

# VWCA Childcare Parent Handbook

## Nature Daycare Little Steps Daycare



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Dear Parents,

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all the children and families at Victoria West Community Association. We are committed to providing the best possible learning experience for each child entrusted to our care. To facilitate our licensed daycare programs, we are pleased to offer this parent handbook. The purpose of the handbook is to better acquaint parents with the philosophy, principles, and operations of the Centre. It is hoped that the contents of this handbook will assist you and your child in making your time at Victoria West Community Association a successful, happy, and positive experience.

All parents are expected to be familiar with the Centre guidelines and policies listed within and abide by them.

Sincerely,

Staff of Victoria West Community Association

### **Victoria West Community Association**

#### **Vision:**

Victoria West community is a diverse, healthy and vital place to live, work and play.

#### **Mission:**

The Victoria West Community Association is a not for profit organization whose mission is to engage residents in community stewardship, to impact decisions that affect the community, to raise awareness, to foster a sense of spirit and pride and to encourage participation in community issues, solutions, projects and events.

Victoria West Community Centre is the heart of the neighborhood, offering diverse and relevant activities for all. It is a place where neighbors meet, learn and volunteer. The Centre provides physical, intellectual, social and cultural services and programs that contribute to individual and community health and development.

#### **Values:**

**Accountability:** We are transparent and accountable to our community, funders and partners.

**Inclusiveness:** The purposes of the Society are to promote, support or undertake any activity that will enhance the quality of life in the Victoria West community and supports the diverse population of the community.

**Sustainability:** The social, environmental and economic health and vitality of the community is enhanced by VWCA activities and initiatives.

**Service:** The VWCA provides services to the community as an advocate for, and facilitate participation in, the discussion of community issues in the provision of community services and in sharing information.

#### **Territory Acknowledgement**

With humility and gratitude, we acknowledge that the land on which we gather as guests is the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples, specifically the Lekwungen, also known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt nations.

## **Nature Daycare Philosophy**

The Nature Daycare offers a curriculum that supports a deep connection to nature. Our program interacts with nature both as the teacher and the classroom. Our core values include creative play-and inquiry-based learning, often child-led or child-centred activities, diversity and risky play. Our Nature Daycare includes some indoor time but as much as possible will be outside in the beautiful Banfield Park. We will explore the ever changing natural world throughout all seasons and in all kinds of weather, safety permitting. Our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment where children fall in love with the natural. We believe that time spent in nature will bring children confidence, resilience, empathy, health and happiness.

## **Nature Daycare Program Hours**

Nature Daycare operates Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm year round, with a week long break at Christmas and March Break (according to the School District #61 School Calendar).

Typical daily schedule:

8:00am – Depending on the number of children arriving early, Nature friends may start upstairs in the Little Steps and then transition to their own room after 8:30  
8:30am - 9:00am: free play activities and snack table open  
9:00am – 11:30am: Outdoor Exploration  
11:30am-12:00pm: Transition to Indoors  
12:00pm - 12:30pm: Lunch time  
12:30pm - 1:30pm: Rest Time  
1:00pm: Children that are awake have quiet activity time  
2:00 - 2:30pm: Washroom Break, Snack and Transition to Outdoors  
2:30pm - 4:30pm Outdoor Exploration  
4:30pm - 4:55pm: Transition to Indoors, Quiet Activities and End of Day

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

Please ensure that you take your child to use the bathroom in the community centre and wash hands prior to being dropped off in the Nature program. Parents are welcome into the cubbie/entrance area of the classroom. We ask that you stay with your child until they have been signed in. Snack is a choice in the morning but please be aware that the snack table closes at 8:50am. If you arrive after this time, please ensure that your child has already eaten. Also, if you arrive after this time, please ensure that your child is already dressed appropriately for the weather of that day and ready for outside. If the group has already transitioned to outdoor exploration, a sign outside the classroom will tell you where to find them. Please be sure to grab a pinny from the classroom before you go out to meet them. We kindly request that you return to pick up your child no later than 4:55. We do not have options for late pickup.

## **Little Steps Daycare Philosophy**

The Little Step 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 daycare and outdoor 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 are capable and competent learners who gain knowledge about themselves and the world around them through investigation and discovery, and through art, dramatic play, and social interactions. Most of our programming evolves from the interests and experiences that they 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 and 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.

## **Little Steps Program Hours**

Little Steps Daycare operates Monday to Friday from 8:00am to 5:00pm year round, with a week long break at Christmas and March Break (according to the School District #61 School Calendar).

