

Wellington County Directly Operated Child Care Programmes Parent & Guardian Handbook

(Mount Forest, Palmerston,

Wellington Place, Willowdale)

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THE COUNTY OF WELLINGTON DIRECTLY OPERATED PROGRAMMES

PARENT & GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

PHILOSOPHY & PROGRAMME STATEMENT

County of Wellington Child Care Centres strive to provide nurturing and inclusive environments that are attuned to the interests of children – what they know and what they wonder about. It is through these environments, as well as play and inquiry experiences, that all children, who we view as competent, capable and creative; can develop their unique disposition, resilience, and skills for life-long learning.

How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years released by the Ministry of Education in 2014 is used as a tool for planning and reflection. The following four foundations from this document inform and guide our work with children, families, the community and each other.

Belonging - We cultivate authentic, caring relationships and connections to create a sense of belonging among and between children, adults, and the world around them.

Well-being - We nurture children's healthy development and support their growing sense of self.

Engagement - We provide environments and experiences to engage children in active, creative, and meaningful exploration, play and inquiry.

Expression - We foster communication and expression in all forms.

When child care staff, families and children, and the community work collaboratively together in all aspects of early learning and care, we can achieve positive outcomes for every child that will support them to grow and thrive in their future.

LOCATIONS

The County of Wellington operates four Directly Operated Programmes. These early learning and child care centres are:

Mount Forest	**Palmerston**	**Wellington Place**	**Willowdale**
311 Foster Street, Mount Forest 519 323 1653	540 Prospect St, Palmerston 519 417 2902	477 Charles Allan Way, Fergus 226 383 2266	95 Willow Rd, Guelph 519 822 6010

HOURS OF OPERATION

The child care centre hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 6:30 AM to 6:00 PM depending on the child care needs of enrolled families.

To provide your child with consistency and to ensure the required child/teacher ratios are met, please bring your child to the centre only for the hours you have agreed upon with the centre supervisor and that has been listed on your registration information.

Please inform the supervisor in writing with two weeks notice if you need to request a change to the scheduled hours. You will be notified if and when the hours can be accommodated.

TYPES OF PROGRAMME

Full day - 5 hours or more 5 days a week

Half Day – morning or afternoon Full time – five days a week

Part-time – less than five days a week (minimum of two days a week) offsetting another child who requires care to equal one full time spot

AGE RATIOS

Infant

Birth – 17 months of age (1 staff for every 3 children)

Toddler

18 months – 30 months (1 staff for every 5 children)

Preschool

31 months – 5 years (1 staff for every 8 children)

Junior/Primary School Age

68 months – 13 years (1 staff for every 15 children)

PARTICIPATION IN THE CANADA-WIDE EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE SYSTEM

Directly Operated Programmes at the County of Wellington have enrolled in the Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care System (CWELCC). In early 2022, the federal government announced that licensees who opted into this progamme would be able to offer parents lower licensed child care fees to an average of $10 a day by September 2025. Families are expected to see an average of 25% reduction in fees retroactive to April 1, 2022, which would be further reduced to 50% by the end of December 2022.

As of April 1, 2022 the Directly Operated Programmes in the County of Wellington immediately reduced child care fees by 25%, so retroactive payments to families were not necessary. Moving forward, the programmes will adjust their user fees for families as instructed by the Ministry of Education according to the CWELCC roll out plan.

Families will be given advanced notice when their fees will be changing. Other than the base fee cost for child care, there are no other costs associated with accessing child care in the Directly Operated Programmes. The only non-base fee that would ever be charged to families is a $35.00 NSF fee if applicable.

PROGRAMME APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES

We use the following goals, strategies and approaches;

A. We provide environments and approaches that meet the child's health and well-being, safety and nutritional needs.

- Our child care centre is licensed by the Ministry of Education and we participate in a licensing renewal process on an annual basis.

- All meals, snacks and beverages meet the recommendations set out in Canada's Food Guide and are reviewed and approved by a Public Health Dietician.

Weekly menus are reviewed with families during the registration process and a 4 week menu rotation is posted.

- Nutritious snacks and meals are prepared on site by the child care cook who has experience preparing meals for young children and holds Food Handler's certification.

- Children's individual well-being is recorded daily and includes their symptoms of ill health, how they ate, changes in their sleep patterns and any accident/incidents that occurred during the day.

- The child care provides flexible routines and spaces to accommodate for children's differences and preferences for play, eating, resting and toileting and includes exploring the outdoors a minimum of two hours each day, weather permitting.

- Child care staff, students and volunteers follow policies of the Directly Operated Programmes including; Playground Safety Policy, Anaphylactic Policy, Sanitary Practices Policy, Sleep Supervision Policy, Serious Occurrence Policy, Medication Policy, Supervision of Volunteers and Students Policy, Programme Statement Implementation Policy, Staff Training and Development Policy, Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Check Policy, Fire Safety/Evacuation Procedures, Safe Arrivals and Dismissals Policy

B. We promote positive and responsive interactions amongst and between the children, families and each other.

- We believe that parents/guardians know their child best. Child care staff invite parent/guardian's insight and knowledge. This collaboration begins as part of the enrollment process when families are invited to tour the centre, meet the child care staff and share their hopes, dreams and goals they have for their child and their child care experience.

- Transition forms are provided to families when their child moves to another

group/room. These help to ensure that child care staff have current information about eating and sleeping habits, play preferences, interests and development for each child in their group.

- Child care staff use warm, positive and respectful approaches and support children as they develop the ability to recognize and describe their emotions and feelings. We observe to determine what a child's behaviour may be communicating and respond using strategies as described under *Supporting and Guiding Children* of the Parent Handbook.

C. We provide opportunities for children to interact and communicate in a positive way and support their development of autonomy and self-regulation skills.

