



VWCA CHILDCARE PARENT HANDBOOK

EMERGENCY FUNDING: TEMPORARY SPACES

Coronavirus COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings from BC Ministry of Health and BC Centre for Disease Control

If you're ill—stay at home.

Within childcare settings, children and staff will often have influenza or other respiratory viruses with symptoms similar to COVID-19 (i.e.- influenza). For this reason, all children and staff who are ill with fever, cold, influenza, or infectious respiratory symptoms of any kind need to stay home. If your child or a member of your household has symptoms, you are required to self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms.

There are several viruses and bacteria circulating in the population, in fact influenza and colds are much more common than COVID-19. Parents of children with cold or influenza-like symptoms should keep their children home for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms. After this period of isolation, they may return to childcare if all symptoms have been gone for a minimum of 48 hours.

During the COVID-19 Crisis, any child attending during our Emergency Agreement will be screened for temperature before drop-off is completed. If a child presents with a temperature they will be sent home and asked to self-isolate.

If you are at all unsure of your status, the BC Centre for Disease Control's online assessment tool can help you assess whether you should stay home or not.

Encouraging hand hygiene

As we know, little and big hands pick up germs easily, from anything they touch, and can spread those germs to objects, surfaces, food, and people. Handwashing with soap and water is still the single most effective way to reduce the spread of the illness.

Children forget about proper hand washing so practice often and teach them to wash their hands properly in a fun, relaxed way. Everyone should wash their hands more often!

When sinks for hand washing are simply not available, you may use alcohol-based hand sanitizers (ABHS) containing at least 60% alcohol. Know that this is not very effective when a child's hands are quite soiled, when coming in from outside, for example. Read labels and wash hands with sanitizer the same way you would wash with soap and water.

Six steps to proper handwashing

1. Wet hands with warm running water.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap. Antibacterial soap is not required.
3. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (sing ABC's). Rub palms, back of hands, between fingers and under nails creating a lather.
4. Rinse off all soap with running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
6. Discard the used towel in a waste container.

Children should wash their hands...

- When they arrive at the Centre and before they go home.
- Before eating and drinking
- After playing outside
- After sneezing or coughing into hands
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Cough and sneeze etiquette:

- Cough and sneeze into an arm or tissue.

Maintain Cleaning and Disinfecting Policies

We don't know yet how long the virus causing COVID-19 lives on surfaces, but early evidence suggests it can live on objects and surfaces from a few hours to days. Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces is very important to help prevent the transmission of viruses from contaminated objects and surfaces.

Please note that VWCA Child Care Centres are:

- Well-stocked with hand washing supplies at all times (soap/clean towels, paper towels, and, if needed, 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- Increasing how often the premises and toys are cleaned.
- Cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces regularly.
- Staying on top of waste management- Emptying garbage containers often.
- Using bleach solution (1-part household bleach and 9 parts water) for sanitizing surfaces-making sure this solution makes contact with the surface for 1 minute for disinfection.

What about toys?

- Staff will keep enough toys out to encourage individual play. Offering toys that can be easily cleaned (i.e. no dress-up clothes or stuffed animals).
- Staff will not be providing playdough or goop- this will reduce hand-to-hand contact and cross-contamination.

Physical Distancing Ideas:

Understandably, social distancing is challenging in a childcare setting. At the same time, it is important that we do what we can to try and assist children. VWCA is:

- Avoiding close greetings like hugs or handshakes
- Taking children outside more often
- Setting up regular activities outside, such as snack time, arts and craft time.
- Regularly cleaning and sanitizing items that are designed to be shared
- Setting up mini environments within the facility to reduce the number of children in a group, for example, setting up 2 or 3 craft areas for colouring or doing crafts.
- Increasing the space between children during activities such as snack and lunch by moving or separating tables and chairs so that they are farther apart.

- Making use of all the space in the facility for napping to increase space between children.
- Setting up distinct areas for children who may have symptoms of illness until they can be picked up.
- **Discouraging any food or drink sharing.**
- Staggering snack and lunch time so you can accommodate smaller groups with more space at the tables.
- Minimizing the number of non-essential people in the facility such as entertainers, librarians etc.
- Reinforcing and reminding children of the rule 'hands to yourself'.

Program Information

Little Steps Daycare Program

Philosophy

The Little Steps program is child directed and play based. This emphasizes the value of unstructured learning that allows children to make choices, experiment, and use hands-on exploration with materials in the preschool and daycare environment. The toys and activities are developmentally appropriate to support your child's emotional, physical, social and cognitive needs. It is our philosophy that children learn best when the information provided to them is easily relatable to their lives, so most of the programming revolves around topics that they can find within their community.