Typical daily schedule:

8am- 9:30 am: Classroom opens, free play activities and snack table open

9:30-10:00am: Group activity

10:00-10:30am: Transition to outdoor play

11:30am: Return to inside and have lunch time

12:30pm-1:45pm: Rest time

1:00pm: Children that are awake have quiet activity time while others rest

2:00pm: Snack and story time

2:45pm: Transition to outdoor play

4:00pm-4:55pm: Free play activities, end of day

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

Parents are welcome into the cubbie/entrance area of the classroom. We ask that you stay with your child until they have been signed in. All children should wash their hands before entering into the play area. Snack is a choice in the morning but please be aware that the snack table closes at 9am; if you arrive after this time, please ensure that your child has already eaten. If you arrive after 10:00am, please ensure that your child is already dressed appropriately for the weather that day, has used the toilet and is ready for outdoors. There are also washrooms in the community centre. Please try to arrive before we transition to our group activity at 9:30, however if occasional circumstances require a later drop off, please notify the educators ahead of time. We request that you do not drop off or pick up during the rest time between 12:30-1:45. Please return to pick up your child no later than 4:55. We do not offer extended care or late pickup.

### **Yearly Schedule**

Both daycare programs run year-round. We will close each year for the first week of both Winter Break and Spring Break (according to the School District #61 School Calendar) for Facility maintenance.

We will also close for the following STAT holidays:

New Year's Day	Family Day	Good Friday	Easter Monday
Victoria Day	Canada Day	BC Day	Labour Day
National Day for Truth and Reconciliation	Thanksgiving Day	Remembrance Day	Christmas Day & Boxing Day

In the case of inclement weather, VWCA Programs will mirror the of the Greater Victoria School District #61 for closures. Please check their website in the morning for updates. Families will not be contacted directly.

Please note, no discounts or refunds are issued for missed days, statutory holidays, sick days, vacations or closures due to inclement weather.

### **Monthly Meetings - Early Closure Policy**

To support ongoing staff development and program improvement, both daycare programs; Nature and Little Steps, close early **one day each month** to allow time for staff meetings, training, and planning. This early closure is essential to maintaining the quality of care and education we provide. These sessions allow our team to collaborate, stay current with best practices, and continuously improve our program—benefiting both children and families. Our daycare programs will close at **4 PM** on the **last scheduled Friday of each month**.

### **Punctuality and Ratios**

We strongly encourage parents/caregivers to ensure that their child arrives on time each day (before the first transition of the day). A student arriving late for their program may be both disruptive and distracting to the ongoing learning process. Consistently late arrivals may miss out on valuable topics, activities and materials being introduced.

- Daycare operates from 8:00am-5:00pm.
- Please drop off before 9:30am for Little Steps and by 9:00am of Nature Daycare
- Please arrive for pick up by 4:55pm.

In order to operate a full 9 hour/day program, there will be 1 staff for the beginning and end of each day.

Maintaining the same schedule for arrival and pickup will allow us to schedule staff accordingly to ensure the required ratio of 1:8 (educator:child) is always maintained. Please plan to have your child attending not more than 8.5 hours each day. If necessary, families may be assigned a specific group schedule as outline below.

Group A – 8:00-4:30 / Group B – 8:30-5:00

Staff schedules are dependent on these times, so if you are running late, please let us know! 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.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of extraordinary inclement weather conditions such as snow, whether unanticipated or where prior knowledge of such conditions are received through meteorological announcements, programs at the Centre may be cancelled. If closures happen prior to programs starting for the days, VWCA Programs will mirror the of the Greater Victoria School District #61. Please check their website [www.sd61.bc.ca](http://www.sd61.bc.ca) in the morning for updates. Families will **not be contacted** directly.

If we need to close our programs early due to inclement weather conditions, the Centre will make every effort to inform parents as early as possible through email or text. Parents are asked to ensure that they have a reliable backup plan should an emergency prevent them from picking up their child on time. Please note, no discounts or refunds are issued for missed days, statutory holidays, sick days, vacations or closures due to inclement weather.

### **Applications and Enrollment**

Both our daycare programs are for children ages 3 to 5. Your child must be fully toilet competent to enroll. This includes using the toilet unassisted and without prompting (before going outside and during bathroom visits). At our discretion, our Little Steps Daycare may accept up to 2 children at a time who are between 30 months of age to 3 years old who are developmentally ready to be included in a 3-5 group

Since many children leave each September to start Kindergarten, our largest intake is for the fall. Families with children currently enrolled in our childcare programs (Daycare & Out-of-School Care) as well as their siblings, will have priority for the September intake (Little Steps, Nature Daycare and Out of School Kids Club). Current families will have until the end February to submit their applications.

If there are spaces remaining, they will then open for new families to apply starting in March. Throughout the remainder of the year, applications will be accepted when spaces become available. We do not keep a waitlist.

Application forms are available online through our website and must be filled out completely. In addition, after reading the parent handbook, a Parent Agreement must be signed by all parents/guardians. A daycare tour for Parents/Guardians and your child(ren) will then be scheduled by the manager.

Registration is not confirmed until the application is accepted by both parties, you have received a Confirmation of Enrollment email, and the non-refundable administration fee and deposit is received.

### **Custody Issues**

Should there be custody issues the Centre must have legal papers of visitation schedules and any other relevant legal documents, including restraining orders, etc. If there are no legal papers, the office will accept a written agreement signed by both parents. Each parent has a right to receive Centre mail, speak to staff, see sign-in sheets, and leave with their child on their appropriate day and time.

