arrangements are made for their pickup.

When children with special needs are in the facility employees will be assigned to individual children for evacuation.

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All personnel will receive orientation and training in his or her responsibilities within the plan annually. In addition, all personnel should carry or know the location of “Quick Reference Guides” for emergency procedures.

Each child will receive training concerning emergency evacuation procedures in the form of drills.

Quarterly drills are to be conducted and all possible emergency scenarios covered on a rotating basis. Written reviews of the drills are kept with the plan for reference and updating of plan.

An employee will be designated to process parents/guardians as they pick up their children.

In the event parents/guardians are unable to pick up their children, the childcare center will remain open, and the children will be cared for until picked up by their parent /legal guardian or designated person (with proper identification).

The plan will be reviewed annually and updated as needed. A copy of a summary of this plan should be forwarded to the local Fire Department and Emergency Management Agency.

Staff Responsibilities

Executive Director, Program Director or Designee Responsibilities:

- Responsible for making the call to 911.
- Responsible for keeping the building attendance list accurate and up-to-date and bringing the list when evacuating or sheltering in place.
- Responsible for ensuring that the first aid kit is present during an emergency.
- Responsible for providing first aid if needed.
- Responsible for dispensing medications to childcare attendees and staff.
- Responsible for ensuring all childcare attendees, staff, and guests are accounted for.
- Person acting as searcher to ensure that everyone has left the building. Responsible for checking restrooms, vacant rooms, storage areas, and other spaces children may be hiding.
- Responsible for closing windows and doors before evacuating.
- Responsible for organizing and documenting information at the designated childcare attendee pick-up point.

Early Childhood Educator and/or Support Staff Member of the Program Responsibilities:

- Responsible for carrying off-site the Emergency Supply Pack(s).
- Responsible for providing first aid if needed.
- Responsible for dispensing medications to childcare attendees and staff.
- Person to lead evacuation lines.
- Responsible for evacuating children with special needs.
- Responsible for taking off-site the emergency contact information for all childcare attendees and staff.

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The preceding information should be discussed with every facility staff member to help reduce confusion during an emergency. This information should be kept with the plan and/or in a location that is easily accessed.

General Evacuation Procedures:

In the event of a fire, inclement weather, facility emergency, bomb threat, or any other situation that results in the facility needing to be evacuated, all staff should adhere to the following.

- The Executive Director or designate will call 911 and indicate the need for assistance.
- Evacuate all children and staff members to a designated safe area away from the building as quickly as possible.
- **Before** leaving the facility, confirm attendance by conducting a **Head Count** to ensure all children and staff members are accounted for. Bring attendance list along to evacuation site. If possible, a staff member should bring along children's and staff's records.
- During the evacuation, children and staff should adhere to predetermined evacuation routes as much as possible. However, staff should not hesitate to alter the designated route if it is unsafe.
- The staff will evacuate children as follows:
 - **INFANTS:** Put up to four non-mobile babies in an evacuation crib or put two infants in rescue packs carried over shoulders of staff or carriers to evacuate.
 - **TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS:** Gather children in a group and supervise an orderly evacuation to the designated assembly area.
 - **CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:** These children will be assisted by specific staff members who have been trained in their role.
- Emergency disaster packs and backpacks containing the facility cellular phone, first aid kit, and portable records are carried out by designated staff.
- Once childcare attendees and staff report to the designated safe area, a **second Head Count** should be made to ensure that everyone has exited the building safely.
- **No person should return into the facility until it is deemed safe by the proper authorities.**

Emergency Lock-Down Procedures

Lock-Down procedures will be used in situations that may result in harm to persons inside the Child Care facility. These situations include but are not limited to a shooting, hostage incident, intruder, trespassing, disturbance, or at the discretion of the building director, designee, or public safety personnel.

- The building director or designee will announce the "Lock-Down" over the public-address system or other designated system. The alert may be made using a pre-selected code word.
- In a "Lock-Down situation all children are kept in classrooms or other designated locations that are away from the danger.
- Staff members are responsible for accounting for children and ensuring that no one leaves the classroom or safe area.
- Facility maintenance personnel secure building entrances, ensuring that no unauthorized individuals leave or enter the building.

