



PARENT/GUARDIAN HANDBOOK

WHDCS Parent/Guardian Handbook



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Introduction

Welcome to Whispering Hills Day Care Society (WHDCS). We are a non-profit society organized to provide Early Learning and Child Care for children zero to twelve years of age in the Town of Athabasca, Alberta. We hope that you and your children will enjoy your involvement with our society.

Locations and Contact

Our Main Office is located at our Multiplex Day Care Site:

2 University Drive, Athabasca, AB T9S 0A3
(780) 675-7946

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Office Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday
E-mail: whdaycare@telus.net
Website: www.whisperinghillsdaycare.com

Multiplex Day Care Cell: (780) 689-8346

University Day Care Site: 1 University Drive, Athabasca, AB T9S 3A3
(780) 675-6233

University Day Care Cell: (780) 519-0483

Out of School Care Program: Room P3, Whispering Hills Primary School
3001 Whispering Hills Drive, Athabasca, AB

Out of School Care Cell: (780) 689-8356

Document Purpose

This Parent/Guardian Handbook is a summary of policies regarding the operations of our programs and is designed to help you understand the Society and our child care programs. Additional information is available from the Executive Director. This document will be updated every three years from the date on the front of the manual or as identified by the Executive Director and Board of Directors. Unforeseen circumstances not covered under these policies shall be referred to the Board of Directors for clarification, decision, or policy formulation.

Membership

All parents and guardians with children enrolled in our programs, staff members and/or interested members of the community at large are eligible for membership in the Whispering Hills Day Care Society. To be a member in good standing all accounts must be kept current. The by-laws of the society are available from our main office.

Board of Directors

The Whispering Hills Day Care Society is a non-profit society administered by an elected volunteer Board of Directors consisting of parents/guardians, professionals, and interested members of the public.

Vision

To build a healthy future with capable community leaders.

Mission Statement

It is the mission of Whispering Hills Day Care Society to deliver quality early learning and care to meet the developmental needs of each child that will provide them with experience for later learning and positive relationships.



Philosophy

Whispering Hills Day Care Society's programming is founded on children experiencing and learning through play in a holistic, nature-based and inclusive environment that fosters respect, individual responsibility and relationship building. This recognizes the connection of the child's physical, emotional, intellectual, creative and social growth, and the importance of relationships between the family, Centre and community.

Hours of Operation

Our University and Multiplex Day Care Sites, and our KinderCare program operates Monday through Friday from 7:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.

Out of School Care runs Monday through Friday from 7:15 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. On non-school days for which we provide care OSC operates 7:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.

- Please note that staff will not be available to provide care or supervision of children prior to 7:15 a.m., even if they are on site or just arriving for their workday.
- Please arrive 10 minutes prior to closing to allow time for checking in with staff members, letting your child get dressed/packed up to leave, and signing them out of the center

Allowing a few minutes time for your child to arrive and depart the centers helps to facilitate a smooth transition for children, parents/guardians, staff and other children in the centers. It also assists in respecting the paid working hours of our educators and enables them to get to their families and personal commitments in a timely manner. In an effort to keep parent fees as low as possible, we need to manage staff time.

Our office hours are typically 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

When a day designated as a statutory holiday coincides with a Saturday or Sunday, the program will be closed on the next business day.

All programs will be closed on the following days:

- New Year's Day
- Family Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Victoria Day
- Canada Day
- Heritage Day (civic holiday in August)
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Remembrance Day
- Christmas Day



- Boxing Day
- 3 business days between Christmas & New Year's Day

Open Door Policy

Whispering Hills Day Care Society firmly believes in maintaining an open-door policy. Parents and guardians are welcome to participate in the daily activities and are encouraged to visit their child at the Centre when their schedules permit.

Personnel Policies

Early Learning and Child Care is provided by educators with Early Childhood Development Certificates and/or who are enrolled in Early Learning and Child Care courses. All staff maintain current certification in Standard B First Aid and CPR, Criminal Record Checks and Child Intervention Record Checks. Our educators routinely attend conferences and workshops to enhance their professional development and attend monthly staff meetings. Each new employee is evaluated by the Executive Director following a three-month probationary period and annually thereafter.