Only the parent with legal custody may enroll the child, withdraw the child, or sign permission slips and paperwork. It is staff policy not to side with either parent in the event of a divorce. Staff also may not write letters in your defense for any legal hearing or legal action. Trust that our staff is here to aid your child and give him/her the best care possible in a consistent and nurturing environment.

If the occasion happens when both parents are in the Centre grounds during a time when the two parents are estranged, we expect both parents to treat each other with respect. No conflicts will be tolerated while on Centre property.

### **Child's Emergency Information**

Educators carry with them emergency information for each child at all times. Each child has their own page in an emergency binder including:

- child's name and birthdate
- a current portrait photo that can be shown to First Responders
- parent contact information including address and phone numbers
- emergency contacts and authorized pick ups
- medical information such as allergies, medications, doctor and BC Services number

Please notify us as soon as possible if there are any changes to this information, including if you move to a new address or change your contact information so that we always have the most up-to-date information in the event of an emergency. Please also ensure that the contact information for your emergency contacts remains accurate.

### **Medical Information**

It is important for the Centre to have all relevant medical information at hand to ensure the safety of your children including:

- **Full Disclosure**: Parents must fully disclose all medical information about the child during registration (information as specified in the medical section of the application and/or registration form). Disclosure is vital so that the Centre can take any medical precautions as becomes necessary – such as requiring an EpiPen be kept in the program areas for a child with a severe nut allergy.
- **Up-to-Date Information**: Should a child undergo a medical procedure or treatment after registration, parents are required to inform the Centre so that changes to medical information can be amended and a medical plan implemented if deemed necessary.
- **Immunization**: Up-to-date immunization records are required for all newly enrolling children.
- If a child's caregivers have chosen not to have their child vaccinated:
  - a) The Centre will provide the family with [a guide](#) from the public health unit that explains the benefits of immunization and [risks of not vaccinating](#)
  - b) The Centre will keep a log to confirm that the parent has received a copy of the guide
  - c) The family is advised that in the event of an outbreak, or an immediate threat of an outbreak, the child will need to temporarily stay home from their program to protect their child from becoming ill and prevent the spread of the disease
- **Student Medication**: Staff should be notified of any prescription or non-prescription medication a child is taking. In the case where staff may be required to administer medication, please complete a "Permission to Administer Medication" form, copies of which can be found at the office and hand to the Childcare Manager. For prescription medication, please bring the container with the pharmacy label. It must have the child's name, dose, and not be expired. For nonprescription medication, please have your doctor fill out the form indicating dose and schedule.
- **Allergies**: Parents must notify the Centre of any allergies and if/when any new allergies or physical condition arise. Emergency medications such as an EpiPen or puffer must be kept on premises for those children prescribed to them for **severe and life-threatening allergies**. These are labelled and kept safely out of reach of other children in the program areas, but easily accessible to staff should they need to be administered. Parents are responsible for ensuring such medications are up to date.

### **Additional Needs**

If your child has special learning or medical needs, please discuss this with the Childcare Manager prior to registration. A child who may show additional needs after starting in one of the programs may require a professional assessment. Parents and staff will work together to determine the best course of action to help with the child's success.

### **Little Steps and Nature Daycare Fees (Sept 2025-Aug 2026):**

	Monthly Rate	CCFRI Funding	After CCFRI
5 days/week	\$1139.00	\$545*	<b>\$594*</b>
Mon, Wed, Fri	\$683.40.80	\$327*	<b>\$356.40*</b>
Tues, Thurs	\$455.56	\$218*	<b>\$237.60*</b>

The BC Childcare Fee Reduction amount is approximate and may vary. Parents are responsible for paying any parent portion remaining after the reduction. You can get more information about the Childcare Fee Reduction Initiative at this link: [CCFRI Estimator website](#).

Please note that each year in September childcare fees may be adjusted to keep up with the cost of living following government guidelines. Parents will be notified with the amount at least a full month prior to the increase.

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

Fees are **due on the first business day of the month**, payable by direct withdrawal.

### **Non-Refundable Admin Fee and Deposit**

Upon confirmation of your child's registration in daycare, a non-refundable \$125 deposit will then be due in order to secure the space. Once your child starts in the program, \$25 will be retained for the administration fee and the \$100 deposit will be applied to your first month's fees.

Should you choose to not proceed with the registration after it has been confirmed but prior to starting the program, you must do so with at least a full calendar month's notice (or a month's fees in lieu of notice). The \$125 admin fee/deposit is non-refundable.

### **Payment Requirements:**

Program financials are managed by the Childcare Manager.

- Fees are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month and are paid via direct withdrawal. Withdrawals will appear on your statement as Victoria West Community Association or VWCA.
- A completed Pre-Authorized Debit (PAD) Authorization form must be provided prior to a full calendar month before your first day of care.
- A VOID cheque must be attached to the PAD agreement. If you are unable to attach a VOID cheque, please ensure that your financial information is entered correctly. Failure to provide correct information will result in a charge of \$15.00.
- For families wishing to have more than one payee, please complete separate PAD forms with void cheques for each and let us know how you will split it (50/50, 60/40 etc).