- Child care staff strive to know each child well - their needs, strengths, interests, body cues and communication. Child care staff model resiliency skills which includes, labeling children's emotions, role model appropriate emotional responses and interactions and supporting each child in their development of social skills and resolving conflict with others.

- Children are encouraged to recognize and respond to their individual body cues such as hunger, sleepiness, thirst, and toileting requirements. For instance, children are offered meals and snacks prepared by the child care cook and are supported in their decisions of what and how much to eat of what is offered.

- Meal times provide an important opportunity for children to practice independence, grow socially and to develop healthy views about food and eating. The centre uses a 'family style dining' approach—meaning that staff join the children at meal times—engaging and facilitating discussions amongst the children while at the same time, providing opportunities for children to demonstrate autonomy and self-help skills.

- Children are provided with various mediums to express themselves, including but not limited to: craft materials, music, role play materials, blocks, and other open ended materials and activities.

D. We foster children's exploration, play and inquiry.

- Child care staff provide welcoming environments, experiences and opportunities for children to actively explore and investigate what they are naturally curious about and to invite children to imagine, think, create, solve problems and make meaning of their experiences.

- Materials provided in the programmes are easily accessible so children have a variety of materials to play with and explore.

- Children are provided with opportunities to take measured risks appropriate to their

abilities and with adult support as needed. Staff assist and support children in their inquiry, problem solving and perseverance and will redirect play if it is harmful to the child, others, or property.

E. We provide child initiated and adult supported experiences based on observation.

- Educators plan the environment and activities based on their observations of children and provide adult supported activities to expand on children's natural curiosity and interests.

- Child care staff provide provocations for learning that are based on the children's interests, development and/or a Cycle of Inquiry.

- Educators provide daily small and large group experiences and environments that include block/construction play, role playing, fine and gross motor activities, creative materials and sensory exploration, songs, finger-plays, language and literacy, social and emotional development.

F. We plan for and create positive learning environments and experiences which support each child's learning and development. Our approaches are inclusive of all children, including children with individualized plans.

- Classroom teachers are registered Early Childhood Educators and have knowledge in child development, curriculum and pedagogy. Teachers use this knowledge to make meaning of their observations of children which influence the set up of our programme. We adapt, plan and implement inclusive activities, experiences and environments that respond to children's interests, development and individualized plans.

- Children's experiences are made evident to parents and educators through many methods which may include programming webs, charts, documentation panels and learning stories.

- Teachers are provided with time to complete programme planning and to record children's experiences.

G. We provide inclusive environments and activities – both indoors and out – incorporating the individual needs and considerations for each child during active play, rest and quiet time.

- Parent/guardians are consulted regarding their child's individual needs, preferences and supports for participation in the entire programme – indoors and out - as part of the enrollment process. This information is reviewed regularly to ensure children's individual needs and considerations are incorporated into the programme as the child moves from one group to the next.

- Child care staff work in collaboration with parents/guardians (with consent) to develop Individualized Support Plans for children whose developmental needs may benefit from additional resources and supports.

H. We work in partnership with families and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents about the programme and their children.

- Parent/guardians are consulted regarding their child's individual needs, temperament, likes and dislikes, etc. both during the enrollment process and ongoing throughout their child care experience.

- Child care staff participate in regular communication with parent/guardians. Drop off and pick up times in particular are used as a time to discuss the care, well-being, interests and changes that may affect the child, family or programme.

- Teachers use many methods to engage families and to seek their knowledge and insight including the sharing of learning stories, documentation panels, parent/staff touch base meetings and/or telephone conversations.

- At any time, parent/guardians may bring forward any concerns or questions they may have. Child care staff work in partnership with families in an effort to support communication, maintain positive relationships and to obtain mutually agreeable resolutions.

I. We are participants in our community and welcome community partners to enhance our programmes for children, families and child care staff.

- The child care programme serves as a learning environment for community visitors, students and aspiring Early Childhood Educators.

- Child care staff access and utilize programmes and locations in the community such as the library, fire station, local grocer etc. as it relates to the interest of the children and the programme.

- Enhanced Support Services (ESS) support the child care centre to meet the needs of all enrolled children, including those who benefit from additional resources. ESS may include the support of resource consultants, supplemental staff, specialized equipment or supplies.

- Child care staff participate in Transition to School Meetings with the school board as needed.

- Child care staff maintain confidentiality. No information regarding children or families is

shared with outside organizations or schools without written parental/guardian consent.

J. We promote and provide opportunities for reflective practice and continuous professional learning.

- As part of the orientation process and ongoing training, all child care staff, students and volunteers regularly review policies and procedures that guide and inform their work in child care.

- Child care staff, students, and volunteers are provided with information about courses, workshops, training and communities of practice.

- Child care staff participate in a performance appraisal process which invite's staff to participate in goal setting and reflective practice.

- The child care centre participates in side by side learning and mentorship. We support staff obtaining their education and/or diploma in Early Childhood Education by serving as a host agency overseeing their practice and placements as ECE's in training.

K. We document and review the impact of the strategies included in our programme statement on children and their families.

- Staff meetings provide the child care team with the opportunity to participate in reflective and collaborative practices including sharing observations of children and/or planning activities, environments and strategies that support the programme statement, children's growth and development and parents insights and suggestions.

- The child care supervisor completes an audit checklist to ensure the programmes' compliance with the child care Programme Statement.

- The child care supervisor serves as a mentor and coach to their child care team. At least annually, each staff is provided with a written record indicating which Programme Statement strategies were observed.

- Child care staff facilitate regular conversations with families regarding their care. The child care supervisor implements a "touch base" with newly enrolled parents/guardians to discuss their overall satisfaction with their child's care experience and to participate in problem solving as needed. Additional touch bases are recorded in the Transition from when a child moves from one group to another.