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- Staff and children remain in the classroom locking the classroom door, if possible, turning off the lights, covering the windows, encourage children to get under desks, behind cabinets, etc. and (if possible) engage in quiet story time activities with the children until “all clear” is announced.

Emergency Procedures:

Fire

In case of a fire

1. Fire alarm should be pulled.
2. The area should be evacuated immediately.
3. 911 should be notified of fire location.

Evaluate the situation:

1. Where the fire is located or the location of the fire within the facility
2. The size of the fire
3. The nature of the fire

The nature of the fire is key in determining a course of action. Smoke color may indicate the potential danger of the situation as follows:

- **Yellow smoke** may indicate the presence of toxic gases. Evacuation should proceed **immediately**, and no effort should be made to extinguish the flame.
- **Gray smoke with brown wisps** is indicative of any electrical fire. Again, the area should be **evacuated immediately**, and all should stay clear of the area.
- **Gray-black smoke is indicative** of a primary fire. The priority remains evacuation of the immediate area, call 911 and then decide whether to try to extinguish the fire. This should only take place if there is no imminent danger of smoke inhalation to the staff and if the staff has received training specific to fire extinguisher use.

Life safety is our priority. No matter how small or large the fire is, an evacuation should begin and 911 should be called.

If the fire is small and is not located in a room where childcare attendees are present, a fire extinguisher may be used to put out the fire. This should only be done if the staff responding to the fire has received the proper training. In addition, the staff should not fight the fire if there is any imminent threat to their safety.

The Childcare Facility’s fire extinguishers are in the following areas:

- Multiplex Daycare site: Beside the front entrance door inside the room
- University Daycare site: On the wall near the fridge in the kitchen
- Out of School Care, WHPS: In the hallway on the wall opposite the classroom door

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A **HEAD COUNT** of all the childcare attendees and staff should be taken before, during and following the evacuation to ensure that everyone is out of the building. If there is any threat to the children and staff at the designated evacuation site, an immediate evacuation to a different location is necessary.

The Executive Director or designate should go to a visible location to help direct the fire department to the facility. Once the fire department arrives on scene, the facility director or designee should establish contact with the fire department official to discuss what information is needed by the fire department.

When possible, all windows and doors in the facility should be shut, and all electrical switches should be in the off position. This should be done while keeping in mind that both the children and staff need to be evacuated in the shortest time possible.

The Executive Director or designate should make sure no child or staff member attempts to re-enter the facility until cleared by the fire department.

Bomb Threats

Any bomb threat should be taken seriously and treated as a real situation until proven otherwise. Any suspicious packages or letters should be reported to authorities.

Evacuation should be out of the facility and to another location as far from the facility as possible.

A **HEAD COUNT** of all the children and staff should be taken before, during and following the evacuation to ensure that everyone is out of the building. If there is any threat to the children and staff at the designated evacuation site, an immediate evacuation to a different location is necessary.

Upon arrival of the law enforcement response team, the Executive Director or designate will assist with any questions that the law enforcement response team may have.

No person should enter the facility until the law enforcement response team has been consulted and the situation has been resolved.

Telephone Threat

The staff member taking the call should notify another staff member that a bomb threat is in progress so that:

- The building may be evacuated immediately.
- The Executive Director or designate will contact local law enforcement via 911.
- **The staff member talking to the caller should keep the caller on the line as long as possible.**
- Information should be recorded as quickly and accurately as possible. The following information should be noted:
 - The time the call was received.
 - The caller's exact words
 - A description of the caller's voice
 - If possible, the staff member should also ask the following questions:
 - Where is the bomb located?
 - When is the bomb set to go off?

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Written Threat

- The staff member that receives the written threat should handle the letter as little as possible and should save all materials that were contained in the letter. All materials involved in the threat should be turned over to local law enforcement authorities.
- Local law enforcement should be contacted by calling 911.
- The Executive Director or designate should be notified of the letter.
- The building should be evacuated until it is determined that there is no longer any danger.