Please feel free to ask the educators questions about your child or the program. Any concerns regarding a staff member's conduct should be reported to the Executive Director in accordance with our Problem Resolution Process.

Problem Resolution Process

In the event a parent, guardian or staff member has a concern regarding a staff member's conduct or the child care program, the following steps need to be taken:

1. Person with concern to contact the Executive Director. If the matter is not resolved to the satisfaction of the involved parties, please take the next step
2. Person with concern to arrange (with the President of the Board of Directors) for the concern(s) to be placed on the next Board meeting agenda.
3. If the interested parties are not satisfied with the outcome, a complaint may be lodged with our regional child and family services authority - contact information below.

North Central Alberta Child and Family Services
2nd Floor, Administration Building
5143-50 Street, Box 4742
Barrhead, AB T7N 1A6
Phone: 780-305-2440

This office handles complaints regarding noncompliance with the Child Care Licensing Act and Child Care Licensing Regulations. All complaints brought to their attention are investigated. Although complaints can be anonymous, the identity of the complainant is not divulged to the license holder. Written complaints submitted by the parent/guardian of a child enrolled in the Centre will be responded to in writing by the Regional Licensing office indicating whether the complaint was verified, and that appropriate action has been taken.



Parent Advisory

Our Parent Advisory contact is available to you as parents/guardians to answer any concerns or questions that you may not want to ask the Executive Director or Board and can be reached via e-mail at whdcparentadvisory@gmail.com. The Parent Advisor acts as an independent liaison for WHDCS.

Registration and Operations

Program Registration

To be placed on our waiting list and accepted into our programs each family must complete a registration form. This can be found online on our website. If you require a paper copy of the registration form, please contact our office.

Intake Process

Once your registration is accepted an initial interview will be set up by the Executive Director, Program Director or designate. This initial interview will include a tour of the Centre, review of the necessary paperwork (including assistance with Child Care Subsidy applications if required), and a question and answer period. Scheduling of further visits with the child to the program is encouraged.

Administrative Records

Whispering Hills Day Care society keeps up to date records on both the children attending the programs and the staff working for WHDCS.

The child records hold information that was provided by the parents at time of registration as well as documents acquired throughout the child's time in the program. These files include: child's daily attendance (e.g. arrival and departure times), child's name, birthdate, and home address; Parent/guardian(s)/Emergency Contacts name, physical home address, mailing address, and telephone numbers; incident reports; medical information; medical administration forms; developmental assessments and any other document recorded while the child is in attendance.

Staff files include their contact information, timesheets, copies of their Child Development Certificates, First Aid Certification, Criminal Record and Child Intervention Record Checks, annual evaluations, leave request forms, tax information and other documents pertaining to their employment with WHDCS.

These files are routinely checked and updated as required. They are also used to respond quickly to emergencies, incidents or accidents involving the child or staff member. If you or your child's information changes you must inform the Executive Director immediately. Families with incomplete or outdated registration information will be turned away until the necessary information is obtained.



Portable Records

In addition to the administrative records on file each program must maintain an updated portable record of emergency information including the following information for each child:

- the child's name, date of birth, home address and phone number;
- the parents name, physical home address and telephone numbers (home, work, and cell if applicable)
- the name, physical address and telephone number of a *local* person who can be contacted in case of an emergency;
- any other relevant health information about the child provided by the child's parent including the child's immunization history and allergies if applicable.

The telephone numbers of the local emergency response service and poison control center are also found with the portable records.

Confidentiality

Whispering Hills Day Care Society, respects and acts responsibly keeping personal information confidential. All information regarding children, parents, staff or volunteers shall be respected and handled confidentially and shall not be disclosed to or discussed with anyone other than those authorized to receive such information, unless disclosure is authorized by law.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Whispering Hills Day Care Society hereby swears to collect, use and disclose personal information, and/or information about the children and families in our care for the following purposes:

- To generate statistical and aggregated data that does not identify parents/guardians or children personally
- To meet legal and regulatory requirements and to disclose to associated Provincial Governing bodies
- To manage, market and develop the business operations of Whispering Hills Day Care Society
- To evaluate parent/guardian credit worthiness or to collect accounts, and, to provide yearly child care receipts
- To provide services and more information about Whispering Hills Day Care Society
- For other purposes, as may be determined by Whispering Hills Day Care Society acting responsibly and/or otherwise authorized or required by law.