*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 the Childcare Manager at least 3 business days before the end of the month to avoid any penalty or late fee.*

### **NSF Penalty Procedure**

Should your direct debit payment be returned to our organization as NSF, we will attempt to withdraw fees a second time (up to 30 days from original payment date). An additional fee of \$30 may be applied if funds are unavailable at the time of withdrawal. VWCA will not be responsible for any costs charged by your bank/ financial institution.



### **Continued Enrollment for the Next Term**

Each year in January, our current daycare families will receive a questionnaire regarding their intentions for the next term (Sept-Aug). This information allows us to be able to anticipate the number of spots available for new enrollment in September. An additional admin fee/deposit is not required for families who maintain continuous daycare enrollment.

For those wishing to apply for enrollment in the OSC Kids' Club Before and After School program at VicWest Elementary School, our current families can apply in February. Once your enrollment is confirmed, an annual non-refundable admin fee/deposit will be required to hold your spot for September. Please note that the OSC Kids' Club is for VWES students only. Please see the OSC Kid's Club parent handbook for more information specific to that program.

### **Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB)**

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

1. Parents/Guardians are ultimately responsible for all fees as registrants to our program. Parents/Guardians will be responsible for fee payments until benefit plan authorization has been received by our program, and we are able to make the claim on your behalf.
2. We make the subsidy claim around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. If there is subsidy available to claim for previous months, a reimbursement cheque will be requested on your behalf.
3. Please note that Affordable Child Care Benefit application processing can take 6 to 8 weeks.
4. Parents are responsible for paying any parent portion remaining after the deduction of subsidy from the program fees.
5. Parents are responsible for renewing the benefit authorization before it expires.
6. 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>

ACCB can be applied to online through the MY FAMILY SERVICES website. All subsidies are processed through **VWCA Little Steps**. Alternatively, you can apply through a paper form. DO NOT bring us a formed that you have filled out first as it contains your confidential information. Instead, please first ask the childcare manager for a form filled out with our information. You will then fill in the remaining family information and send it to the ministry. If you require assistance with the application process please contact the childcare manager, or the Child Care Resource and Referral Centre 250-382-7000 or MCFD at 1-888-338-6622, option 1.

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

We are very proud of our community. We do ask that parents observe the following as good decorum:

- Treat their children and other children with respect both verbally and physically.
- Treat each staff member with respect.
- Treat each other with respect on school and community centre grounds.
- Use a soft voice while inside the program areas.
- Refrain from using inappropriate language. There are many ears listening.
- If you have a conflict with a staff member, parent, or child, please take it to the Childcare Manager immediately. Any misunderstandings can be cleared up through the office. Unsubstantiated gossip undermines the professionalism of the programs and can be harmful to the community at large.
- Smoking and vaping tobacco or cannabis are strictly prohibited inside the centre or on or near centre property.
- Children will not be released to parents who appear to be under the influence of alcohol or illegal substances.

## **Parent Communication**

At Victoria West Community Centre, we believe in regular communication. An integral part of a parent's involvement in their child's education is through effective communication with the Centre. The Centre has an 'open door' policy so should you have any immediate concerns please don't hesitate to touch base with the educators in your child's program.

We use email communication and will use the email address you have provided on your child's registration form for all communication. Important information is sent out via email; therefore, please ensure that the email provided is accessible at all times, even during holiday breaks. 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. It is the parent's responsibility to provide accurate contact information and read the notifications and newsletters that are emailed out.

## **Parents: Notice of Withdrawal and Refund Policy**

Parents/Guardians who wish to withdraw their child or reduce the number of days they attend must provide notice to the Childcare Manager, at least a full month (30 days) before their intended withdrawal/change date. This written notice must be received by the last day of the month prior to the last month before you wish to withdraw/reduce your enrollment. Withdrawals with or without notice, and sudden departures are treated the same and are required to pay full fees for the full calendar month following the date of notification/departure/withdrawal. If a child is absent a period of 30 days without any notice or other explanation, that child is then deemed to have given notice, and the family will be required to pay full fees for the following full calendar month.

## **Service Continuity Policy**

We understand the importance of mutual understanding and adherence to our childcare policies and procedures outlined in this handbook. Our aim is to ensure a harmonious and safe environment for all participants in our programs. Your cooperation ensures a positive and enriching experience for all. In the rare instance where policies or procedures are not being upheld, we follow a progressive approach:

1. Reminders and Guidance: Our staff are committed to assisting parents/guardians in understanding and complying with our policies. They will remind you of the policies and encourage you to review the parent handbook.
2. Supportive Correction: Continuous non-compliance may necessitate further action. In such cases, we will offer additional support and clarification to facilitate adherence to our policies.
3. Service Termination: In instances where repeated non-compliance persists, we reserve the right to discontinue childcare services. This decision is made with careful consideration and in the best interests of all children, families and staff within our childcare community.