Hazardous Chemical Spill

The following section is a general response to a hazardous chemical spill in the Child Care facility. In general, the most dangerous chemicals located on the premises will be locked in a secure location. When handling chemicals, be sure to follow the instructions written on the product. Never mix products together.

- **Evacuate the area immediately** if a hazardous chemical is spilled.
- Do not turn any electrical switches on or off when exiting the room. Eliminate all open flames.
- Evacuate to an area upwind and uphill from the location of the spill if possible.
- The Executive Director or designate will contact 911 and notify them that there has been a “hazardous materials spill”.
- No person should try to contain, touch, or identify the hazardous material.
- Staff should not attempt to rescue anyone who has passed out due to fumes given off by the hazardous materials spill.
- If any child or staff has come into contact with a hazardous material, the chemical should be washed off immediately with water.
- No person should enter the facility until authorized by *Fire Department Hazmat team*.

Physical and Verbal Threats

The following information is a general response to physical threats that may present itself in the Child Care facility. This includes threats that come from outside the facility, as well as inside of the facility. In every situation, the Executive Director, Program Director, and facility staff members should evaluate the situation, and only address the situation when their safety is not compromised. If any person in the facility does not feel safe in the situation 911 should be contacted if it can be done in a safe manner.

- All physical threats made inside or outside the childcare facility should be taken seriously.
- Report any physical threats directed towards the children or staff members to the facility director and document the threat.
- If the physical threat comes from within the facility, the facility director notifies the police of the incident and communicates with the staff members who were involved in the incident.
- Staff members involved in the altercation should be separated. Appropriate administrative actions should be taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the children.
- Children should be removed from the area in which the altercation is taking place and should return only after the situation has been resolved if it can be done in a safe manner.

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- If the physical threat comes from outside the facility, the facility director is notified of the incident. The Executive Director or designate will notify the police of the incident.
- Childcare attendees should be removed from the area in which the altercation is taking place and should return only after the situation has been resolved if it can be done in a safe manner.
- All verbal threats will be treated the same way as physical threats.

Unfit Pick-Up

This procedure is in place in the event an educator, upon the arrival of an authorized pick-up person or the departure of a child from the program with said individual, suspects the child may be in danger or otherwise unsafe during the transport from the program to their home. This includes but is not limited to the following scenarios: the authorized pick-up person seems to be under the influence of a controlled substance and is driving a vehicle, or the educator suspects the child is being maltreated or is being exposed to abuse, substance abuse, or another form of neglect.

If the educator suspects the child is in danger upon departure from the program with their parent or guardian, the RCMP will be notified, and the “Protocol for Handling Suspected Child Abuse” will be employed. If it is safe to do so, note the description of the parent/guardian, their vehicle including the make, model, colour, and license plate, as well as a description of the child and the educators’ observation of the risk to the child (ex. The parent/guardian seemed to be under the influence, could smell alcohol and they were slurring their words, they were aggressive toward the child, etc.).

If the child is being picked up by someone on the authorized pick-up list who is not the parent or guardian of the child and the educators have reason to believe the child may be in danger upon departure from the facility, they may stall the departure of the child while they, or another educator, attempts to contact the child’s parent/guardian to report their suspicion. The procedure for “Potentially Violent Situations” will be employed at this time.

Potentially Violent Situations

A potentially violent situation such as a hostage situation, unauthorized person on the premises, disgruntled person, and unstable custody may be cause for a selective evacuation procedure. The premise behind a selective evacuation is that it enables large numbers of children and staff to stay out of harm’s way when an individual is on-site who is potentially violent.

If a potentially violent individual gains access to your facility:

- Immediately call 911/Police and notify security.
- Indicate to security and another center administrator that you may have a condition for selective evacuation (this may be within the building if the potentially violent person does not leave the area).
- If the individual cannot be isolated from the children and chooses to leave the premises, allow them the freedom to exit, and, if possible, to do so safely, note their car make and model, license plate, and the directions of their travel. Communicate this immediately to the 911 dispatcher.