All information collected is kept confidential and only used as described. Parent/guardians may revoke consent at any time in writing to the Executive Director. Failure to consent may prohibit the child from accessing the services offered by Whispering Hills Day Care Society.

Despite this, in the best interest of the child Whispering Hills Day Care Society abides by the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and the Children First Act of Alberta.



Photograph Policies

Whispering Hills Day Care Society realizes that parents/guardians don't always get to see some of the fun and priceless moments of their children's day in the program that the staff enjoy and experience on a regular basis. And so, all members of WHDCS including staff, members of the Board and parents/guardians will adhere to the following Photograph Policy.

Photos of the Centre, children, families and staff will be taken with cameras belonging to WHDCS for the purpose of the Centre's displays, licensing reports, to enhance the indoor environment and support the children's social/emotional development and will be given to the families electronically via USB or disc provided by them upon termination of their services.

Photos of the Centre, children, families and staff will only be taken using camera's that belong to, and stay at, the program. Photos and videos will NOT be taken using WHDCS cell phones, personal cell phones or cameras belonging to staff and parents/guardians, webcams or other devices that are not belonging to WHDCS. Nor will members of the public be permitted to take photographs of the Centre or children while they are in attendance in our programs.

Photographs taken of children, families or staff and acquired by WHDCS containing identifiable images of children, families or staff will NOT appear on any social media or anywhere on the internet including our website or advertisements.

Photographs of the programs and activities with non-identifiable features of children and families may be posted on the Whispering Hills Day Care Website and our social media pages and/or used for advertising and presentations for WHDCS or for educational purposes.

Each parent/guardian will be required to sign photography consents located on the WHDCS Agreements Forms.

Scheduling

Early Learning Programs

Full time registration is encouraged for your child(ren) to fully benefit from our programs and to ensure a space is provided for the days you require care. In instances when part time care is required, we will consider space sharing if possible.

Out of School Care

There are many options for Out of School Care scheduling including scheduled part-time care. Scheduled part-time care is available in this program and requires a schedule of dates care is required by the 15th of each month prior to care being provided to allow for invoicing to occur. In these cases, the scheduled dates will be invoiced for and **our payment policies apply to those scheduled dates**. Additional dates are available with advanced notice and only if space allows. Children may also be registered for PD/Holidays only in this program – in this case they would schedule those non-school days with our office prior to the 15th of each month prior to care as explained above.



Kindergarten Care

Children registered in, and attending, Kindergarten can be registered in our KinderCare program operated within our Out of School Care program. This program is available every day in our classroom at Whispering Hills Primary School (WHPS) and is operated in partnership with WHPS Kindergarten teachers. On the days your child attends Kindergarten they have the opportunity to attend our before and after school care program, on their off-days (days they are NOT in kindergarten), they will attend a full day in our classroom, and on all non-school days (PD, Holidays, Staff work days, etc.) they will attend our all day program in our classroom. Full-time and part-time registration is available in this program. Check our website for the current fee schedule.

Payment of Fees.

Payment of Fees

Each registrant is required to pay child care fees in advance of child care being provided. Fees are payable by cheque, money order, credit card or debit at our main office located at our Multiplex Day Care Site. Cheques should be made payable to the “Whispering Hills Day Care Society”. Fees are due at the time of invoicing. A parent/guardian(s) may be asked to remove their child from the program for failure to pay outstanding fees. Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of days that are booked even if the child does not attend (e.g. vacation, sick days). Families who have applied for Child Care Subsidy will be required to pay the first month’s fees in full amount unless a conditional approval notice has been provided to the Executive Director. You will have a subsidized credit applied to your account. The following month your rates will continue at regular subsidized cost. **Rates are subject to change. Any rate change will be posted at each site at least one month prior to the effective date.**

Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is available from the Government of Alberta for those families that qualify. Applications are available at <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/financial-support/15104.html> Assistance with Child Care Subsidy applications is available, contact the Executive Director for further information.

Parent Portion: The parent portion of the fee is the total fee minus the amount you receive from subsidy. This amount is due at the time of invoicing.

If you are receiving funding from another source for independent welfare, please provide your social workers name, phone number, and the office location to the director. We will give you a letter to hand to your social worker to arrange payments directly to the director; the director will also contact the social worker.