PROHIBITED PRACTICES

No child care staff, student or volunteer will implement any strategy that would undermine the health, safety or well-being of any child in receipt of care including,

i. Corporal punishment of a child.

ii. Physical restraint of a child, such as confining the child to a high chair, car seat, stroller or other device for the purposes of discipline or in lieu of supervision, unless the physical restraint is for the purpose of preventing a child from hurting himself, herself or someone else, and is used only as a last resort and only until the risk of injury is no longer imminent.

iii. Locking the exits of the home child care premises for the purpose of confining a child, or confining a child in an area or room without adult supervision, unless such confinement occurs during an emergency and is required as part of the licensee's emergency management policies and procedures.

iv. Use of harsh or degrading measures or threats or use of derogatory language directed at or used in the presence of a child that would humiliate, shame or frighten the child or undermine his or her self-respect, dignity or self-worth.

v. Depriving a child of basic needs including food, drink, shelter, sleep, toilet use, clothing or bedding; or

vi. Inflicting any bodily harm on children including making children eat or drink against their will.

vii. Sexual abuse, sexual misconduct and prescribed sexual acts (*as defined under the Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007*)

Any staff member, student or volunteer who witnesses another adult using prohibited practices as described in this policy and/or practices in contradiction of the goals and approaches of the Programme Statement is obligated to report the incident to the Child Care Supervisor or designate as soon as possible but within 24 hours of the occurrence.

WAITLIST PROCEDURE

The information provided by families on the waitlist is deemed confidential.

- No parent/guardian will be charged a fee or deposit to be placed on the waitlist.
- The Children's Early Years Clerk will maintain the waitlist of families requiring child care and may contact families to verify their interest
- Only families requiring a minimum of 2 full days or equivalent per week will be placed on the waitlist. Exceptions may be made to meet urgent or extenuating circumstances as deemed by the Child Care Supervisor or Directly Operated Manager.

- Families inquiring about their placement on the waitlist will be provided with an approximate range in increments of 'five or ten' of the number of children placed ahead of their child, i.e. 'There are approximately 15 children ahead of your child'.

- A child's placement on the waitlist may change due to the priority of other families on the waitlist as well as the Director and Manager's ability to override the waitlist due to extenuating circumstances (ie. Requests from Family and Child Services)

ADMISSION TO PROGRAMME

Children are offered admission into the programme based on the hours of care noted in the initial application form and the centre's ability to meet the needs of the child, family and legislative regulations. If the need of the family is not accurate, the centre reserves the right to re-assess the family's placement on the waiting list using the current information as provided by the family.

The Child Care Supervisor will offer admission to the programme using the following priorities and criteria;

1. Families who currently have a child enrolled in a Directly Operated programme.

2. 10% of spaces in the Directly Operated Programme will be designated for children living in Guelph and Wellington County who:
    - Are eligible for Fee Subsidy, or
    - Are deemed high-risk by a community service provider, including but not limited to: Family & Children's Services (F&CS), Women in Crisis, KidsAbility, Community Mental Health Association (CMHA)

    Once the 10% capacity is reached, or if a Fee Subsidy or high-risk family cannot take a space, priority continues in order.

3. Families who reside in the County of Wellington have priority for the Directly Operated Programmes located in the County of Wellington and families who reside in the City of Guelph have priority for the Directly Operated Programmes located in the City of Guelph.

4. Families who reside in the County of Wellington have next priority for the Directly Operated Programme located in the City of Guelph and families who reside in the City of Guelph have next priority for Directly Operated Programmes in the County of Wellington.

5. One family requiring full time full day care OR two part time families that can fill one full time space.

6. Families who reside outside the City of Guelph and/or County of Wellington.

Once the order of priority is established, the chronological order by date in which children were added to the waitlist will determine which family is offered a child care space.

Before a child may be admitted into the programme, Parents/guardians must complete all areas of the enrolment package and meet the immunization requirements as stated in the Parent Handbook.

The Manager of Directly Operated Programmes and/or Director of Children's Early Years reserve the right to override the waitlist at their discretion due to extenuating circumstances.

ENROLLMENT AND REGISTRATION

Prospective families must add their name to the online OneHSN Wellington- Guelph Child Care Application and Waitlist portal. When a space becomes available, the Child Care Supervisor will notify the family and give them 72 hours (3 business days) days to either accept or decline the space. The Supervisor will invite the child and their family to visit the programme to help determine if it meets their needs, hopes and goals. If the family wants to accept a child care spot, they will need to arrange a start date that begins within two weeks of the date the space was offered. The Supervisor will place their child through OneHSN; Parents/Guardians will need to complete an enrolment package and submit a deposit equal to two weeks of child care fees through their OneHSN account. This two-week deposit will hold the space and be applied to their last two weeks of child care fees when enrolment in the child care centre ends.

Up-to-date immunization information as per the current *Publicly Funded Routine Immunization Schedule for Ontario* must be provided before your child may start in the programme. If due to extenuating circumstances vaccinations are delayed, the parent must provide written confirmation of an upcoming appointment or plans to complete the vaccination schedule. Parent/Guardians who do not want to immunize their child must provide a *Statement of Medical Exemption,* signed by a qualified physician or must provide a religious belief affidavit signed by a commissioner of oaths. This document will be sent to Public Health. Please note: Children who are not immunized may not attend the child care centre during a vaccine preventable outbreak. Child care fees are charged regardless of your child's attendance.

Once enrolled, the centre has an 'open-door' policy and welcomes families to visit at any time or bring forward any questions or concerns related to their child's care.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Participate in the enrolment process including completing all required paperwork, proof of immunization and providing contact information in case of an emergency and maintain updated records at all times.

- Notify the centre of their child's absence. (See Safe Arrival and Dismissal of Children)

- Hand deliver children to the educators in the classroom at drop off and update them on anything they need to know about your child to make their day in care successful.

- Provide one month written notice of withdrawl of care or change of required hours or days. Hours or days of care can only be changed once approved by the Centre Supervisor.

- Fulfil financial obligations i.e. paying child care fees, providing required paperwork for subsidized care.