Little Steps strives to provide a safe, welcoming environment for children to learn about their world as well as how to navigate in it. Emphasis on cooperation, using words to solve conflicts and build self confidence is a large part of the program. We strive to allow children to make their own choices and explore in an environment which is physically safe, cognitively challenging and emotionally nurturing.

Program Expectations

Your child must be fully **toilet trained** and be 3 years old by December 31st.

Program Hours

During the Emergency Funding Period, the Daycare operates **Monday to Friday from 6:30am to 5:00pm.**

Little Steps Daycare Daily Schedule:

The times of the schedule are flexible and may be adapted to meet the needs of the children

6:30 (AM)	-	Classroom opens with greetings and hand washing
7:00-9:30	-	Open snack table, play and art
9:30	-	Tidy up for circle time
10:00	-	Bathroom
10:15	-	Dress for outside time
10:30	-	Outdoor play
12:00 (PM)	-	Lunch time
12:30-2:30	-	Rest time
2:30	-	Bathroom
2:34	-	Afternoon snack
3:00	-	Afternoon play/art or Dress for outdoor play
3:00-4:30	-	Outdoor time
5:00 (PM)	-	End of day

What to bring?

- A change of clothes (top, pants, underwear, and socks) in a labeled large zip lock bag. We will store the bag of spare clothing in a bin at the Centre.
- A nap blanket, sheet, and a small pillow in a cloth bag.
- Food: Breakfast, Lunch and/or a snack needs to be sent each day.
- Outside Wear: Weather appropriate clothing.

Food and Drink

We promote healthy eating and nutritional habits. Safe drinking water is always available for all children, and we encourage them to drink as much as they would like. If a child has specific nutritional requirements, we will ensure that all staff understands these requirements. Please pack a breakfast, and/or lunch and a snack from home which follows Canada's Food Guide. Please inform the staff of any dietary needs or allergies.

Active Play

We acknowledge the importance of active play in the daycare. Gross motor development is just as important as fine motor development. We go outside every day, for a minimum of 90 minutes. When we are outside, we have outdoor equipment that the children can explore, and we have a variety of games that we play, like "Go, Go, Stop" and "What Time is it Mr. Wolf?". Please make sure your child has weather appropriate clothing. If we see puddles, we will probably be jumping in them! There are many fun activities to do in the rain, and we will be enjoying as many of them as possible.

Fees:

Daycare(5 days/wk)

\$950.00/Month

Eligible for \$100.00 CCFRI Fee Reduction

(Parent Total: \$850.00/month)

Fees will be pro-rated for families that start after the 1st of the month during the Emergency Childcare Agreement.

Fees are averaged over the year, some months may have fewer days, some have more, but the fees do not vary.

Daycare Fees are **due on the first of the month**, and are payable by cash, cheque, debit or credit (up until August 31, 2020).

NSF payments will be required to be paid in cash with an additional \$30 NSF charge.

Late Fee Payment Penalty Procedure

If your Daycare payment is not received by the 1st of the month, a late fee of \$5.00 per day will be charged. If full payment is not received by the 5th day of the month your child(ren) may not return to the program until the account has been paid in full.

NSF Penalty Procedure

Should your Daycare payment be returned to our organization as NSF, we require repayment. Repayment must be in the amount of the original fee as well as a \$30.00 NSF penalty charge. Upon the VWCA receiving notification from our financial institution regarding NSF a notification will be sent to you via email.

General Information

Payment Requirements:

- Daycare Fees are due on the 1st of the month and can be paid by cash, cheque, debit, or credit card.
- Camp Fees are due upon registration, and can be paid by cash, cheque, debit, or credit card.
- Please make cheques payable to: VWCA or Victoria West Community Association
- To pay by credit card over the phone, please call 250-590-8922.

Here at VWCA we recognize that there are a number of situations that can cause financial strain. If you need to arrange alternate payment arrangements, please contact your onsite Manager.

Withdrawal and cause for discharge

To withdraw or change registered days without penalty, Daycare families are required to give one month's written notice on the first of the month to the Onsite Manager to de-register or decrease registered days. In lieu of notice families will be charged one month's fees.

Absentees (when your child will not be attending our program)

If your child will be absent from the program, parents/guardians are required to phone the Manager's Phone by 9:00am and leave a message stating your child's name, program, and the date of absence.

We are unable to accept notification of absence via email.

If you do not inform us that your child will be missing, our missing child protocol will be followed.

If we do not receive notice of your child's absence, you will be subject to a non-notified absence fee of \$50.00

After three non-notified absences your child will be withdrawn from the program.