## **Attendance**

Consistent attendance and routine are an essential element that promotes successful integration for each child. It is the responsibility of parents to inform the educators or childcare manager by email or phone if their child is unable to attend, is delayed for any reason, preferably ahead of time. If dropping off or picking up in the middle of the day, please be considerate of disruption to the program (ex during nap/quiet time). Communicate with the educators to coordinate an appropriate time. It is helpful to also keep us informed of plans for vacations, etc. Please note that monthly fees will not be adjusted due to illness or vacation requests.

### **Child Pickup and Drop Off Policy**

The Centre will only release your child to caregivers whose names are indicated on the registration forms as emergency or authorized pickups. Please include on the Childcare Application Form the name, relationship to child and phone number of anyone who will be picking up your child. Temporary permission may be granted and must be received in writing. Pick up contacts must be responsible adults who are of the legal age 19. Staff will ask for photo ID if they do not recognize the person. Please let us know in advance if you are sending someone to pick up in your place so we can verify they are on your contact list. Parent and/or caregivers must check in with staff so they can sign your child in and out of the program.

### **Late Pick Up Policy**

It is the parents or guardians' responsibility to pick-up their child on time. Please ensure that you give yourself adequate travel time to arrive 5 minutes before the end of the day. We do not provide an option for late pickups. If a parent/guardian frequently arrives past their pick up time, the centre reserves the right to terminate services. Please see the *Service Continuity Policy*. Transportation to and from the daycare is the responsibility of each parent or guardian.

### **No Show at End of Program**

If a child is still at the centre at closing time, the staff will take the following steps.

1. **Attempting to Contact the Parent or Guardian:** Staff will immediately try to reach the parent or guardian using the contact information provided in the child's records.
2. **Contacting Emergency Contacts:** If after several attempts (5 min) the parent or guardian cannot be reached, staff will begin to try to contact the emergency contacts listed in the child's record.
3. **30 min late - Involving Authorities:** If no authorized individuals can be reached and the child remains uncollected, staff will contact local authorities, such as the Ministry for Children and Families and/or the police, to ensure the child's safety and well-being.

### **Illness**

We understand that parents may choose to bring their children to our programs even with a mild sickness. However, we have an obligation to everyone to ensure a healthy atmosphere for all.

If a child has a bad cold with a runny nose or cough and comes to program, the chances are that other children and staff could also contract the cold. Germs have the potential to spread quickly in the program environments. With your cooperation, we can establish a healthier environment for everyone if, when your child is sick, they remain at home. **Please Note: If we see that your child is not feeling well, we will call you to pick them up promptly.**

Below is a general list of illnesses that would prevent your child from being allowed to attend childcare as well as a general guideline for the Centre's educators to call you to pick up your child promptly.

- A fever exceeding 38°C or 100.4°F.
- An infection for which the child has not been on an antibiotic for at least 24 hours.
- A child vomiting or complaining of severe headaches or stomach aches.
- A child who has diarrhea.
- A child who has been constantly coughing or has a runny nose with thick discharge.
- A communicable disease such as pink eye or head lice. Parents are required to notify the Centre immediately if their child contracts a communicable disease.

**Please Note: We ask that parents keep their child home until they have been symptom-free (without the use of symptom or fever reducing medication) for at least 24 hours.**

## **What to bring to Daycare?**

Please label each item of clothing and store in a large zip lock bag in cubby or backpack. If items are not labelled, an educator will label them. If clothing is sent home dirty, it must be replaced the following day.

- Two changes of clothes (top, pants, underwear, and socks), indoor and outdoor shoes.
- Weather Wear: raincoat, muddy buddy/rain pants, rain boots, warm hat and gloves, sun hat, sunscreen (summer), and running shoes. (No open-toed shoes or sandals).
- Food: Lunch and two snack (\*Please follow the Food and Drink Policy) and a water bottle needs to be sent each day. Please label all lunch bags, containers, and water bottles with your child's name.
- Rest time: Fitted Standard Crib Sized Sheet/Blanket (labelled). Optional: small stuffed animal, small travel size pillow.

## **Separation**

Separation is a process we go through all our lives. Though often challenging and exciting, this growth towards independence can be a bit scary and emotional for both children and parents. Parents and staff working together collaboratively to show children that they trust and believe in one another. This offers a foundation of support when the world suddenly seems a new and different place.

Independence is one of the key goals, but many children have second thoughts about being away from their family initially. We do encourage a quick drop off in the cubbie area of the classroom. Although the transition from parent to teacher can sometimes be challenging, remember that sometimes staying or prolonging the goodbye only makes it more difficult for your child as well as for yourself. We encourage parents to remain in the Centre (out of sight) for a few minutes whilst the staff settle their child or to call the Centre once at home or at work to see how they are doing. Please don't leave the classroom without letting your child know that you are going as this establishes trust.