- Treat educators and children, including their own, with dignity and respect at all times. If parents/guardians/authorized individuals picking up engage in inappropriate, aggressive, or threatening behaviour, staff have the right to deny service, ask them to leave the premises, and/or contact the Police.

Failure to uphold the responsibilities of the Parent/guardian may result in the termination of their child care placement.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN

As part of the hiring process, all staff provide a clear Police Vulnerable Sector Check, proof of Valid First Aid and Infant/Child CPR Certification, and have extensive knowledge of child development and pedagogy.

Ensuring the safety and well-being of children in our programme is the responsibility of every staff member. Your child will be supervised by a staff member at all times. No student, parent or volunteer will be left alone with your chid.

Our programmes serve as a learning environment for community visitors, students and aspiring Early Childhood Educators. We ensure that every staff, student and volunteer completes an orientation session before interacting with children in the programme.

Before signing in with the classroom educators upon arrival, and after signing out of the classroom at the end of the day, your child and any of their siblings accompanying you, are your responsibility to supervise. Educators need to be able to focus on the children under their care and cannot monitor or address the behavior of your child or children outside of their time in care with us.

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING AND GUIDING CHILDREN

Through the development of trusting relationships and by knowing each child well, child care staff, students and volunteers are able to determine how best to respond and support the children. Parents know their children best and their knowledge and input is valuable. We will seek and include your views and perspectives throughout your child care experience, and when there are any changes in your child's typical demeanor or development.

It is important to note that some behaviours are typical for children in child care such as mouthing objects, biting, hitting, and yelling. Children sometimes exhibit these behaviors because they are not yet able to express themselves using words and they are still learning and developing their understanding of the world around them. Our educators role model ways for children to express their emotions and communicate in more positive ways, but it can sometimes take a while for children to replace these behaviors with different strategies.

The safety and well-being of every child is a priority. We will intervene and implement behaviour guidance strategies when a child is:

- Endangering the safety of themselves or others.
- Behaving in a physically aggressive or verbally abusive manner.
- Being destructive of property.
- In a conflict that is emotionally upsetting.

We use many strategies. These include:

- **Observation**: We will observe to determine what a child's behavior may be communicating. This information can be helpful in developing a plan to best support the child. A plan may include: changing the environment, adjusting the level of support, role modeling, positive reinforcement, problem solving, and/or redirection.
- **Responding to safety concerns**: Ensuring the safety and well-being of every child is a priority. If there is an concern for a child's well-being we will remove child(ren) from the situation immediately, attend to an upset or hurt child first and then assess the situation and follow through with an explanation to the child(ren). This explanation may include clearly defining behaviors that are and are not acceptable.
- **Use of natural consequences**: As appropriate we will assist children in making decisions. For example, *'If you play in the cold without mittens, your hands will feel cold. I will bring your mittens outside for you, in case you change your mind."*

- **Supporting the child's 'readiness'**: We use positive and supportive approaches when/if a child has withdrawn themselves from the group and/or chooses to re- enter play. We will assist the child in labeling their feelings/emotions, support them to identify the issue and guide them to use acceptable ways of having their needs met.

- **Role modeling**: We role model calming strategies. This may include: deep breathing, sensory exploration, stepping away and returning to the situation, asking for help, participating in physical outlets such as outdoor play, running, songs and finger plays.

- **Additional Support**: If necessary, we will seek additional support. This could be from:

    - Child Care Supervisor

    - An outside support agency: i.e. Enhanced Support Services. This will not occur without your consent.

Strategies do not include:

- **Time Out**: Time Out is considered a demeaning and prohibited practice. It is not used at the centre. Instead, we will clearly identify the issue (what we would like the child to start or stop doing) and will provide simple and clear expectations.

  i.e., *"I see your hand hitting. Ouch! That hurts! Stop Hitting. Do you want a turn on the bike? I can help you ask for a turn on the bike."*

- **Apologies:** We do not require children to state apologies as children do not develop the cognitive and empathetic skills to fully understand the concept of 'regret' until later in life. We do however introduce these skills through our role modeling of such.

- **Manners:** We do not require children to use their manners such as saying please and thank you. We do however encourage the children to demonstrate respect for everyone in the programme as role modelled by our educators.

The safety of the children and staff in the programme is our priority. If it is determined that all supports and resources have been exhausted without improvement, and the behavior of a child is deemed to pose great risk or danger to others in the programme, the Director of Children's Early Years has the authority to end a family's child care placement with sufficient notice.

SAFE ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL OF CHILDREN

The County of Wellington believes it is important to have a framework of measures to help ensure children's safety when arriving and leaving from the child care programme.

This policy will provide staff, students and volunteers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for ensuring the safe arrival and dismissal of children receiving care,

including what steps are to be taken when a child does not arrive at the child care programme as expected, as well as steps to follow to ensure the safe dismissal of children. This policy is intended to fulfill the obligations set out under Ontario Regulation 137/15 for policies and procedures regarding the safe arrival and dismissal of children in child care. During the enrollment process, the Child Care Supervisor will discuss and confirm with you daily drop off and pick up times, and persons to whom your child(ren) may be released. This information will be recorded on the child's enrollment package.

Safe Arrival

Please note the importance of notifying Child Care Staff if your child(ren) will be absent. If a child does not arrive at their expected time, and the parent/guardian has not communicated a change in drop-off or that the child will be absent (e.g., left a voice message or advised the Child Care Staff at pick up), after 30 minutes the safe arrival procedures will be implemented, which include the following:

- Calling the parent/guardian who was expected to be dropping off to determine child's attendance for the day.
- Calling the secondary parent/guardian (if applicable) to determine if there was a change in drop off person and/or if the secondary parent/guardian knows where the child is.
- If the Child Care Staff are unable to speak directly to a parent/guardian (i.e. must leave voice mail) and no call back is received, they will contact emergency contacts that are listed on the child's registration to try and verify child's whereabouts
- If child's well-being is not confirmed by either a parent/guardian or emergency contact within 1 hour, the child care provider will notify the centre Supervisor.
- Police may be contacted when the provider's and parent's/guardian's home, parent's/guardian's at work, emergency or additional contacts can't reasonably account for a child's unexplained failure to arrive at the programme.

