



St. Patrick's Before & After School Care Program



Parent Handbook

Revised September 2011

2368 Trent Street
Victoria, B.C. V8R 4Z3
Cell Phone: (250) 896 -8162

Welcome to Before/After School Care!!

This handbook was designed to assist all parents/guardians in the St. Patrick's Before and After School Care program. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with its contents. This handbook contains information about the program, procedures and expectations of the Before and After School Care program.

Before and After School Care programs are a vital part of the Out of School Care Program, which was created to meet the needs of working parents. Before and After School Care is available for children in Kindergarten through to Grade Seven. The program provides children with stimulating, age-appropriate activities within a nurturing Christian environment.

The Before and After School Care room is situated in the Primary Wing of the school. The pick up and drop off location for your child (ren) will be at the backdoor exit beside the Out Of School Care room. There is a bell located on the door. Please ring it as sometimes the room can get noisy and we don't hear knocks!!

If you have any questions or concerns about the Before and After School Care program, please feel free to speak with Carmel MacMahon in person or by CELL: (250) 896-6162

Carmel MacMahon
cmacmahon@cisdv.bc.ca
Out of School Care Manager

Philosophy

Each child is a unique gift of God and it is our role to nurture individual style and provide opportunities that will enhance their creativity, ability to problem solve and make choices. In Before and After School Care, children are considered as special and unique individuals. They will be approached in a respectful and positive manner.

Before and After School Care will provide opportunities for children to develop spiritually, cognitively, socially, emotionally, physically and creatively. Children will participate in activities individually, in small groups, and in large groups. Their needs will be met through playful, hands-on experiences.

Children learn through interaction with their peers and adults. Our programs at St. Patrick's are committed to providing children with a safe and enriching environment that encourages a positive self-image and personal growth.

Children learn best in a positive, honest environment. In order to develop to their fullest potential, they need to be nurtured in an atmosphere of warmth, acceptance, encouragement, trust, respect and fun. The focus will be on what children can do. Individual, family and cultural differences will be accommodated and reciprocal relationships with families will be encouraged.

Communication between staff and parents is vital. This is important to create a healthy balance between home and school.

Program

The program will enhance each child's ability to grow and develop through a wide variety of activities. Activities will be designed to meet individual, group and developmental needs. Children will be involved in indoor and outdoor activities. There is also opportunity for children to work on their homework.

We provide a safe, caring and healthy environment, tailored to individual children's needs and development within the context of a larger group. We strive to provide a fun, enjoyable and positive environment.

We will:

- provide quality care and education for each child
- model and encourage appropriate guidance and care for each child and family
- provide opportunities to increase each family's knowledge of child development and health (through newsletters, bulletin boards, etc)
- support families in meeting their responsibilities to their children
- work as part of a team with families, children, community and individuals
- utilize community resources

Staff Qualifications

All staff members are required to have an updated criminal record check and to provide a physician's note of good health. Staff are also required to hold an updated First Aid Certificate.

Guidance and Discipline

St. Patrick's Child Care Programs operate on the belief that all children are unique individuals who learn through their interactions with peers, adults and their environment. The purpose of guidance in these programs are to ensure a safe and healthy environment in which all children can feel secure, respected and valued.

As children grow and develop, it is normal for them to try out a variety of behaviours in order to learn what is acceptable and appropriate ways of interacting with the world around them. Quality care uses a variety of methods to assist children in choosing appropriate behaviours.

Each child will be encouraged and supported to develop positive relationships with their peers and staff. Staff will strive to role model appropriate behaviours for the children by showing respect for the children, parents, co-workers and the environment.

Staff will:

Demonstrate care and affection towards children through the use of verbal direction, guidance and redirection if and when necessary.

Provide clear, simple and consistent limits regarding behaviours within the programs. Limits will be offered in a positive manner. Harsh and belittling language will not be used at any time nor will the use of any physical punishment.

