Whistler Children's Centre Society

Family Handbook



Welcome to the Whistler Children's Centre

Welcome to the Whistler Children's Centre Society (WCC). We hope your whole family will enjoy the Centre and the friends you will make here. This handbook has been written to describe our programs, goals, policies and the myriad of practical details that go into making each school day as happy and successful as possible.

All programs at WCC are licensed by the Ministry of Health, and are in compliance with the Health & Safety Regulations outlined in the Community Care Facilities Act. We offer full-day programs for children between the ages of three months to five years.

Our vision is to have a solid reputation as the best, most innovative children's centre in the corridor, one that communities, families and staff take pride in.

Our Commitment to Children and Families

The WCC is dedicated to strengthening families and communities. We value the strength of each family and respect the various backgrounds that enrich our programs. We recognize that each child is an individual and that each family has different needs, interests and expectations. Our goal is to build partnerships and work with families to help children grow to be healthy, caring, competent adults. We support families by providing information, resources and programs that will assist them in their role as parents. WCC provides an environment for children outside of the home, which is caring, supportive and safe. We understand that a child's early years establish foundations for the future which support patterns for successful relationships and lifelong learning.

Inclusion

The WCC works in partnership with families, respecting the diverse backgrounds that enrich our programs, and recognizing all families have different needs, interests and expectations. The WCC programs are open to all children including those children with special needs. To support the inclusion of children with special needs, the WCC, the child's family and any external support services will work together collaboratively to ensure effective inclusion.

If your child requires extra support, please meet with the Executive Director to discuss your needs and determine whether the teachers will be able to support your child appropriately. If a referral has not already been made by the family, and Centre staff believe your child would benefit from Supported Child Development Program, a referral will be discussed with you.

Staff

Your WCC staff team is dedicated to the safety and well-being of all children in our programs. Staff are professionals who have the necessary training and experience to deliver quality programs. All staff are First Aid certified, have completed a criminal records review, and have the required ECE certification to work with young children.

Hours of Operation

WCC is open year round, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. All programs are closed on statutory holidays as well as 3 days during the Christmas holidays (a day for Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day). When a holiday falls on a weekend it is observed on a subsequent business day. We also close at 3:00 pm on New Year's Eve. **See calendar at the end of this document for details.**

Guidance and Treatment of Children

WCC provides an environment where children are treated with respect, adults are caring and activities are planned based on children's interests and developmental needs. Our goal is to assist children to learn self-discipline and to develop socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours. When approaching a challenge or problem, we apply a strength-based approach. A strengths-based approach means entering a situation and identifying the strengths of the child first and then supporting them to build on their strengths to overcome challenges.

WCC Child Guidance Policy and Procedures have been developed to provide a framework to:

• Assist children in developing self-control, self-confidence and self-discipline

• Assist children to develop socially acceptable and appropriate behaviour

• Recognize that each child is an individual whose age, experience, environment, developmental level and background influence his/her behaviour

• Ensure staff uses positive and proactive strategies for guiding children's behaviour

The WCC Child Guidance Policy is based on requirements of the Provincial Community Care and Assisted Living Act and the Child Care Regulation.

At the Whistler Children's Centre no child enrolled will ever be:

1. Subjected to shoving, hitting, shaking, spanking or any other form of corporal punishment
2. Subjected to harsh, belittling, or degrading treatment. Whether verbal, emotional, or physical, that would humiliate the child or undermine the child's self respect
3. As a form of punishment, confined, physically restrained or kept without adult supervision, apart from other children
4. As a form of punishment, deprived meals, snacks, rest or necessary use of a toilet

Reporting Suspicions of Child Abuse

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 of Children and Family Development and/or the police and they are responsible for contacting the parent/guardian.

Arrival Procedures

Please let us know if your child will be absent from the WCC by phoning the program directly.

Children may not be dropped off before the Centre opens. Parents must sign their child in and ensure that a staff member is aware that you are dropping off your child. Please let a staff member know about any pertinent information about your child's previous night or morning that might be helpful for your child to have a successful day.