Safe Dismissal

All authorized individuals picking children up from the programme must be over the age of 18 and their names must be listed either on the child's registration form or communicated to the child care staff by the parent/guardian. If someone arrives to pick up your child and they are not on the authorized list, or the staff have no prior knowledge of them coming to pick up, the staff will contact the parent/guardian to verify that the child can be released.

If a child is not picked up at their expected time, after 15 minutes the safe dismissal procedures will be implemented, which include the following:

- Calling the parent/guardian who was expected to be picking up to determine if they are just running late.

- Calling the secondary parent/guardian (if applicable) to determine if there was a change in pick up person and/or if the secondary parent/guardian knows the expected pick up time.

- If the Child Care Staff are unable to speak directly to a parent/guardian (i.e. must leave voice mail) and no call back is received, they will contact emergency contacts listed on the child's enrollment form and request the child be picked up.

- If no response is received, the centre has closed, and it has been at least ½ hour since the child was supposed to be picked up, contact centre Supervisor and cross check that all previous steps have been completed.

- Child Care Staff will then contact Family and Children's Services at 519.824.2410 and notify them of an unclaimed child.

SECURED ENTRANCE

The safety of children, their families and staff members is important to us. The main entrance of the child care centre has a controlled entry system. All information or details and equipment for use of the secured entrance is shared with all legal guardians of children currently enrolled in the centre and is NOT to be shared with anyone else.

USE OF TAXI

Releasing children to a taxi and/or volunteer driver is not a regular practice and is only considered in extenuating circumstances and when approved by the Supervisor or designate. In approved situations, children will be released to a taxi or volunteer driver only if a parent/guardian has provided this direction and an appropriate plan for the child's supervision is in place.

CUSTODY ARRANGEMENTS

If your child has a formal custody arrangement, you must provide the Child Care Supervisor with a copy of the court order for your child's file. Child care staff will notify the police in situations where a 'non-authorized' person arrives to pick up a child.

CENTRE CLOSURES

The child care centre is closed for the following holidays:

1. New Year's Day
2. Family Day
3. Good Friday
4. Victoria Day
5. Canada Day
6. Civic Holiday
7. Labour Day
8. Thanksgiving Day
9. Christmas Day
10. Boxing Day

When a holiday falls on a weekend, the child care centre will close on an alternate date. Families will be informed in advance of this taking place. Child care fees are charged for centre closures due to the holidays stated above. Any other centre closures for reasons other than a statutory holiday will also be communicated to families in advance.

The child care centre may close for up to 2 additional days for professional development. Families will receive 60 days' notice of such closure and will not be charged.

FEES AND PAYMENTS

Fees are charged based on the scheduled hours of care as well as the age group your child is registered in. The Supervisor will place your child in the appropriate age group when your child is enrolled at the centre. If your child turns of age to be eligible to move up to the next age group, but, there is no space to allow the move, your child care fees will remain the same as their current programme. The child will be moved up in order of priority, as soon as a space becomes available.

Invoices are given to families every two weeks for the previous 2 weeks of attendance. Fees are due within one week of receipt of the invoice. All payments are non-refundable.
Refunds or credits will only be issued in the event that a family is overcharged.

Payments can be made by pre-authorized payments or online via credit card set up through your OneHSN account. Your bank record of pre-authorized payment or your email confirmation are receipt of payments. Should your pre-authorized payment not go through or be completed, there will be an NSF fee of $35.00 (Non-Base fee) applied to the family's invoice.

You will be charged for days that your child misses because of illness, vacations, or legal statutory holidays.

Failure to make payments may result in the loss of your child care placement.

LATE PICK UP

If you are unable to pick up your child as planned, please make alternate arrangements for your child to be picked up by an authorized person. Please notify the centre that an alternative person will be picking up your child and let them know that photo-ID will be required to verify their identity and release the child.

If your child is not picked up as planned, the child care centre will call to see if there is a change in your pick-up plans. If the centre does not receive appropriate arrangements for your child's pick up prior to the centre closing, your emergency contacts will be notified to come pick up the child. If multiple attempts to contact parents/guardians and emergency contacts have been unsuccessful, Child care staff will contact Family and Children's Services for direction. At no time will your child be left unattended or unsupervised.

CHANGES IN HOURS OR DAYS OF CARE

Families must provide two weeks written notice to the Child Care Supervisor to request a change of hours of care. Families are not able to change their hours of care until approved by the Centre Supervisor.

NOTICE OF LAST DAY FOR CHILDREN ENTERING KINDERGARTEN

The child care centre offers care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. We are not licensed to provide before or after school care for school age children.

If you choose to enroll your child in Full Day Kindergarten, your child's last day at the centre will be determined by the Centre Supervisor and communicated to you in advance.

SUPPORTING INCLUSION

Families are viewed as the expert on their child and their advice, support, suggestions and input help to inform our programmes and support staff in creating environments that reflect the unique and diverse characteristics of every child. The child care staff implement inclusion practices to ensure all enrolled children can participate in every aspect of the programme.

Where appropriate, community resources and agencies can be brought in to offer additional guidance and support if needed. With written approval from families, child care staff are able to discuss and record your child's progress with outside agency workers specifically assigned to support individual children.

ILLNESS AND CARE FOR YOUR CHILD

Child care staff monitor children's health throughout the day beginning when your child first arrives to the centre. . Please do not bring your child to the child care if they are not well. If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be called to pick up your child or send another authorized person in your place.