Health and Safety

Missing Child Onsite

If your child does not arrive to our program by 9:00am, our procedure is to:

-Check the Manager Cell Phone for messages, and check staff communication book

-Call the parents and contact numbers indicated on your registration form

-If by 9:10am your child has not been located and should be in care, we will call the police and report your child missing

Missing Child Off-Site

If a child has been accounted for and then goes missing we will complete a five-minute search of the area, after which 911 will be called.

Out-Trip Protocol

We follow these out-trip procedures when taking part in activities offsite:

-The VWCA will ensure that parents have reasonable access to their child at all times.

-Out trip information will be available in your program space, in monthly calendars, and will be sent by email prior to your child's out trip.

We will endeavor to return to the program space between 4:00 and 5:00pm

If you wish to pick your child(ren) up from the out-trip location, or en-route, please speak to a Manager in advance to arrange pick-up from the out-trip location. If your child is unable or unwilling to attend the out-trip, please make arrangements for alternate care. Additionally, please send your child prepared for the out-trip with appropriate attire and food.

Injury and Accident Procedures

Should your child sustain an injury that requires medical attention, we will contact you immediately. If we are unable to reach you, we will call the emergency contact person for direction.

All injuries are documented. Minor injuries such as bumps, bruises, small scrapes or surface cuts will be tended to by staff, documented, and brought to the parent's attention at pick-up time.

Injuries requiring medical attention will be reported to the parent, Manager, Executive Director, and VIHA licensing.

If the injury requires immediate medical care, we will call 911.

Outside

We carry first aid kits with us at all times, as well as the attendance sheet and the child's emergency forms. It is very important for parents to keep the emergency forms and their registration papers up to date throughout the school year. For additional safety, our

playground areas are checked daily by staff as well as inspected monthly by our facility staff and routinely inspected by our Licensing Officer as part of their program review.

Emergency Situations

VWCA staff are trained to follow the VWCA Emergency Procedures. Procedures are posted in program spaces. Programs are equipped with cell phones and staff will make every attempt to contact parents during/after an emergency.

Emergency Closure and Weather Closures

In the event of an emergency (including but not limited to: unforeseen weather, lack of human resources, natural disasters, health emergencies, power failure, renovations, or teacher's strike), the VWCA will close. If emergency closure is necessary during operating hours we will attempt to contact you by phone to promptly pick up your child. There will be no refunds issued for emergency closures. In the event of a closure lasting more than two weeks, fee credits will be calculated and applied to your next invoice. Should the region be experiencing dangerous weather conditions and SD61 closes, VWCA will also close. Follow the steps below to obtain the most up to date information:

-check the SD61 website: <http://sd61.bc.ca>

-check the VWCA website: www.victoriawest.ca

-call your onsite Manager.

-check your email, as your onsite manager will endeavour to provide written notification

Care Plans

If your child requires extra support, or has special medical or behavioural needs, a care plan outlining instructions for specialized care must be created. This will be created by the caregiver, parent, and possibly outside resources and will be updated yearly. Your manager may request a care plan and will guide you through the creation of a care plan, should your child require one.

Affordable Child Care Benefit

As a licensed child care provider, VWCA is eligible to accept provincial child care benefit for eligible enrolled children. The following are expectation that our program has for families utilizing child care subsidy:

1. Parents/Guardians are ultimately responsible for all fees as registrants to our program.
2. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for fee payments until benefit plan authorization has been received by our program. Please note that Affordable Child Care Benefit application processing can take 6 to 8 weeks.

3. Parents are responsible for paying any parent portion remaining after the deduction of subsidy from the program fees.
4. Parents are responsible for renewing the benefit authorization before it expires.
5. For more information about this program, please visit:
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/child-care-funding/child-care-benefit>

If you require assistance with the application process please contact your childcare manager, or the Child Care Resource and Referral Centre 250-382-7000 or MCFD at 1-888-338-6622, option 1. Please note, authorization from the MCFD (Ministry of Children and Family Development) may take several weeks to process.

Families receiving the Affordable Childcare Benefit must pay the balance of their account by the 1st of the month.

Late Pick-Up Penalty Fees

If a parent/guardian does not pick up by the time a VWCA program closes, a late fee of \$5 will be charged for the first 5 minutes. After this, an additional \$1 per minute will be charged. The staff will write up an invoice for the amount owing, your copy can be taken to the office and added to your monthly bill. If the fee has not been paid before the end of the week, an additional \$50 fee will be added. If the fee is not paid by the end of the month you will be contacted by the manager to discuss further consequences.

Call if you are running Late!