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Hostage Situations

Although considered improbable, the childcare facility may be subject to hostage situations either from disgruntled employees, parents/guardians, or terrorists.

- Remain calm.
- Remain polite.
- Follow the hostage takers instructions.
- Any available staff should call 911.
- Do not resist.
- Do not try a rescue.
- Pay attention to the captor(s) try to get details of what they want and accommodate them.
- Provide as much information as possible to the police when they arrive.
- DO NOT PUT YOURSELF IN DANGER
- Alerted staff members will close the doors of their areas of responsibility.

Lock facility doors, pull down shades, turn off lights, and have children secured under desks, behind cabinets, etc. Try to conduct quiet activities which keep the children engaged until the situation is resolved.

Inclement Weather

Monitor winter storm watch, warnings, blizzard warnings or travel advisories. Check the status of:

- Battery powered radios.
- Flashlights and/or Back-up lighting
- Power
- Heat
- Cell phones

Consider pre-storm closing (night before) or early closing depending on conditions. Release non-essential staff in accordance with center closing procedures.

Arrange for snow and ice removal as well as debris removal such as fallen trees and utility lines.

WHDCS staff should follow these general rules during weather emergencies.

- The Executive Director or designate will determine the safe place for the children and staff. (Shelter-in-Place)
- Staff should always keep voice contact, and all staff members should have flashlights and emergency packs/backpacks available.
- Take a ROLL CALL before moving to the safe place, after arriving at the safe place, and finally, after leaving the designated safe place.
- Once the storm has passed and there is no more danger to the children and staff, the following steps should be taken:

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- If any medical attention is required, first aid should be administered. If the situation warrants it, contact 911 for medical assistance.
- The staff should once again do a ROLL CALL to ensure that all children and fellow staff members and/or volunteers are safe.
- The Executive Director or designate needs to walk through the facility looking for any damage created by the inclement weather, such as fire, water, or structural damage. Report any damage according to the Emergency Preparedness Plan for Recovery.
- Utilities of the facility should be tested to ensure that the operations of the facility have not been compromised.
- Any vendors that provide services should be contacted if problems occur as a result of the inclement weather.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch

The Executive Director or designate will advise all staff of the weather conditions that are approaching. The Executive Director or designate will monitor radio, television, or internet for weather updates. Outdoor activities should be modified to ensure that quick access to shelter is available.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning—In addition to the above:

- All outdoor activities should be terminated, and shelter should be taken.
- The Executive Director or designate will monitor sky conditions as best and safely as possible. If a dark/funnel-shaped cloud is seen, seek shelter immediately. If possible, call 911 to report it.

Tornado Watch

The Executive Director or designate will advise all staff of the weather conditions that are approaching. The Executive Director or designate will monitor radio, television, or NOAA Weather Radio for weather updates.

Outdoor activities should be modified to ensure that quick access to shelter is available.

Upon the approach of thunderstorms, cease all outdoor activities that may delay seeking shelter.

The Executive Director or designate will monitor sky conditions as best and safely as possible. If a dark/funnel-shaped cloud is seen, seek shelter immediately. If possible, call 911 to report it.

Tornado Warning—In addition to the above:

- The Executive Director or designate will monitor sky conditions as best and safely as possible. If a dark/funnel-shaped cloud is seen, seek shelter immediately. If possible, call 911 to report it.
- The Executive Director or designate will turn off all utilities if time permits and it can be done safely.
- The Executive Director or designate will have all staff and childcare attendees move to their designated safe locations.

The designated location for tornado safety is:

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- Multiplex Day Care Site: The Curling Rink
- University Day Care Site: Far side of the room where the children's lockers are and away from the windows.
- Out of School Care Program: Locked Down away from doors and windows. Proceed to the gymnasium if safe to do so.

Blizzard/Snow

The facility Executive Director or designate will advise all staff of the weather conditions that are approaching. The facility director or designee will monitor radio, television, or Environment Canada website for weather updates.

Outdoor activities should be modified to ensure that quick access to shelter is available in the case of hazardous conditions.