Billing

In an effort to keep the Centre as environmentally friendly as possible and reduce costs we conduct paperless billing. Invoices and statements are sent electronically to the



parent/guardians on or as close to the 15th of each month before care is required. If you should require a paper copy of your invoice, please inform the Executive Director.

Failure to make Payments

Invoices not paid by 1st of the month may result in the removal of their child(ren) from the program until payment is received or a payment plan is arranged with the Executive Director. Payment plans will be designed so fees are paid in full within 2 months of the billing month (e.g. original payment due by May 1, payment plan will require full payment by June 30 for May and June). In circumstances where a parent/guardian forecasts difficulty in prepaying the month's care, a payment plan may be made at least 1 month prior (e.g. April 1). Any concerns with billing can be directed the Executive Director.

N.S.F. Cheques

Repeat offenders will be required to pay by certified cheque after the second offence.

Change of Service

A two-week written notice of change is required when changing a child's program status for the following month. This will only be considered if we have an available designated space.

Termination of Service

A **four-week written notice of termination** must be provided when withdrawing a child from the program. WHDCS reserves the right to cancel services at any time in the future if it is in the best interest of the child or Centre and/or should any account be outstanding more than 30 days and alternate payment arrangements have not been made. In addition, if a pattern of late pick-ups occurs and cannot be resolved within a timely manner to the satisfaction of WHDCS, service may be terminated.

Attendance

Attendance Record and Parent/guardian(s) Responsibilities:

The Whispering Hills Day Care Society does not assume responsibility for the health and safety of the child until the parent/guardian(s) have signed the child into the Centre.

The parent/guardian(s) is responsible to remove outdoor clothing, place belongings in the locker, put indoor footwear on, and sign the child into the Centre. At the time of pick up, the parent/guardian(s) must sign the child out, dress the child in outdoor clothing and footwear, and collect belongings. It is very important that the parent/guardian(s) sign the child in/out every time. This is typically done electronically but may be done in writing in some programs. Whenever the child is removed from or returned to the Centre, the time removed, and the time returned must be recorded (e.g. doctor appointments). This ensures the staff are aware of which children are in the Centre at any given time, particularly in the case of an emergency.



To receive the maximum benefits from our programs please drop-off your child by 9:00 a.m. **If your child is to be absent or late, please notify (by phone or email) the facility by 9:00 a.m.** as the children often go on outings. This is to enable the staff to know how many children they will have to properly plan for activities and meals for the day. It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to bring their child to the group if they have left the centre. This includes the playground and nature walks. Staff members of the Out of School Care program will attempt to contact the parent/guardian(s) if the child does not show up when expected (i.e. missed the bus).

The staff members of WHDCS are not responsible to take any child to appointments outside the Centre (e.g. doctor or dentist).

Pick Up

- No child may be picked up by anyone other than the parent/guardian(s) unless the person claiming the child is listed on the Registration Form:
- The parent/guardian(s) must telephone or advise the staff in person of the changed pick-up arrangement.
- The person claiming the child must be over 18 years old unless they are the legal parent/guardian of the child.
- If the person claiming the child is not listed on the Registration Form:
 - The parent/guardian(s) must telephone or advise the staff in person of the changed pick-up arrangement AND a signed note must also be provided.
- If the staff members are not certain of the identity of the adult designated to pick up the child, then picture identification will be required before the child is released.
- Please note that in cases of separation/divorce, the staff cannot prevent either parent from picking up the child unless a **copy of the legal custody order is in the files.**

Late Pick-up/Early Drop-off Policy

To allow time for parents/guardians to check in with staff members and get their child dressed to leave at the end of the day we ask that you **arrive to pick up your child at least 10 minutes prior to closing time.** Please phone the program and advise the staff if you are unable to pick up your child on time.

Please note: if you arrive to the Centre to pick your child up on time but fail to leave the Centre prior to closing time it is still considered a late pick-up as our staff are required to stay until all children and families have left the premises.