Departure Procedures

Your child must be picked up by closing time (5:30pm). Parents must sign their child out and always ensure that a staff member is aware that you are taking your child home. Please check with the staff team to see if there are any messages related to your child. Children will only be released to authorized persons, including parents/guardians,

persons listed on the Additional Authorized Pick-Up List/Emergency Contact List in the Enrollment Package or parents/guardians recorded on a legal document (i.e. custody agreement).

Children will not be released to anyone other than individuals listed on the Additional Authorized Pick-Up List/Emergency Contact List of the Registration Package, unless staff are notified in writing (i.e. if a family member who is not listed on the Additional Authorized Pick-Up List/Emergency Contact List arrives to pick up your child, s/he will not be released). Should a parent wish to have an additional person added to the Authorized Pick-Up List, written consent must be submitted to the WCC Staff team. Photo identification is required to verify the identity of the person picking up your child, if staff is unfamiliar with the person.

Children will not be released from WCC if the authorized pick-up person appears incapable of providing safe care (i.e. intoxication/drug use). Should this occur, staff will suggest that the person call a friend or taxi for alternate transportation. If staff feel a child is at risk or the authorized pick-up person makes an unsafe decision to drive, staff will call the police.

If a child is not picked up five minutes after closing time and there has been no contact with the parent/guardian, the staff will follow these procedures:

• Check the sign-in sheet for any information regarding alternate arrangements for the child's pick-up

• Call parents/guardians at home and/or work; if alternate pick-up arrangements were made, staff will call the alternate pick-up's phone number as well as the parents/guardians

• After 15 minutes, if parents cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called

• If after 30 minutes staff are unable to contact either parent or any of the designated emergency contacts, staff will call the Emergency Services of the Ministry of Children and Family Development, who will come and take your child into care until you can be located.

Late Pick Up

The first occasion a parent is late picking up their child you will receive a verbal warning. The second and subsequent occasions will be noted on the Late Pick Up form and parents will be requested to initial the form, and parents may also be levied a fine. Continuous late pick-ups may result in withdrawal of services.

Custody

If a custody agreement is in place for your child(ren), a copy of your custody or court order must be on file. Staff will act in accordance with this legal document. If issues around custody exist and there are no legal documents, the enrolling parent must provide written information about access. Staff will follow the information provided by the enrolling parent. The parent with whom the child resides will be deemed to be the custodial parent and staff will only follow instructions from this parent unless otherwise instructed by a court order.

Program and Field Trips

Our programs provide safe, healthy, stimulating environments where children can work together with a variety of open-ended materials. We provide opportunities where children develop values, self-confidence and social skills, and encourage children's curiosity and desire to learn through play. Our routine is flexible to meet the needs of the children and may vary depending upon daily activities and interests of the children. We know that children learn best in environments that are child-centred and age appropriate. The WCC follows the BC Early Learning Framework in combination with the latest knowledge on how the brain develops and how children learn. A

carefully planned program will assist the child in gaining independence, confidence, responsibility and respect for themselves and others. We believe that every child has a special style and personality which makes them a unique individual. Our approach to children focuses on respecting and nurturing the uniqueness of each child. We offer a consistent daily routine, involving balance of vigorous and quiet activities which aid in fostering each child's intellectual, emotional, physical and social development. Field trips can be an important part of our child care program. We often take children for neighbourhood walks or to visit local parks which allow them to get to know their community. This is considered a part of our regular routine and is often done spontaneously. For major field trips, parents will be notified ahead of time including if the children will be using public transportation.

Student, Volunteer & Parent Involvement

Our programs may accept Early Childhood Educator practicum students and volunteers to help in our programs. All students and volunteers provide a clear criminal record check prior to volunteering within our programs. We welcome and encourage parent involvement. Parents are welcome to visit or to take part in our program activities at any time. Whatever your special talents, interests or schedule may be, there are also plenty of ways to get more involved, please speak to your child's teacher.