Respect that there is always a reason for particular behaviour and staff will observe, problem solve and strategize to work with the children. Behaviour is a method of communicating needs and wants. Staffs' role is to assist children in learning appropriate methods of having these met.

Differentiate between the behaviour and the person, leaving the child's dignity intact. Verbally prepare the children for the transition to another activity.

Communicate with parents about children's behaviour and guidance strategies.

Programs Guidance Methods:

Environment:

The physical environment will be set up in a way to encourage desirable behaviours and minimize conflict. Staff will observe and modify the environment as needed to promote positive behaviours.

Modeling:

Staff members will demonstrate respect, understanding, compassion, kindness, listening and cooperation in their interactions with children and each other.

Choices:

Children will have access to a variety of choices so that they may learn to make decisions, be self-directed, and discover things in their unique and individual ways. Choices will be given when appropriate within limits. (i.e. “would you like to choose the block area or the dress up area?”)

Routine:

Daily routines and schedules will be kept so that children will know the expectations each day. The program will have a balance between quiet and active play, indoor and outdoor play and structure and unstructured play time.

Limits:

When necessary, staff will explain the limits to children so that children can learn the reasons behind the limits in a way that the children can understand. Appropriate alternatives will always be presented to the children. Limits will be clear, consistent and simple. Limits are in place so that children cannot hurt themselves or others by engaging in unsafe activities and play.

Staff will clearly state what is expected.

Examples: It is unsafe for you to run inside - Inside we walk.
I will not allow you to hit Suzy - use your words to ask Suzy for what you want.

Positive Reinforcement:

Children will be acknowledged for interacting in ways that are respectful, kind, helpful and considerate of others. Children deserve positive feedback from those around them. Children are more likely to repeat the desired behaviour when they are shown appreciation for their interactions.

Redirection:

Children will be redirected to other areas of play to change the circumstances that are creating the undesired behaviour.

Conflict Resolution:

If conflict arises between children, the process will involve the children in resolving the problem. The children will be encouraged to express their feelings, discuss the problem, and brainstorm solutions with the assistance of a staff person.

Logical and Natural Consequences:

Children will learn the natural and logical consequences of their actions. i.e.) If you cannot keep the water in the water play table, you will be asked to find somewhere else to play.

In the event that none of the above methods are working, and the child may be at risk to hurting themselves or another, they may be removed from the situation, in order to allow time for the child to reflect and calm down. Staff will then discuss the situation with the child.

If persistent issues around guidance continue with a child, staff will set up a meeting with the child's parents to discuss the situation and strategies.

Parents are encouraged to discuss any concerns around Guidance with the staff. As partners in guiding your children's growth and development, it is desirable for staff and parents to work closely and honestly together.

Communication

In order to support your child's growth and well being, it is essential that parents/guardians regularly communicate with their child and the staff. Communication will be handled in the following ways:

- Staff will maintain a bulletin board in the entry to share information with families.
- Parents will be directed to the board.
- Telephone Communication is encouraged. Please check with our staff regarding mutually convenient times.
- On request, parents can meet with staff at mutually convenient times.
- Parents are asked to make themselves familiar with the Parent Handbook.

We also have a 'Parent Communication Log.' Please use this log locate to communicate with the staff in regards to pick up and drop off. If you are picking your child up at 3pm from their class, please write that in the log. If your child is going on a play-date, please note this in the log with the date of the play-date, the person picking up and your (parent/guardian) signature. We will NOT allow your child(ren) to go home with anyone unless they are on the emergency contact list or if a note has been placed in the log.

Telephone messages are not sufficient. We need the information in writing, which is why we developed the ‘Parent Communication Log.’

Celebrations:

We enjoy celebrating birthdays and special events throughout the school year! Since your child will most likely be bringing birthday treats to their class, it is not necessary to bring treats for Before and After School Care as well. We will acknowledge children’s birthdays by singing “Happy Birthday” and by giving a card.

Family Life:

We would appreciate that if there is any major change in your family i.e) a new baby, a death of a family member or anything that might cause stress in your child’s life, that you could report it to the staff, so that we can help your child cope with their feelings.