If children have not been picked-up by 5 minutes after closing, and the Centre has not been advised of the parent's tardiness, the following procedure will be employed:

- Parent/guardian(s) will be phoned at home and at work and asked to pick-up the child.
- In the event the parent/guardian(s) cannot be located, the emergency contact(s) named on the registration form will be phoned and asked to claim the child.
- If neither the parent/guardian(s) nor the emergency contact can be reached:



- Emergency Social Services (Child Protective Services) will be phoned and asked to take custody of the child.
- Staff will not take legal responsibility for the child or shelter him/her outside the Centre for reasons of legal liability.
- Should it be necessary to contact Emergency Social Services, parent(s) will be informed that their child can be located through Emergency Social Services and/or the RCMP.

Please observe our program opening time. You may not enter the facility or leave your child(ren) before our opening time. At times, there may be educators within the facility, but they are not yet working.

In the event there are repeated late pick-ups or early drop-offs (2 or more) the Executive Director will arrange a meeting to discuss a solution. If a solution cannot be met it will result in a termination of services and the removal of your child(ren) from our program.

Program Policies

Program Content

Our programs implement the philosophies and guidelines set out by Alberta's Early Learning and Child Care Curriculum Framework: Play, Participation and Possibilities (2014 Makovichuk, Hewes, Lirette, and Thomas).

We believe a child learns more through play than by any other means. We have many varied learning centers such as a dramatic play house (for imagination), water table, block play (for large and small motor movements), arts and crafts center (for freedom of self-expression), book/quiet area, and more. Experiences in cooking, field trips, special guests, and physical activities complement the different learning centers. Children learn to make their own decisions and assume responsibility by choosing at which center they will spend their time. There is a balance between child-directed and educator-directed activities to provide opportunities for the child to reach their fullest potential.

The children choose activities that are interesting to them throughout the day. The Early Childhood Educators in the room provide a variety of planned experiences that the children can participate in if they choose. These planned activities are interest based and child guided. The staff complete observations of children's play to identify these interests and provide them with provocations to assess their interests and guide them in their learning. The staff continue to plan around an interest bringing in new materials and activities to support the children's learning and curiosity until the observed play indicates a new interest. Occasionally, we do request special things from home to support the children's development and learning in the program such as family photos, items for show and tell, etc. The program planning sheets will be posted at each Centre for families to see and parents/guardians are encouraged to participate in generating more ideas to support this planning.

It is our belief that fresh air and an opportunity for physical activity are necessary for a child's healthy development; therefore, children will have regular outdoor activities. We try to go outside two times every day and take learning experiences out of doors as much as possible, weather permitting.

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To ensure that children are protected, safety drills are practiced routinely. In case of an emergency portable records, first aid kits, extra clothes, etc. are carried in the program backpack each time the children leave the Centre.

Inclusion

Whispering Hills Day Care Society resolves to provide care and ensure access for all children regardless of abilities and free from prejudice as stated in our Societal Philosophy. With trained and dedicated staff members we provide the best care to meet the needs of each individual child in an inclusive environment and, when required, will seek out training for staff members to better meet those individual needs. We provide care and early learning opportunities based on each child's individual developmental level of understanding and physical abilities including but not limited to: language barriers; developmental delays; challenging behaviours; and physical disabilities. The environment is set up to meet the needs of each individual child and ensure independent access of all play materials. We will access community supports to the best of our ability and will work closely with families to ensure continuity of care between all members of each child's support group. We will assist families in seeking out referrals to access additional support within the community when necessary. Additional supports and individualized programming will be carried out within the inclusive environment during play experiences with peers.

Developmental Screening

Whispering Hills Day Care Society uses the Ages and Stages developmental assessment tool for evaluating children's development. All parents/guardians are encouraged to complete their own assessment as well and will be permitted to view and obtain a copy of the assessment at any time. If there are any questions about the assessment or concerns that come from the assessment, WHDCS will advise parents/guardians to have further screening completed through Athabasca Community Health Services (call 780-675-2231).

Nap Time (Day Care Programs Only)

From approximately 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., there is a quiet time for all children. Those children who nap may sleep for as long as they wish. Older children may also lie down, or they can choose to participate in quiet activities.

Lunch and Snack Times

The Day Care programs provide two-thirds of the children's nutritional food intake per day in compliance with the Canada Food Guide. Parents are encouraged to give their input or suggestions about our menu's and or concerns with our food choices. A hot lunch and 2 nutritious snacks (9 a.m. & 3 p.m.) are prepared daily in our government-inspected kitchen by staff trained in food preparation. If you wish, you may join your child for meal times at the programs.