If evacuation is necessary, the Executive Director or designate will ensure that proper transportation has been arranged to move the children and staff to the designated safe area. This area can be the same as the flash flood location.

Wildlife Threat

In the event wildlife is spotted in the area off-site outings will be suspended and the playground will only be utilized if it is safe to do so. Off-site outings will resume the following day and the precautions below will be taken.

Precautions while on off-site outings:

- Staff and children will be singing/talking loudly to deter animals from their path.
- Staff members will always carry the program cell phone and will have both the Executive Director and Fish and Wildlife on the contact list.

In the event the staff and children come across wildlife while off-site the following procedures will take place:

- The group will immediately turn around and walk away from the animal.
- The Executive Director and Fish and Wildlife (if necessary) will be called and made aware of the situation.
- A new route back to the program will be decided upon by the Early Childhood Educator(s) if necessary and outdoor supervision policies will be adhered to for the return trip.

Pandemic Situation

A pandemic situation can occur when a communicable disease spreads through the area which could result in increased health and safety measures up to and including a temporary closure of the facility. These communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: COVID-19 (including all variants), SARS, H1N1, etc. Childcare programs can help protect the health of their educators and families during a

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pandemic by continuing all current health related procedures and implementing outbreak cleaning precautions (see Outbreak Management in WHDCS Policies, Practices, and Procedures).

This plan is in place to respond to notice of such a communicable disease which has been deemed to have caused a pandemic situation in our area. In the event of a pandemic, WHDCS will create, as an appendix, additional policies and procedures which are specific to the identified pandemic situation. These policies are in addition to WHDCS Policies, Practices, and Procedures and will be updated as necessary to ensure feasibility, and to align with Alberta Health guidelines and other guidance. In the event of a conflict between these policies and advice from Alberta Health Services which results in WHDCS policies being insufficient, the advice from Alberta Health Services will prevail. WHDCS may choose to create policies which exceed the requirements from Alberta Health Services.

Pandemic Rapid Response Plan

Upon laboratory confirmed identification of a communicable disease related to an ongoing pandemic situation in any individual (employee, volunteer, contractor, child in care, or visitor) who has been on site in a program even one time, or within 6 feet of another individual (even outdoors) for more than 15 minutes, in the 48-hours prior to the onset of symptoms or the date of testing which resulted in a positive case of this disease, the following plan will commence:

- Families will be informed immediately if at any time there is a positive case of a communicable disease related to an ongoing pandemic situation, and recommendations for all families and educators will follow AHS guidelines.
- For families of children in attendance at the time of identification of a positive case, phone calls will be made by the executive director, program director, alternate site supervisor, and/or educators.
- For families of children not in attendance at the time of identification, or if the program is closed at the time, families will be notified via email and, possibly, HiMama.
- Due to the nature of our programs as one mixed age grouping, it is likely all individuals in the program in question will be identified as possible close contacts. As such, the Executive Director will close the program that the individual was in for a minimum of 72 hours to complete a deep clean.
- Deep cleaning includes using a bleach disinfectant concentration on all surfaces and opening windows for ventilation.
- Following the deep clean, if children are not identified as close contacts AND adequate staffing is available the program may reopen.
- It is likely that the program will remain closed for the duration of the quarantine period in which case, parents/guardians of children who are not required to isolate may be required to seek alternate care.

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- If all educators in the program are in quarantine for the duration of the closure, the facility will be deep cleaned upon the end of the quarantine period. Therefore, the program may remain closed for an additional 72 hours.
- In the case of an unexpected program closure due to a pandemic situation, parents/guardians will receive a refund for the duration of the closure.
- The executive director will issue these refunds in the form of a credit toward their next childcare invoice within 2 weeks of the closure date.
- For families wishing to terminate their enrollment as a result of this closure, the Executive Director will issue a refund in the form of a cheque which will be issued and mailed no later than 30 days after notice of termination.