## **Parent Involvement**

We value community and strong relationships between the centre and home. The past few years parents have been invited to read a story during Book Month. Some have also volunteered to share a cultural tradition or lead a special activity such as music or dance. If you have something you'd like to share with the children, we encourage you to speak with the educators or the Childcare Manager. Your involvement enriches our program and helps strengthen the connection between home and center.

There are also opportunities to get involved more broadly within the community centre — whether by volunteering at events, helping with ongoing programs, or even joining our **Board of Directors**.

## **Bikes, Scooters and Strollers**

Children's bikes, scooters or strollers must not be left in the classroom or inside the community centre. There is limited space outside where you can lock things up at the bike stand as well as one ring on the wall to lock a larger items like stroller or trailer. Since there is very limited space, preference would be that you take these items with you after you drop off your child.

## **Home Toys**

Children can bring one small soft toy for comfort during rest time. We request that all other toys are kept at home unless a special request (such as Teddy Bear Day or Show and Share) is made by the educator.

## **Screens Policy**

We do not provide any screen time in our daycares.

### **Sleep/Rest Policy**

Based on research showing that adequate rest supports emotional regulation, learning, and development in young children, all children are encouraged to take part in a quiet rest period after lunch. Napping is not required. Children who need sleep will be supported by educators in settling comfortably, while those who do not fall asleep are given the opportunity to rest quietly. After not more than 30 minutes, awake children are invited to get up and engage in calm, quiet activities.

Children ages 3-5 typically require approximately 5.5 to 6.5 hours of wakefulness after an afternoon nap before they are ready for their evening bedtime, so for children who do fall asleep, we ensure that they are awakened between 1:30-2pm. If a child appears genuinely tired, staff may allow them to sleep, even if a "no nap" request is in place, as we prioritize the immediate needs and well-being of the child. We recognize that every child's sleep needs are different and aim to provide a respectful, individualized approach.

### **Toileting Policy**

We expect all children to be fully toilet competent before entering our programs. It can be disruptive to the learning process of others when one of the educators is called away to take care of a toileting concern. Ongoing issues can lead to stress and anxiety for the child and turn it into a negative experience.

We understand that accidents do happen from time to time, especially in the first few weeks for new children, but if a child regresses or is not truly toilet trained when they start with us, the program staff will consult with the parents to work on a solution. In extreme cases when a remedy cannot be found we may ask that the child have a shortened day or stay home until they are successfully toilet competent. If this should happen staff will work closely with the parents to ensure a positive and successful return to the program. Diapers and pull ups are not permitted in the program.

### **Indoor / Outdoor Shoes (Boots)**

All children must have a pair of shoes for indoor use as well as a pair of outdoor shoes and, as previously stated, a pair of boots for the playground. This will help maintain a clean program environment.

### **Food and Drink Policy**

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 inform the staff of any dietary needs or allergies.

For both Little Steps and Nature Daycare, please pack two healthy snacks and a lunch from home that follow Canada's Food Guide <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>. **Please do not send** candy, gummies, cookies, cake, pastries, chocolates, chips, juice or pop. Foods with high sugar content are not allowed in our programs. We cannot reheat foods so please send foods that need to stay warm in a thermal container. Please include all necessary utensils required to eat the lunch and snacks. Include an icepack in the lunch box to keep the foods fresh.

### **Nut Policy**

In the event that we have a child attending one of our programs with a severe nut allergy, the program will then enforce a **NUT FREE** policy. Please ask the educator about the status of allergies in the room before including any nut products in your child's snack/lunch. Substitutes such as seed or soy butters (ex: Sunbutter/Wowbutter) would be permissible in a nut free zone, however we would greatly appreciate it if you could include a note for educators letting them know that it is not a nut butter.

### **Birthdays/Special Occasions and Shared Food**

We understand that families may have a desire to celebrate special occasions within the daycare environment. We request that this is done without the use of foods, cakes or sweets. The educators in your child's program can help to suggest some alternatives such as a special theme day to mark the occasion (favorite colour day or pajama day) or you could bring a small gift bag to hand out.

### **Clothing and Possessions**

Please ensure that children are dressed appropriate to the weather and with clothing that they can easily put on and off themselves. Shoes/boots must be appropriate for active play with a closed toe and heel. Crocs and flip flops or fancy dress shoes are not appropriate for outside play.

A second set of clothing should be left at the centre at all times in case of "mishaps". Please remember to bring a spare set of clean clothes if the previous ones were taken home to be washed. All clothing should be labeled with your child's name. Please be sure to update your child's spare clothes seasonally so that they remain appropriate for the weather.

### **Active Play Policy**

We acknowledge the importance of active play in all our programs. Gross motor development is just as important as fine motor development. Our Little Steps friends go outside daily for 60-120 minutes, and our Nature Daycare friends stay outside most of the day. When we are outside, we have outdoor equipment that the children can explore and lots of time to explore natural materials. We will go out in ALL weather conditions and enjoy the outdoors in all seasons. Please see "What to Bring" to ensure your child is dressed appropriately for all outdoor conditions.