A weekly menu is provided for viewing on the bulletin board or by the Centre door.

Parent/guardian(s) are responsible to advise staff of any dietary/allergy considerations for their

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child and may be asked to supplement the menu with foods that their child can eat/drink (i.e. soy milk).

All children are seated while eating and drinking and no beverages are provided to children while napping. All infant formulas are to be provided and prepared by the parent(s) along with appropriate equipment items and must be properly labelled and given directly to staff for proper storage. Parent(s) are responsible for washing infant and water bottles. Children self-feed and are encouraged to serve themselves when developmentally appropriate.

At least one staff member at each program holds an Alberta Food Handling Certificate. Food handling procedures ensure that hot foods are kept hot, cold foods are kept cold at all times. Food preparation and serving utensils and surfaces are sanitized after each use.

As we provide food at the day care programs **NO OUTSIDE FOOD** is to be brought unless it is to meet a specific dietary requirement (soy milk, tofu, etc.). This is to help us maintain our daily routines as well as to avoid any allergens from entering the day care. **We are a PEANUT/NUT FREE facility.** If you do bring snacks for your child to eat on the way home, etc. please ensure these are in a closed container and remain in the child's locker for the duration of their time at the program.

At the Out of School Care program, we provide supplementary snacks on all regular school days which are available for children to take independently. We do not provide meals on the All-Day Care days – such as school P.D. days and school breaks – or during Summer Care. On these days, Parents and Guardians are responsible for providing their child with a morning snack, lunch and afternoon snack that is healthy and peanut/nut free.

Clothing

Please ensure that the child has at least one complete change of clothing left at the Centre and more if toilet training. The staff is not responsible for unmarked clothing. For your own convenience, **please label** clothing, footwear, and bottles so that they are clearly identifiable as belonging to your child. Parent/guardian(s) are requested to supply a sheet and blanket if the child is used to resting; these will be sent home at the end of each week for laundering.

Please also ensure your child has the appropriate clothing for outdoor activities. The children go outside every day and, although we do have some extra winter items and sun hats, if your child is not properly dressed to go outside they will miss out on important outings and/or the parent/guardian may be called to bring the appropriate clothing.

We request that the children wear indoor shoes at the Centre for health and safety reasons. Please ensure separate indoor footwear with non-marking soles is provided.

Dirty or soiled clothing will not be washed at the Centre. Caregivers will put soiled clothing including cloth diapers into plastic bags to be picked up at the end of each day. This policy protects the health of the children and staff at the Centre. Soiled diapers, soiled linen, and garbage are stored in closed containers. If applicable for your child, please remember to bring bedding, clothing, diapers, wipes, and bags each week.

WHDCS operates play-based programs and we encourage the staff and children to participate in 'messy play'. As such, **we recommend that your children not wear their best clothing to the program.** The children may get corn starch, glue, paint, shaving cream, etc. on their clothing

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even with the precaution of wearing a paint shirt. This sort of messy play is encouraged, and our staff take precautions to ensure the children are not painting themselves. We use non-toxic washable paint and we add soap to the paint when mixed so it should easily come out of most fabrics. The only thing that we use that may stain is food colouring. Food colouring easily comes out of most fabrics but may temporarily transfer to skin. We encourage the children to play freely, use their imagination and not limit their expression while in play.

Items from Home

Special comfort toys such as cuddly toys or blankets are acceptable items to bring from home to help ease the child into the Day Care environment. These are to stay in their locker until nap/rest time to prevent items from becoming lost or broken. Otherwise, **do not send treats, toys or electronics from home**. Exceptions may be discussed with the staff. WHDCS will not be responsible for lost or broken toys or other items brought from home.

Celebrations/Events

The Society and programs hold special events and celebrations throughout the year. These are based on the children's interests as well as community and family celebrations and are held within each program. Families are always invited to join in these special events and are encouraged to share any information on any occasions they celebrate throughout the year. These events can include: winter celebrations; monthly birthdays; family picnics; and cultural events. A newsletter or invitation is sent to the parent/guardian(s) with more details on these special occasions as they occur.