The following steps will be taken in the event of a late pick up:

1. You will be contacted
2. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached, your Emergency contacts will be contacted to find someone to come pick up your child.
3. If both emergency contacts and parents are unable to be contacted within half an hour of closing, the Ministry of Children and Families will be contacted, and the child will be put into emergency daycare services until a parent is located.
4. Three late pickups in a row will result in dismissal from the program.

Policies

Behaviour and Guidance Policy

The word “guidance” describes a teaching and learning process by which children develop socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours as they grow to maturity. The goal of guidance is to assist the child in establishing inner control and making decisions. Little Steps Childcare Centre adheres to the guidelines of the Ministry of Health’s “Guidance and Discipline with Young Children” handbook.

Encouraging children to make their own decisions, choices and problem solve is the best solution. Of course, this is a learning process, so an educator will assist the child to resolve the issue themselves.

Conflict Resolution

VWCA believes that a successful program intrinsically relies on the cooperation and cohesiveness of children, their families, staff, the community, and various integral outside resources. Our mission is to create a positive space from a basis of supporting families and community.

In the event of a conflict, the VWCA takes a problem-solving and family-centred approach. We value open communication, mediation, and encourage parents to discuss any concerns regarding their child(ren) and their child(ren)'s experiences in our programs.

Managers have an open door policy and will address a parent's/guardian's concerns in a respectful environment. Whenever possible, please email to make an appointment with the onsite manager to assist in discussing the manner in a timely fashion.

In the event that an issue is unresolved between the manager and the parent, please make an appointment with the Executive Director.

Discharge:

The VWCA reserves the right to discharge based on:

- Inability of the child or family to follow VWCA expectations and policies
- Inability of the child or family to adhere to the VWCA Code of Conduct
- Inability of the program to meet the needs of the child or family
- Refusal to meet with management and failure to communicate regarding the care of your child
- Three late payments, non-payments, or NSF cheques
- Three late pickups
- Three non-notified absences

In the event that an issue arises, a mandatory meeting will be set with the onsite manager and Executive Director. All written warnings will go on file. In the case that your child is discharged from the program we will provide a pro-rated reimbursement.

Screens policy

We do not provide any screen time at preschool, daycare, or out of school care.

Drop off/pick up policy

Please adhere to your child's program times for drop-off and pick up.

Daycare (3-5 Yrs) operates from 6:30am-5:00pm. Please arrive for the day by 9:00am, and for pick-up by 4:55pm at the latest.

School-Aged Camp (5-12 Years) operates from 7:00am-5:30pm. Please arrive for the day by 9:00am, and for pick-up by 5:25pm at the latest.

Staff schedules are dependent on these times, so if you are running late please let us know ASAP! Our fabulous staff would like to leave when their shift is done.

Please give yourself at least 5 minutes (maybe more when your child first starts the program) prior to closing to pick up your child to make sure that everybody can be out of the room by the time the program ends for the day.

If an alternate person will be picking up your child, please have a written note or send an email with the person's full name and phone number as they will be asked for identification.

Authorized Pick-up

Children may only be released to persons named on the child's registration and emergency form. Authorized pick-up contacts must be responsible adults who are of the legal age of 19. Staff will ask for photo ID and a local phone number. Please inform staff in advance by email if someone else is picking up your child.

Unauthorized Pick-up

If you wish to have an unauthorized person pick up your child, we require advanced written authorization by completing the unauthorized pick-up section of the registration package or by sending a fax or email. Pick up contacts must be responsible adults who are of the legal age 19. Staff will ask for photo ID and a local phone number.

Release of Care

Parents must check in with staff so that they can sign your child in and out of the program. Your child must be picked by a responsible adult from the authorized pick-up list. Your child may never sign themselves out, walk home or leave the premises without being signed out.

Alleged Impaired Pick-up

The staff must take reasonable steps to prevent any person unable to provide care from gaining access to a child. If a staff member believes the child to be at risk, they will offer to call a taxi, relative, or friend to pick up the person and child. As required by law, the VWCA staff

may call Child Protection Services and/or the police if a child is taken off premises by an allegedly impaired person.

Custody

We require, with registration, all legal documentation regarding custody and custody orders. The VWCA cannot withhold a child from a parent and will not intervene in custody issues unless current court ordered documents have been provided. In the case that we have a copy of a custody order that is not being abided by we will contact all concerned parties. This may include phoning the police and/or The Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Please speak with the manager if you have specific questions relating to your situation.

VWCA Custody Arrangement Document

We require written paperwork indicating the agreement plan outlined by separated or split families. Both parents/guardians are required to fill out the documentation and paperwork to ensure that information is shared.

If you have **joint custody** of your child, we expect payments, pick-up persons, and penalty fees to be provided from the parent who is listed first on the registration form. Split payment information must be provided at the time of registration.