Emergencies

In the case of an emergency or natural disaster, we will attempt to contact parents as soon as possible. It is essential that you keep us informed of current phone numbers so we can notify you or your emergency contact in case of an emergency. If only long distance telephone lines are available (i.e. local lines are down or engaged), we will notify your additional emergency contacts/authorized pick up contacts.

The staff and children practice fire drills monthly. An emergency evacuation drill will be practiced on a yearly basis. In the event of fire or building evacuation, you will be notified where to pick up your child. In the case of an earthquake, we will remain on site (if possible). If the centre is badly damaged, emergency crews will relocate us to the nearest emergency centre.

Our policy is to notify a parent when a child is ill or needs medical attention. When we cannot contact parents or emergency contacts, and immediate help is needed for the child, an ambulance will be called.

Unscheduled Closures

In the event of a power failure or emergency situations our programs may be unable to open or may be required to close early. When possible, parents will be notified of a potential closure. If the program must close earlier than the normal scheduled closing time parents will be contacted and asked to pick up their children.

Illness & Immunization

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to keep ill children at home to prevent the spread of illness at the program (please call and let us know if your child will be absent). If a child comes to the centre ill, parents will be asked to find alternate care for that day. According to the health department, a child is considered too sick to attend when s/he has any of the following symptoms (and may only return after 24 hours of the last symptom is completed):

- Difficulty in breathing – wheezing or a persistent cough
- Fever of 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38.3 degrees Celsius or higher)
- Sore throat, trouble swallowing or excessive coughing
- Infected skin or eyes, or an undiagnosed rash

• Severe headache or stiff neck (should see a physician)
• Diarrhea, nausea or vomiting
• Known or suspected communicable disease

A child may not return to the centre until after the above symptoms subside and is well enough to participate in all areas of the program including outdoor play.

If your child becomes ill during the day, you will be notified to pick up your child immediately. If we cannot contact you, we will call your emergency contacts. Your child may be given a quiet area to rest, away from the other children, but within supervision of staff, until an authorized person arrives to pick up your child.

It is important that you inform us of any communicable disease. The Ministry of Health recommends that your child's immunizations are current before your child enters the program. Written record of each child's immunization must be on file and should be kept up to date. If a child is not immunized, a letter stating this must be provided for the child's file. If an outbreak of a communicable disease occurs, the non-immunized children will be excluded immediately. In the event of an outbreak, Community Care Facilities Licensing and/or the Centre for Disease control will be notified. Children should not attend the facility for at least 48 hours after their last symptom or as directed by the Medical Health Officer or designate.

Medication

It is preferred that parents administer medications at home; however, staff will administer prescription medication if your child is on a strict medication schedule, providing the following procedures are followed:

• Prescription medications require a parent to provide a completed Consent to Administer Medication form.
•Medication must be in the original container stating child's name, dosage and time to be given.
• Non-prescription medications are not permitted at the Centre.
• If your child has an inhaler which must be with them at all times, please consult with the program teacher on how to ensure your child's safety.

If your child is receiving medication for a communicable disease, he or she must be on medication for a minimum 24 hour period prior to returning to the centre.

Clothing & Weather

Regardless of the weather, children attending WCC spend time outdoors every day. Please ensure your child has appropriate clothing for the relevant season (i.e. rain gear or winter coat).

Please send your child to the Centre in comfortable, washable play clothes. Messy indoor and outdoor play activities are always a part of your child's curriculum. To promote your child's independence, we suggest clothing that is easily managed by your child.

During spring and summer please ensure your child has a hat and sunscreen at the centre. A wide-brimmed hat is recommended, as baseball hats do not shade a child's ears or the back of the neck. Staff will assist your child in applying the sunscreen you provide. During the fall and winter months boots "muddy buddies" (rain gear), mittens, hats and snowsuits are required.

PLEASE LABEL ALL ARTICLES OF CLOTHING The Centre and staff are NOT responsible for lost articles but will certainly do their best to help your child keep track of their belongings.