Toys From Home:

The staff of the child care programs prefers that your child leave toys at home to ensure that they do not get lost or broken. There may be times when we have a special “Show and tell” and would invite your child to bring something from home.

Snack:

All students are required to bring their own snacks. To ensure safety for those children with allergies, snack will not be shared. If a child has an allergy, all parents will be informed and food that a child is allergic to, will not be allowed for snack.

Please make sure your child has sufficient food and water to last them the day. Extra food (such as dry foods, for example granola bars) can be stored in the top shelf of your child’s locker.

Statutory Holidays and Center Closures:

Before and After School Care will be closed on the following holidays:

- Thanksgiving
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Holidays (December – January)
- Spring Break (March)
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day

St. Patrick's Child Care Programs Release of a Child Policy

Children enrolled in St. Patrick's Child Care programs will only be released to parents, guardians and other individuals that the parents have previously listed on the "Release of a child consent/registration form." If a staff member does not recognize a person picking up a child, they will ask the individual to provide identification. If the person is not listed on the registration form the parents will be contacted and written authorization from the parents will need to be provided before the child will be released to this individual.

Unexpected alternative pick ups must be pre-arranged by the parents with the child care staff. The parent is required to fax a written document with their signature, authorizing pick up of their child by this individual to the child care program. Without this written authorization, the child will remain under the supervision of the child care staff. The alternative person will also be required to present identification. Parents are to provide as much notice of an alternate pick-up as possible. If difficulties arise, all reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the safety of the children.

If a parent or guardian arrives to pick up a child and is intoxicated, the staff member will follow this procedure:

- 1) Offer to call a relative or friend to pick the adult and child up.
- 2) Offer to call a cab.
- 3) Inform the parent/guardian that if they choose to leave in the car with or without the child, the staff member will call the police.
- 4) Call the Ministry of Children and Family Development if the staff feels that the child is in need of protection.

Custody and Court related orders:

If a custody or court order exists, a copy of the order will need to be placed on and remain on the child's file. The parent/guardian is responsible for providing accurate and up to date information concerning legal guardianship of the child (ren). If this information changes at any time, it is imperative that the child care staff be notified immediately. Without a custody or court order on file, the child care staff cannot deny access to the non-enrolling parent. If the non-enrolling parent is not on the authorized pick up list, the policy of unauthorized persons will be implemented. The guardian is responsible to provide all consents.

Late Pick up Policy: Please pick up your child on time when the program ends.

If a parent is late then a late fee will be applied and will be paid directly to the staff member who has had to stay late. Late fees are as follows: \$10.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$1.00/minute for every minute thereafter.

There will be a referral to School Administration if this concern continues.

If the child has not been picked up 30 minutes after the program end time, listed individuals on the emergency contact list will be called. If no one can be contacted, it is the program's responsibility to call the Ministry for Children and Family Development.

Safety and Emergency Procedures:

The safety of the children is a serious priority at all times. The Before and After School Care program will regularly practice fire and earthquake drills. The classroom has a list of emergency procedures near the main doors, as well as emergency phone numbers posted by the telephone.

In case of an emergency or accident, staff will contact the parent/guardian. If the parent/guardian cannot be located, staff will contact the alternate person listed on the pick up authorization form. If it is determined that a child needs to be taken to hospital by ambulance, parents/guardians will be notified immediately. An accident report will be completed and given to the Principal.

Repayment Agreement

Withdrawal of a child in care: One month notice is required in lieu of one months fee.

If a child is asked to leave our program, one month notice will be given to the parent/s. If for any reason that is not possible, one months fee will be returned to the parents.

Illness: If a child has a fever, unclear runny nose, or has vomited 24 hours prior to attending our program, they will not be permitted to attend. If a child in our care becomes sick, a parent will be contacted (if or when a parent cannot be reached, an authorized emergency contact will be contacted) and expected to pick up the child as soon as possible.