### **Sun Safety**

To protect children from excessive sun exposure during seasons when children wear clothes that expose more skin, we ask parents to apply sunscreen before arrival each day. Parents must provide a labeled broad-spectrum SPF 30+ sunscreen lotion (no aerosol sprays) to be kept at the daycare and educators will reapply before afternoon outdoor play. Each child should also bring a labeled wide brimmed hat for sun protection, a refillable water bottle, and sunglasses are optional. As our playground area has limited shade, staff assess conditions daily when deciding where to go in order to limit time in direct sunlight during peak hours. Sun-protective clothing is also recommended.

### **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.

### **Duty to Report**

We are required by law under the Child, Family and Community Service Act to report any suspected cases or disclosures of child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities for investigation. Our responsibility is to report suspicions or disclosures, not determine if abuse has occurred. Investigations are the responsibility of the Ministry for Children and Family Development and/or the police, and they are responsible for contacting the parent/guardian.

## **Privacy Policy**

VWCA respects the right of individuals to the protection of their personal and family's information. VWCA is committed to maintaining the confidentiality, privacy, and accuracy of personal information it collects, uses and discloses. VWCA staff and volunteers who have access to personal information follow fair information principles, in keeping with privacy laws. Families in our programs are in turn expected to respect the privacy of other participants and staff.

In accordance with British Columbia's privacy and child protection laws, there may be circumstances where VWCA is legally required to share personal information. This includes, but is not limited to, disclosures to child protection authorities, law enforcement, or health professionals when there is reason to believe that a child or individual may be at risk of harm. In such cases, only the minimum necessary information will be shared to meet legal or safety obligations. If at any time you feel your privacy is not being appropriately respected, please bring it up to the Team Lead and/or the Childcare Manager.

## **Child Guidance / Harassment and Bullying Prevention**

Victoria West Community Centre believes that all children have the right to learn in a safe, caring and orderly environment with a focus on physical safety, social connectedness, inclusiveness and protection from all forms of bullying, regardless of a child's gender, race, culture, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our approach to behaviour guidance is to assist children in developing self-control, self-confidence, and ultimately self-discipline and sensitivity in their interactions with others. The Centre's approach to discipline is positive, proactive and consistent with the developmental age and stage of each child. We encourage acceptable behaviour such as being respectful to ourselves, to others, and to centre property and learning to follow Centre rules such as walking calmly when inside and staying in designated areas.

Unacceptable behaviour can consist of but is not limited to: fighting (or play fighting), lack of respect for others, teasing, throwing objects and running in the building. This applies whilst at the centre, at a program-related activity or in other circumstances where engaging in the activity will have an impact on the centre environment.

The consequences of unacceptable behaviour will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, will respect an individual's right, and take into account their age, maturity and special needs, if any. Consequences will be restorative rather than punitive.

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

1. The first incident of inappropriate behaviour will result in the child being redirected to a different activity. The staff will discuss with the child the reason that their behaviour is inappropriate. The child will be supported by the staff to make more appropriate choices and find problem solving solutions.
2. If inappropriate behaviours continue or progress in frequency and escalates in peril, the educators will contact the parents to discuss solutions/options to address the problem. The incidence will be logged in our internal documentation. The parent may be called to pick the child up immediately depending on the severity of the incident.
3. Should the solutions arranged by the staff and parents prove ineffective, a more formal meeting will be scheduled to look at alternative solutions. The parents may be advised that the child cannot attend the program temporarily if the alternative solutions are unsuccessful. The incident may be documented for our Licensing Officer to review.
4. If the behaviour is still a concern, the Childcare Manager reserves the right to discharge the child from the program.



## Accidents/Incidences

All accidents/incidences involving children are documented at the Centre.

### In case of a Minor Accident or Incident:

The child/ children will be tended to immediately by a staff member. Appropriate first aid will be administered, if necessary (soap and water and/or an icepack, bandage), or comfort and support given should that be more appropriate. It will then be shared with the caregiver picking up the child that day as well as being documented in the classroom communication book and/or on a "VWCC Incident Report Form" which is kept on file for the year.

### In case of a Serious Accident:

- The child will be tended to immediately by a staff member who will ascertain the extent of the injury, begin first aid if it is appropriate and inform the Childcare Manager as soon as possible through another staff member.
- Parents/caregivers will be notified.
- For serious injuries, the teacher, Childcare Manager and/or Centre Manager will also call 911. (Parents will be expected to assume responsibility for any expenses incurred.)
- Should the child need to go to the hospital and parents cannot be reached, they will be accompanied by a staff member who will take along all their necessary medical information; care card number, family doctor etc.