Food & Allergies

The WCC promotes healthy eating habits and uses the Canadian Food Guide as a resource when providing food for the children. The WCC is a **peanut-free facility**. Please inform staff of any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

Physical Care

Diapering routines are an important part of the day not only because of babies' and younger toddler's comfort but because it gives opportunities for quality interactions and communication. WCC staff follows diapering procedures as outlined by child care licensing regulations.

When your child is ready, staff will encourage individual responsibility for dressing and toileting and will assist and support children to develop these self-help skills. Depending on the age of your child, staff will encourage him/her to clean themselves after a bowel movement and will help those children who require assistance.

Nap and Rest Time

Naptime is designed to allow children to physically rest and emotionally unwind. Although some children require a nap during the day, naptime is not mandatory for all children. It is designed as a rest or quiet time as some children do not require a nap during the day. Children's nap time schedules may vary depending on age or individual needs.

In group care, nap-time/quiet-time is an important necessity in the children's routine. The children are at school for a long period and require time to re-group and to relax their muscles and their minds. Children may sleep or simply lay quietly on their beds with a book or other quiet activity.

Bedding and cribs are cleaned on a regular basis and your child will have their own individual bedding. Quiet/rest times will depend on the age of the child.

Gradual Entry

Although your child may have had other group experiences, this is a new group and environment with unfamiliar faces. The gradual entry process allows time for your child to feel comfortable, to start developing friendships and to become familiar with staff. We recognize that this process can be stressful for parents but by experiencing this process you child will feel more comfortable when it comes time to leave them for the whole day. If this process is difficult for you to arrange, we recommend you have a friend or family member substitute for you. There is no cost for these additional days.

Moving to the Next Age Grouping

If your child is currently attending the program he or she will receive priority for a space in the next age group at the centre, based on their original enrolment date, if a space is available and if they are of age to qualify for enrolment; however space cannot be guaranteed.

Fees & Enrolment

Payment
Fees are due and payable on the first of each month. Your monthly fees can be paid by cash, cheque or CAFT (Customer Authorized Fund Transfer). **If your child is absent due to sickness, vacation or for other personal reasons, it is still necessary to pay the full fee in order to maintain your child's space.** Failure to pay the full child care fee can result in termination of your child care space. A $15 Late Fee will be charged to accounts.

Annual Membership Fees
($75) will be posted to your account each June 1st. This Membership entitles you to be a voting member of the Whistler Children's Centre Society, and helps defray the cost of maintenance and insurance.

NSF Fee
If funds are unavailable the WCC will attempt to withdraw fees a second time (up to 30 days from original payment date). The WCC may charge a fee of $15 if funds are unavailable at the time of withdrawal. The WCC will not be responsible for any costs charged by your bank/financial institution.

Withdrawal or Change of Days
If you wish to withdraw your child, drop a day, or request a change in days, you are required to provide one month written notice. Withdrawals or changes need to be submitted to the Executive Director from the 1st of the month prior for the 1st of the month you wish to withdraw your child (i.e. for a withdrawal of May 1st, written notice must be received on or before April 1st). An additional month's fee will be charged if the required notice is not given. Upon withdrawal, if there are outstanding fees, the WCC may release your personal information to a 3rd party collection agency for the purpose of recovering any outstanding debt.

Provincial Child Care Subsidy, Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)
The government child care subsidy program is available to families based on provincial eligibility requirements. Parents who receive the provincial child care subsidy are responsible for the difference between the subsidy and the WCC fee. Parents are responsible for keeping their subsidy current and are responsible for the full fee if their subsidy expires. We will refund the subsidy portion of the payment to parents once subsidy has resumed and payment has been received from the Ministry. Please contact the MCFD at 1-888-338- 6622 or online at www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/childcare for more information.

Child Care Tax Receipts
Issued in late February each year for prior year's income tax purposes. Receipts are emailed to the last known email on file.

Scheduling

Enrollment is managed on a monthly basis and fees are paid monthly. Fees remain the same regardless of how many allowable days a child can attend within the month. We do not have a daily rate. We do not allow families to trade days or drop-in days. Monthly enrollment is managed by the Executive Director and sporadic drop-in days are managed by the program staff and based on availability. Additional fees apply for drop-in days. When families withdraw days to attend ski school and/or bike programs and request re-entry for a later date, space is not guaranteed and is based on availability.