Your child cannot attend child care with the following conditions:

- Fever of 38 degrees or higher, children must be symptom free for 24 hours prior to returning to care
- Unexplained Diarrhea – 2 or more bouts within 24 hours, or in combination with other symptoms, children must be symptom free for 48 hours prior to returning to care
- Vomiting – 2 or more bouts within 24 hours, or in combination with other symptoms, children must be symptom free for 48 hours prior to returning to care
- Any contagious sickness/symptom (i.e. rash, sores). The advice of a medical professional may be required to clarify conditions or support a diagnosis
- Any sickness that prevents your child from participating in all aspects of the programme.
- Any restrictions implemented by the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Public Health, or other provincial or federal guidelines

MANAGEMENT OF PESTS

Pest infestation (e.g. head lice, scabies, bed bugs) are not regulated public health conditions, and although easily spread, are not considered a communicable disease. Pests can be transmitted through head to head contact or by contact with personal items (ie: combs, hats etc).

If you suspect that your child is carrying any pests, we ask that you notify centre staff as soon as possible. If live lice, nits (eggs), or other pests are evident, a treatment should be administered. Treatment kits for many pests can be purchased over the counter at a pharmacy or through a service. Children should not return to care until after a treatment has been applied and all visible pests and nits are removed. Families are also advised to continue to check their child's hair and that of other family members daily for 14 days to minimize the spread. If a case of pest infestation is reported, a notice will be posted for all families so that they can monitor their child.

If an educator suspects pests on your child during child care hours, they will contact you. Your child will not be excluded from the programme. The educators will adjust the programme by removing dramatic play clothing and hats etc. to reduce the risk of spreading. Depending on the severity of the pest infestation found, educators may request children are picked up early from the programme so that treatment can begin immediately.

FOOD AND MEAL TIMES

Meal times provide an important opportunity for children to practice independence, grow socially and to develop healthy views about food and eating. We use a 'family style dining' approach— meaning that staff join the children at meal times— engaging and facilitating discussions amongst the children while at the same time, providing opportunities for children to demonstrate autonomy.

Scooping their own food, pouring a cup of milk, scraping their plates, feeding themselves, choosing portion sizes… are all examples of ways in which children can participate in the experience.

Children are invited and encouraged to try new foods. Researchers tell us that offering new foods 10-15 times can help to increase a child's food preference. As such, meal time is not a time to rush but rather it's a time to talk about things that have occurred in the day, to make plans for things that will happen and for building trusting relationships with each other.

Staff sit with the children and participate in snack and meal times - facilitating a calm and unhurried atmosphere. Knowing that children's tastes and feelings of fullness are unique and will evolve over the years, staff use positive and supportive approaches as children taste new foods, learn to pour and scoop, and develop their sense for proportions.

All meals, snacks and beverages are reviewed and approved by Public Health. Weekly menus are posted for your information.

No food or drinks brought from home are permitted at the centre with the exception of items provided for infants. All food and drinks brought from home for infants must be clearly marked with your child's name, and be provided in its original packaging with a list of ingredients. Any food provided must be peanut and nut aware and be free from other restricted allergens present in that classroom.

ALLERGIES AND FOOD RESTRICTIONS

It is important that we are aware of any food allergies or dietary restrictions your child has. This information will be recorded and posted in all areas where food is prepared or served. Please note that the centre only accommodates allergies and dietary restrictions and that other personal preferences or individual requests cannot be accommodated.

From time to time, the centre may inform families of restricted foods or allergens that are not permitted at the child care centre. This will occur when a child or staff member has a life threatening allergy. During such times, everyone (i.e. parents, children, staff) is required to adhere to the posted food or allergy restrictions.

If your child has an allergy that requires medical considerations (i.e. epipen, inhalers) the supervisor will work collaboratively with you to develop an Individual Emergency Health Plan. This plan will be shared with all staff, students and volunteers to help ensure the well-being of your child and should be updated at least once annually or when there are changes.

MEDICATIONS

The child care centre can only give children prescription medication or medicine if directed in writing by a medical practitioner (i.e. Child's physician or Registered Nurse). It is recommended that prescription medication be administered at home where possible.

All medication must be in the original container and labelled with the pharmacy prescription.

A completed MEDICATION FORM, including your signature, is required to permit staff to administer medication. Staff will not administer medication without this authorization.

All medicine brought to the child care must be handed directly to the staff to ensure it is stored properly and safely. Do not leave medicine in your child's cubby.

Additionally, you may request staff to apply creams, lotions and/or lip balm to your child. In these circumstances, your signed consent is also required. These items must be labelled with your child's name and come in the original containers.

INDIVIDUAL EMERGENCY HEALTH PLANS

Your child's health and well-being is important to us. You are required to assist in the development of an Individual Emergency Health Plan for your child if she/he has a medical and/or health concerns which could

pose a life threatening concern for your child. Examples of life threatening conditions are,

- History of seizures.
- Respiratory conditions i.e. severe asthma.
- Cardiovascular conditions i.e. fainting or collapsing.
- Diabetes.
- Anaphylactic Allergy.

These Individual Emergency Health Plans will be reviewed by all staff, students and volunteers upon completion and at least once annually. They will be posted in areas where they are visible to everyone to ensure the safety of the child at all times.

SLEEP CONSIDERATIONS

We use respectful and supportive approaches to assist your child in their development of autonomy and self-regulation skills. This includes their ability to recognize their individual feelings of sleepiness and their ability to self sooth, rest, and sleep.

Children ages 12 months and younger will be placed on their back to sleep as recommended in the *Joint Statement on Safe Sleep*. This requirement may only be overruled with written instructions by the child's physician. Once an infant is able to roll from their back to their stomach or side, they will not be repositioned back onto their backs if they have switched position in their sleep.

Sleep positioners or devices, bottles and cups are not permitted in cribs or on cots. Sleeping areas will be kept dimly lit to ensure the safe supervision of all children.