If you have **sole custody** of your child, we expect payments, pick up persons, and penalty fees to be your sole responsibility. In the event that fees are accrued on your day of registered pick up, you are responsible for paying fees before the child can attend on the next registered day. In the event that your child is unable to attend the program due to your account being in arrears, we will notify both guardians.

Closures

The **Daycare and School-Aged Camp** programs will close for the following STAT holidays:

New Year’s Day	Good Friday	Easter Monday	Victoria Day
Canada Day	BC Day	Labour Day	Thanksgiving Day
Remembrance Day	Christmas Day	Boxing Day	Family Day

Illnesses

Please keep your child at home if they have any of the following symptoms: cough, fever, respiratory symptoms, ear infections, eye infections, diarrhea, fever, lice, vomiting and any other communicable disease like chicken pox.

This prevents the spread of illness in the centre.

During the COVID-19 Crisis, any child attending during our Emergency Agreement will be screened for temperature before drop-off. If a child presents with a temperature they will be sent home and asked to self-isolate.

If your child has any of these symptoms, please report them to the Manager by email.

Your child needs to remain at home for at least 48 hours after symptoms (and medications) have stopped.

If your child becomes sick while attending VWCA programs you will be contacted to pick your child up as soon as possible (within 1 hour). If you are not able to pick up, we will contact your Emergency pick up persons listed on your registration form.

Sunscreen Policy

VWCA staff will supervise and provide direction for the application of sunscreen. The VWCA is not able to supply sunscreen, therefore families must provide their child with a labelled bottle of sunscreen. We ask that if your child has allergies to sunscreen to provide a reasonable safety plan to ensure that your child will not be at risk of sunburn or sunstroke.

Communication

We use e-mail communication and will contact you by email you have provided on your registration form. Important information is sent out via email so please ensure the e-mail address you have provided is accessible at all times, even during holiday breaks. If this is not possible, please provide your preferred method of communication.

We assume that you have received and read our e-mail unless it bounces back as undeliverable. If this occurs we will notify you by phone.

E-mails include: monthly newsletters, billing notification and relevant program information

It is the parent's responsibility to provide accurate contact information and read the notifications that are emailed out. Notify the childcare manager as soon as possible if your personal contact information changes during the year.

VWCA Code of Conduct

The Victoria West Community Association Board, staff, volunteers and user will adhere to the following Code of Conduct to guide all behaviour and activities related to the VWCA:

- We will interact with respect, courtesy, objectivity and inclusiveness.
- We will work towards the good of all community members, and not for personal benefit.
- We will promote collaboration, cooperation and partnership with each other and with other groups.
- We will promote health, wellness and safety for the entire community.

Contact Information:

Manager Contact Information

Daycare Manager: Beth Hume

Phone number: 250-590-8922

Please use this number to let staff know that your child is sick/away for the day

School-Aged Care Manager: Asha Willis

Email: outofschoolcare@victoriawest.ca

Phone Number: 250-508-0142 (cell phone)

Please use this number to let staff know that your child is sick/away for the day

Daycare Cell (Frontline Staff): 250-516-2752

School-Aged Care Cell (Frontline Staff): 250-508-5935

VWCA Parent Agreement (Please Sign and Return)

The parent/guardian must initial each box and must sign below acknowledging and taking responsibility for all expectations and policies outlined in the parent/guardian handbook.

- The policies around fee payments, refunds, de-registration and penalty payments.
- If the information provided on this form changes, I am responsible for updating it with the manager and educators.
- If my child is sick and/or unable to participate in the program, I/or one of my emergency contacts will immediately pick-up **(within 1 hour's time)**.
- If my child cannot participate in a safe manner, ie: physical aggressiveness, active climbing in the classroom, etc. I/or one of my emergency contacts will immediately pick-up **(within 1 hour's time)**. The safety of children and educators is paramount.
- It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to read and comply with all policies and procedures. It is also a parent/guardian's responsibility to read and acknowledge e-mail correspondence and text messages in a timely manner.
- Open, honest communication with parents and educators is mandatory to better support your child in our programs. Please update us immediately if there are any changes of note in your child's behaviour, daily routine, medical history, etc. Educators have the right to inquire about changes in behaviour and update you of our observations.
- We recognize our programs are not suitable for every child. If we are unable to support the needs of your child, VWCA reserves the right to discharge them from the program.

If you do not adhere to the VWCA Code of Conduct, that is grounds for dismissal from any program.

By signing below I/we confirm that I/we have read and understand all information outlined in the parent/guardian handbook

Signature: _____ Date: _____