Outdoor/Environment Policies and Procedures

It is our belief that fresh air and an opportunity for physical activity are necessary for a child's healthy development. We believe in solidifying the child's connection with the natural world to promote a healthy, active lifestyle and an appreciation and attitude of care for the environment. The children typically go outside in the morning and again in the afternoon to explore the playground and abundance of nature surrounding our Centre's.

Our society aims to provide at least 90 minutes of outdoor/gross motor play per day. The children will go outside everyday unless the weather including the wind-chill is colder than -20 Celsius. We also generally avoid going outside when the UV index is at its highest or there is severe weather.

Children must be properly dressed before going outside.

- Proper winter dress includes winter jacket, ski pants or snowsuit, hat or hood that covers the ears, boots, and mittens (preferably waterproof).
- In the wet and muddy seasons children should have extra mitts, socks, and pants, rubber boots, and splash pants.
- Proper summer dress includes shorts and a hat to protect them from the sun. In summertime parents/guardians need to provide hats, sunscreen, and appropriate



clothing for the weather so that staff can still take children outside for walks regardless of the weather.

- Staff will apply child safe sunscreen as provided by the parent/guardian and bug spray at the Centre or as provided by the parent/guardian for the appropriate uses.

All outdoor play structures comply with the CSA Standards. The outdoor play area is free of toxic plants.

Field Trips and In-Centre Visitors

The children and staff at our University Day Care Site and the Multiplex Day Care Site regularly go on neighborhood walks including select posted Muskeg Creek Trails directly adjacent to Athabasca University or may visit the other day care site weather permitting. The Out of School Care Program participates in neighborhood walks surrounding Whispering Hills Primary School including but not limited to the Cornwall area. Off-site walks will only be taken to areas within walking distance of the program and after the Executive Director or designate has completed a walkthrough of the area and approved the area for an off-site walk or field trip.

When each program is on a neighborhood walk or field trip, staff will record the walk area including the time they left, the time they expect to return, and their program cell phone number at the front for all parents/guardians and staff. A map of regularly visited areas will be posted at each program for reference.

Staff will bring the Centre backpack containing first aid supplies, the program cell phone, camera, and portable records each time they leave the Centre.

At least two staff members (or more if ratio requires) including one primary staff member must be present in order to leave the Centre with the children.

Parent/guardian(s) are advised of any planned field trips beyond our neighbourhood walks and are required to sign a consent including transportation approval when bussing is required.

Additional adults may be required to accompany the group above the required ratio for the program to ensure adequate supervision. Staff will review field trip guidelines with both the children and volunteers that will be accompanying us on the trip. Staff and volunteers will ensure the children are in sight at all times and that they are actively engaged in the children's activities. If a parent/guardian doesn't permit their child to participate on a field trip they may be requested to find alternative care as all staff and children in the specified program will be attending the trip. The Early Childhood Educators (ECE) will be responsible for ensuring all children have signed consent forms and portable records and are accounted for at all times.

The ECE staff will carry the program cell phone and back pack containing these portable records, consent forms, the first aid kit and emergency numbers. Children will be returned to the Centre at the end of the field trip, they will not be left at any other location.

Special guests are invited into the programs to enrich the activities and experiences.

Program Evaluations

Parents/guardians will regularly receive surveys to complete to assist us in quality assurance and to ensure we are meeting the needs of the families and children we serve. Families are



invited to participate in the Accreditation process including acquiring re-accreditation status, evaluating the program and creating and updating our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP).

Child Guidance Policy

Our child guidance policy is based on developmentally appropriate communication methods and best practices. Staff use active listening and I-messages to ensure each child is heard and understands the situation.

Our child guidance policy is in place to promote positive self-esteem, respect, independence and responsibility for one's actions. We use logical and natural consequences when dealing with challenging behaviours.

When required, staff will record behaviour observations to help inform them on what is happening for the child and their challenging behaviour. We work with parents/guardians to ensure the best support is given to those children who may develop or display challenging behaviours. Families are consulted about their child's likes, dislikes, hopes, fears, beliefs, cultures and traditions so that a bridge between home and the program is established. We encourage continuity between home and the Centre when dealing with challenging behaviours in children.