Children are supervised during rest and sleep and staff members conduct visual checks of sleeping children every 30 minutes by being physically present beside the child while the child is sleeping and looking for indicators of distress or changes in sleeping patterns. Any significant changes in a child's sleeping patterns will be shared with you, their parent and may result in adjustments to sleep supervision. Parent/guardians are encouraged to speak with their classroom teacher at any time to discuss their child's individual sleep considerations.

As per the *Child Care and Early Years Act,* Toddler and Preschool aged children's rest period will not exceed two hours in length. Sleeping children will be gently awakened by changing the environment i.e. increasing lighting, opening shades…

Your child will be assigned an individual crib or cot. While your infant is 'falling to sleep' a small sleep item (i.e. stuffed toy) may accompany them in a crib while they are being supervised directly. These small sleep items will be removed when the child is not supervised directly. Staff will assist children with resting and sleeping by, playing soft music, patting/rubbing children's backs, reading a story, rocking…

As children transition between groups, any adjustments to sleeping arrangements will be communicated with their new teacher.

Children who are unable to sleep will be provided with quiet activities and play opportunities off their cots after no longer than an hour of rest. Practices that would undermine a child's well-being will not be used at any time. These include,

- Not providing a cot, crib or bedding for sleeping or resting.
- Taking a child's soother, blanket, sleep toy away.
- Sending children to 'bed' as a form of punishment.
- With-holding any aspect of the programme as a form of 'punishment' for not sleeping or resting.
- Forcing children to sleep or rest against their will.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Your child will have a minimum of two hours of outdoor play on a daily basis – weather permitting. This may include time on our playground, a neighbourhood walk or a visit to community green space. In warm months, children may participate in water play which includes hoses and sprinklers. The use of pools is not permitted.

Child care staff complete a check of the outdoor play space each day to ensure the safety of toys, equipment and surfaces. Indoor gross motor activities are provided on days that weather does not permit the children to play outdoors.

Due to staff ratio requirements, children may not stay indoors while their group is outside. If your child is not able to participate fully in the programme – including outdoor play – they should remain at home.

CLOTHING FOR PLAYING INDOORS AND OUT

Outdoor play provides a wonderful opportunity for your child to play, explore and develop large motor skills. Digging in the sand, crawling on the grass, playing in the snow, painting, water play…are all examples of the types of active play your child will experience.

Providing your child with appropriate clothing for outdoor play i.e. sunhats, rain boots, winter clothing… will assist your child in staying warm and dry while they participate fully in the programme. Please provide clothing that will allow your child to play and explore. For safety reasons, please do not send scarves or clothing with long strings.

Staff and families work in partnership to communicate any clothing or needed child care supplies (i.e. needed diapers, hat, mittens…).

Please label all clothing to help us return lost articles to their proper owner and please remember to return borrowed 'child care clothing' to the centre.

EXPLORING THE COMMUNITY

Under the direct supervision of staff your child may explore the surrounding community through neighbourhood walks. Children will be brought to see the local businesses and schools where families may attend, work, or shop. As well, they may visit with library, fire, health, and police services, or at local splash pads and green spaces..

Child care staff will ensure the safety and well-being of your child during excursions off premises. While offsite, staffing ratios are reinforced to provide additional support and supervision where appropriate. Your signed approval is required to permit your child to participate in neighborhood walks.

ACCIDENT REPORTS

Child care staff will complete a written report when any accident or incident occurs that could affect the health, safety or well-being of your child. You will be provided with a copy of this Accident/Incident report.

In the event that your child is picked up by another authorized adult on the day that an Accident/Incident report is completed, the report will be provided to them to be passed onto you.

DUTY TO REPORT – SUSPECTED/ALLEGATIONS OF ABUSE

We all have an obligation to report suspected child abuse or neglect. All staff who know or suspect a child is or may be in need of protection are obligated by law to personally report such information on to Family and Children's Services. In the event that an investigation occurs, we will work collaboratively with F&CS to support the child and family through this process.

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

If someone comes to pick up your child who appears to be impaired by drugs or alcohol, child care staff will suggest that another authorized adult pick up the child. If the impaired person refuses to comply, child care staff will call the Police for further guidance.

DUTY TO REPORT – SERIOUS OCCURRENCES

A serious occurrence could include a life-threatening s injury to a child, use of a prohibited practice, an unplanned disruption of service, a fire or other disaster on site. The child care programme must immediately report a serious occurrence to the Ministry of Education. To support increased transparency and access to information, Serious Occurrence information will be posted at the centre for 10 days.

CONCERNS AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

At any time, you may bring forward any concerns and questions with the person you feel is most appropriate and/or with whom you are most comfortable. In turn, staff will forward the question/concern to the appropriate person - as applicable, within 24 hours. This will occur in a confidential manner and with the intent to support communication, maintain positive relationships and to obtain a resolution.

NOTE: At any time parent/guardians may bring questions/concerns to their child's Centre Supervisor. If parents/guardians need to escalate their concerns, please see the attached process.