Calculation of Child Care Fees

Fees are charged for monthly enrollment and are based on the assumption that the average month has four weeks of childcare days. However maximum available child care days vary from month to month as some months have 4, 4.5, or 5 weeks in them. If a child is enrolled full-time, five days per week, we assume the child will receive at least 20 days of care in any given month (5 days/week x 4 weeks). If a child is attending part-time, 2-4 days per week, the same assumption applies. Based on a four week month, a child attending 2, 3 or 4 days per week, will receive 8, 12, or 16 days of care, respectively.

We make this assumption to create allowances for statutory holidays or other Centre closures.

For example, a child attending full-time, 5 days per week, may actually attend 23 days, but has only paid for 20. This also occurs for children attending 2, 3 and 4 days per week, where they actually receive more days than what is paid for in the fee structure.

Termination of Services

When a conflict arises, WCC staff will make every attempt to work with the family to resolve the issue to the mutual satisfaction of all parties, provided the arrangement does not compromise the mission and values of the WCC, put staff, the child or other participants at risk, diminish the value of the WCC experience for other participants, or result in financial loss to the WCC. All situations are dealt with on an individual basis, taking into account the specific needs and circumstances of the family. After working with the family and making every attempt to resolve the situation, the Executive Director, in consultation with staff, may come to the decision that it is not appropriate for the child to continue involvement in the WCC. The following are some situations where this would be the case.

Behavioural Concerns
The WCC is not equipped to deal effectively and appropriately with a child whose behaviour requires ongoing significant intervention (i.e. persistent unprovoked physical violence, persistent bullying, verbal harassment of peers or staff or continual unauthorized departure from the centre). The Teachers in consultation with the Executive Director will make every attempt to link the family and child to the appropriate services.

Unresolved Custody Issues
If a family's custody issues result in continuous conflicts at the centre (i.e. non-custodial parent continually attempting to pick the child up at a time not specified on the court order), and places the child, staff and other children at risk, then the family will be asked to make alternate care arrangements.

Philosophical Differences
Occasionally, the needs and opinions of a family do not fit with the principles, policies and procedures of the WCC. The Executive Director, in consultation with staff, will try to promote discussion to come to some agreeable terms with the family. If this is not possible, it is in the best interests of the family to enrol the child in a program that is more in line with their needs and beliefs. The WCC reserves the right to ask the family to find a more suitable child care arrangement.

Inappropriate Conduct
If a family member harasses, threatens or commits a violent act toward a staff person, child or other family involved in the child care program.

Late Pick-Up Issues
The centre is unable to satisfactorily resolve problems of continual late pick up with a family.

Non-Payment of Fees
Where required, staff will work with the families to develop alternate payment plans. Default on fees will result in termination of services.

Communication

We encourage open communication and encourage you to discuss any questions or concerns you may have with your WCC staff team. Parents/caregivers are welcome to drop in, observe and participate in the programs at any time. If you would like to consult with your child's teacher, please let us know ahead of time so that we can give you undivided attention.

The Head Teacher of the program is responsible for ensuring that WCC standards are followed and that parent issues and concerns are addressed. If you feel that your concerns are not being addressed or resolved please contact our Executive Director.

In addition, we frequently send important program updates to families via email. This information is important for our families, and includes information related to program news (i.e. monthly highlights, staffing changes, closures, registration times), and administrative items (i.e. statements, tax receipts, fee information) and fund-raising initiatives.

Code of Conduct

We are committed to providing a friendly, respectful environment and reinforce socially responsible behaviour. We do not tolerate abusive behaviour. Employees, volunteers, program participants and others using the WCC facilities are expected to treat others with courtesy and respect. Discrimination or harassment on such grounds as age, race, ancestry, colour, place of origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, family status, marital status, political beliefs or because that person has been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the employment of that person is against the law, and is not acceptable in any WCC programs or on WCC premises.

Contact Information

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