Responsibilities:

Individual and family identified with the laboratory confirmed case of the disease in question:

- The individual or parent/guardian of the children must report their test results to the Program Director or Executive Director as soon as possible.
- If you or your child has been exposed to a person who has tested positive for the disease in question, you must inform the executive director or program director so we can follow AHS recommendations.
- The infected individual will not be permitted back to the program until they report that they have received a lab-confirmed negative test result.

Executive Director

- Upon identification of a positive case the Executive Director will contact Alberta Health Services to report the case identified at the childcare facility for further instruction.
- The Executive Director will report identification of the positive case to Early Learning and Child Care Licensing Authorities including an outline of the action plan which may include the closure of the program.
- The Executive Director will report any outbreaks or closure to the WHDCS Board and provide status updates on the Society operations.
- In the event of a sudden closure, the Executive Director will immediately inform all families of the applicable program via email and, when possible, through HiMama.
- The Executive Director will inform potential close contacts, identified by the Program Director, via email or telephone they may have been in contact with someone infected by the disease in question and may be contacted by AHS.
- The Executive Director will report to Occupational Health and Safety that there is someone on the worksite who is infected in the following situations:

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- A worker is confirmed to have contracted the disease in question and the employer has reason to believe that the exposure occurred at work; or
- A worker is exposed to a confirmed or suspected case of the disease in question and the work site did not follow the rules, procedures and guidance related to protection during the pandemic, or the controls in place have failed.
- The Executive Director will collect information from individuals identified as positive for the disease in question or who have been identified as close contacts and complete a Pandemic Outbreak Spreadsheet. This information will then be shared with AHS, OHS, WCB, or other necessary agencies in accordance with WHDCS privacy policies.

Program Director

- Timesavr will be used for contact tracing in the case of a reported illness in facility-based care. If there is a report of a lab confirmed positive case of the disease in question at Whispering Hills Day Care Society, the following procedure will be followed:
 - The Program Director will immediately complete contact tracing through the Timesavr system to see when this individual has been on-site, which program(s) they were in, and identify individuals who may be close contacts from 48 hours prior to the testing date of the individual's onset of symptoms or the test date which identified them as positive for the disease in question (for asymptomatic cases).
- The Program Director will assist the Executive Director in contacting all families of children in attendance if the program is to be closed during operating hours. They may also enlist the help of the alternate site supervisor or a designated educator to make these phone calls to families to pick up their child and inform them of the sudden closure.

Educators

In the event of a sudden program closure during operating hours, the following procedure will be followed by educators:

- Outdoor play and nature walks will be suspended, and the children will return to, or remain in, the facility.
- The educators will keep the daily routine as consistent as possible while readying the children to be picked up by parents and guardians.
- The educators will not discuss the reasons for the closure in front of, or with, the children and will use effective communication to inform the children the day care is closing for a time and assure them they are safe and supported.
- The educators will work as a team to support each child and fellow educators in working through emotional responses that may present because of the sudden closure and identification of a positive case of the disease in question.

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- The educators will ensure all children's belongings are taken home.
- One educator will be assigned to greet parents and guardians at the door and sign children out of the program as they are picked up.
- As children are picked up and ratio allows, educators will begin to go home.
- Following a sudden closure, educators who are identified as close contacts will self-isolate and follow AHS recommendations.
- Educators will inform WHDCS of their test results and guidance from AHS.
- Educators will be granted sick leave in accordance with WHDCS personnel policies. They may have the opportunity to access Workers Compensation or Employment Insurance and are encouraged to discuss these opportunities with the Executive Director for further information.
- Educators who are not identified as close contacts, or who receive a negative test result and/or have completed their isolation period, will return to duty for three days to assist with the deep cleaning of the facility prior to reopening.

The program will reopen if ALL the following criteria has been met:

- It is confirmed by AHS that is safe to do so,
 - Educators are available to work by either receiving notification they are not required to self-isolate, or they have tested twice (as close contacts), received a negative result, and are no longer mandated to self-isolate.
- If there are children identified as not being close contacts and who are not mandated to isolate AND there are educators who are also not close contacts and not mandated to isolate, AND ratio is able to be met, the program may reopen as early as 72 hours after the closure following a deep-clean.

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