### Fires, Earthquakes and other Major Disasters:

- VWCC has an Emergency Preparedness Plan as well as an Emergency Procedures Flowchart, which addresses the procedures staff would take in the event of a fire or bomb threat, a minor or major earthquake (including tsunami), a Lock Down or a major weather event.
- The children do practice fire drills once a month and earthquake drills once a year. The Emergency Preparedness Plan is practiced at least once each year by the staff.
- **We ask that you DO NOT phone the Centre.** Phone lines must be kept open for emergency calls.
- **TUNE into local radio station CFAX 1070** using a battery-operated radio or car radio for information and direction.
- **ESTABLISH an out-of-area contact person.** Phone service will likely be limited during a major disaster. It may be much easier to phone someone outside the region than to contact someone locally.
- **Electronic Mail** may serve as a means of communication.
- **Epipens and Emergency Medication.** Time and safety permitting staff will do their best to ensure that epipens or other emergency medications are taken with them during an evacuation.

## Staff Qualifications and Criminal Record Checks

At VWCA we are committed to providing an inclusive, safe, nurturing, and high-quality learning environment for all children. All educators hold the necessary education and training as outlined in childcare regulations and are certified by the BC ECE Registry. You can find these certifications on the wall in each classroom. All ECE's continue ongoing learning and professional development.

All Educators must complete a Criminal Record Check (CRC) with a vulnerable sector. CRCs are reviewed and updated as required under licensing standards.

We are proud of our team's training and professionalism, and we encourage families to speak with the Manager if they have any questions about staff qualifications or experience.



### **Assurance of Compliance with Licensing Standards**

VWCA is a licensed childcare facility operating in full compliance with the *Community Care and Assisted Living Act* and the *Child Care Licensing Regulation* of British Columbia. Our program is inspected and monitored by the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) – Licensing Program to ensure we meet or exceed all required standards related to health, safety, staffing, and programming.

Our current childcare facility license is visibly posted in the Childcare Manager's office for your review. We are committed to transparency, and all VIHA inspection reports for our facility are publicly available through the Island Health website at: <https://inspections.myhealthdepartment.com/island-health/program-ccfl>. Both Little Steps and the Nature Daycare program are included under the facility name: VWCA Little Steps Childcare

### **Concerns and Issues Resolution**

If any parent wishes to clarify or discuss any matter or concern about the programs or their child, the following guidelines should be followed:

<b>Issue/ Concern</b>	<b>Contact</b>
-your child's needs	-one of the staff in your child's program
-your involvement with an individual teacher	-the staff person directly (using discretion as to time and place.)
-general program matters or concerns about program environment	-Program Team Lead or Childcare Manager
-personnel issues in general	-Childcare Manager, Centre Manager or Executive Director
-financial matters	-Childcare Manager
-buildings and grounds	-Centre Manager
-overall functioning of the Centre	-Centre Manager or Executive Director
-registration and enrolment	-Childcare Manager

### **Appeals Policy**

- If a concern is not addressed satisfactorily with the staff member(s) involved, following the above guidelines, the Executive will make every attempt to solve the matter.
- If the parent feels that the matter has not reached a satisfactory conclusion, the parent should present the matter, in writing, to the Executive Director.
- If a concern is in regard to the Executive Director, the matter should be presented in writing to the Board. The Board will contact all parties involved and after careful consideration, will resolve the matter.

## **Preventing Contagious Disease Outbreaks Guidance for Childcare Settings**

Even though the Covid-19 pandemic is officially over, it has taught us how important it is to protect ourselves and others from contagious diseases. We must work together to ensure that our childcare spaces are safe and healthy places for our children, families and educators.

If you're ill—stay at home.

All children and staff who are ill with fever, cold, influenza, or infectious respiratory symptoms of any kind need to stay home. Parents of children with cold or influenza-like symptoms should keep their children home. Children can return to childcare of 24 hours after their symptoms have ceased, without the use of fever reducing medication.

### **Continue to encourage 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**

Wet hands with warm running water.

Apply a small amount of liquid soap. Antibacterial soap is not required.

Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (sing ABC's). Rub palms, back of hands, between fingers and under nails creating a lather.

Rinse off all soap with running water.

Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.

Discard the used towel in a waste container.

### **Children should wash their hands...**

When they arrive at the Centre before entering the program

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.

Please keep your child at home if they have any of the following symptoms: cough, fever, runny nose, 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.

## **Contact information:**

Childcare Manager Email: [childcaremanager@victoriawest.ca](mailto:childcaremanager@victoriawest.ca)

Daycare Team Lead Email: [outofschoolcare@victoriawest.ca](mailto:outofschoolcare@victoriawest.ca)

For all enquiries regarding financial matters, enrollment, general program matters or concerns about the program environment or staff, please contact the Childcare manager by phone or email.

Childcare Office Phone: (250) 590-8922 ex:1

Please contact your child's program directly by phone/text if they will be away/sick/or if you are running late. If your child is sick with something potentially contagious to others, you must also contact the childcare manager by email and list their symptoms.

LITTLE STEPS DAYCARE: 250-516-2752

NATURE DAYCARE: 778-700-7749

**Victoria West Community Centre: 250-590-8922**