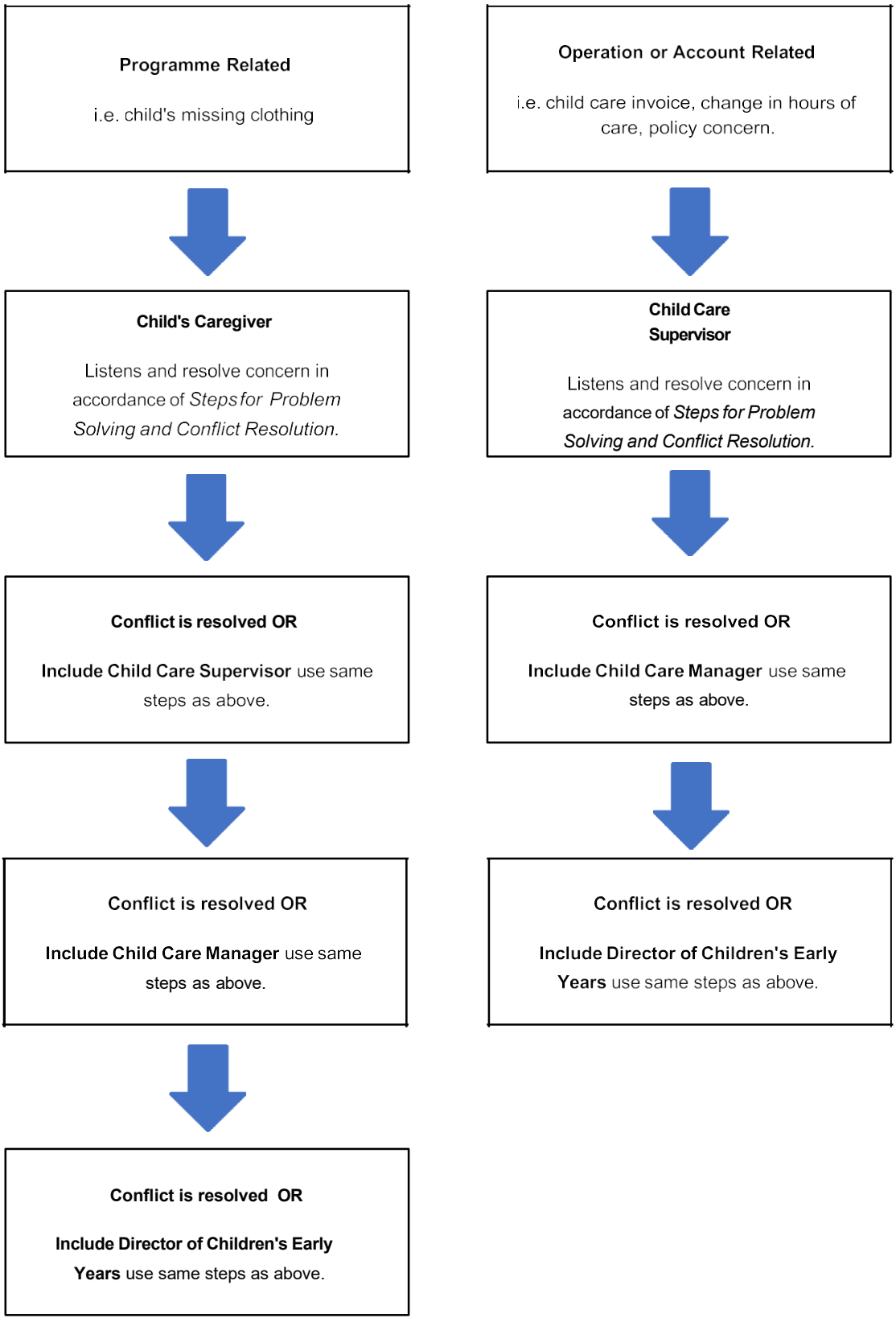
Concerns regarding the approaches used to guide, support, or redirect children, must be reported to the Supervisor during business hours, within 24 hours or the next business day, of becoming aware of the concern (See Diagram for Route for Resolution). If the way that parents/guardians express their concerns is inappropriate, aggressive or threatening, staff have the right to refuse to engage in conversation and defer the discussion, ask them to leave the premises, and/or contact the Police.

ROUTE FOR RESOLUTION

We are committed to resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner and will include the individual(s) best able to assist with this process. (See chart on next page)

If a resolution cannot be reached following the last step and/or if the parent/guardian wishes to appeal a decision, they may forward their appeal to the Administrator of Social Services, County of Wellington.

Parent/Guardian has Concern



CLOSURE POLICY – INCLEMENT WEATHER & EMERGENCY

We understand that our families depend on our services for child care. The centre will stay open for our regular hours unless we cannot meet the requirements of the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014,* or if Public Health or County of Wellington Administration requires the centre to close.

In inclement weather, staff will try to make their way to the centre safely. We may need to limit the number of children that attend, or ask parents to wait at the centre until enough staff arrive to provide care to meet our teacher to child ratios.

If we close outside of our regular hours of operation, a notice will be shared on the County of Wellington's social media. In addition, when possible, the centre's voice mail will be changed and an email message will be sent to all families announcing the closure. If possible, a notice will also be placed on the centre front doors.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND SERVICE CONTINUITY

The safety and well-being of children, families and staff is a priority. The County of Wellington has a Service Continuity Plan specific to Emergency Management of our child care centres. This plan is reviewed with each staff, staff and volunteer as part of their orientation. Copies of this will be provided upon request.

If we are unable to provide safe supervision of children due to an urgent or pressing situation and/or if we are not able to maintain legislative requirements, we may leave the premise and provide temporary care at our emergency evacuation location. These decisions can have a critical impact on services. As such, decisions will be made by the CAO of the County of Wellington or their designate.

Should a decision to relocate be made, you will be immediately notified by phone and will be required to pick up your child from the emergency evacuation site. In the event the centre is unable to reach you, your emergency contact person(s) will be notified and required to pick up your child. Additionally, a notice indicating that the centre has moved to its temporary site will be posted on the front doors.

As part of the recovery process, you will be contacted as soon as information is available, including information regarding the reasons for the evacuation, plans for remedying the situation, timelines, processes for supporting children and families as well as steps and expectations for returning the programme to operational and legislative requirements.

In the event of an emergency evacuation of the building, programmes will temporarily relocate to their emergency evacuation sites which are as follows:

Child Care Location	**Emergency Evacuation Site**
Mount Forest	Mount Forest Fire Hall, 381 Main St N
Palmerston	Palmerston Library, 265 Bell St
Wellington Place	Aboyne Library, 552 Wellington Rd 18
Willowdale	Shelldale Centre, 20 Shelldale Cr