Our purpose is to focus on the positive behaviour of the children rather than the negative behavior. Children will be redirected to different areas when displaying a repetitive negative behavior in an area. Children will be encouraged to use their words, hear each other's words or to recognize their facial expressions, and to offer hugs or help to correct the situation (i.e. Return the toy and ask for a turn, help rebuild a structure, etc.) to develop a sense of empathy and responsibility. Any form of child guidance must be reasonable in the circumstance.

Approaches not used:

- Physical punishment: striking, shaking, shoving, spanking, restraint or any other form of aggressive contact.
- Verbal or Physical degradation or emotional deprivation
- Withdrawal or threaten withdrawal of basic necessities such as: food, clothing, shelter or activity.
- Belittling and degrading statements or any other form of verbal abuse.
- Time outs, confinement or isolation

NO FORM OF ABUSE WILL BE TOLERATED FROM STAFF OR PARENTS/GUARDIANS DIRECTED TOWARD CHILDREN OR STAFF IN THIS CENTRE.

Inclusive Child Care policy

Whispering Hills Day Care Society shall have a valid Inclusive Child Care Contract in place with the Government of Alberta as long as such a contract is available.

This contract will be utilized to provide support for children outside of ratios to address the individual needs of children identified with diverse needs and/or facing challenges in personal situations. The purpose is to eliminate barriers to successful inclusion of the child in daily program activities. These barriers may include but are not limited to: displaying a challenging



behaviour; speaking English as a second language; struggling with mental health in the family; or being diagnosed with a developmental challenge, special need or disability.

The educators working under these contracts will be certified at the minimum as Child Development Assistants. These educators will receive additional training to provide support for the individual children they are working with. These educators will be the designated staff member to keep records of communications between the parents/guardians and educators, external supports and all reporting relevant to the Inclusive Child Care Contract. For more information on this role please refer to the Inclusive Child Care Worker job description.

Working with External Agencies and Supports

In order to provide the best support for families and children in care, Whispering Hills Day Care Society will make all efforts to connect with community resources when necessary.

We will maintain information on community resources and services for children and families accessing our programs. This information will be provided to families at the front entrance of each child care program in the form of pamphlets and posters, on our website, and upon request.

We will work with various community organizations and participate in partnerships and coalitions with community organizations and professional groups working with families with young children in the Athabasca area.

When able to, WHDCS will break barriers for families who experience difficulty accessing community resources and services. We will facilitate the delivery of supports and services within the child care program so the parent/guardian may continue to work and have access to these supports for their child. We will act as a liaison between the external agency and family to ensure continuity of information between all parties.

All agencies working with WHDCS will sign an oath of confidentiality of information obtained in the course of professional dealings with Whispering Hills Day Care Society, in accordance with the Society's privacy policies.

Families working with WHDCS and external agencies will sign a document for the consent to release specific information and to whom. These agreements will be subject to WHDCS privacy policies.

When necessary, WHDCS will consult with community organizations, cultural groups and representatives to ensure programming is inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of our member base.

Supervision Policies and Procedures

Indoor Supervision

Staff members maintain room awareness and position themselves in order to see the whole room as well as the area they are directly supervising— they can see where the children are and what they are doing at all times. The staff members move their bodies around the room and are actively engaged in play and conversation with the children to ensure the best/most



effective supervision. One staff member will be in each area of the room where children are playing, at no time should staff be sitting or standing together in the room.

Each program has a phone for staff to call if assistance is needed from the Assistant or Executive Director.

Staff complete head counts regularly to ensure the number of children matches the number on the whiteboard or clipboard. A clipboard containing the day's attendance and headcount checklist must be kept in the assigned place in the room, filled out multiple times throughout the day and taken when leaving the room including to go outside or to the indoor gym.

Supervision during Transitions

The staff complete a head count to make sure all children are accounted for before leaving the room and before leaving the field house or the playground to ensure all children are accounted for and are safe at all times. This is recorded on the designated clipboard containing the day's attendance and head count checklist.

The last staff in the room/area will do a complete check of the room before leaving even after completed the final headcount.

One staff member will be in charge of checking the playground or field house/gymnasium for and any potential hazards or potential dangers before the children enter the space. The playground checklist will be filled out by this staff person at the time of arrival to the playground.

Outdoor Supervision

There needs to be at least two staff when leaving the Centre with children (or more if needed to maintain ratio) including at least one Early Childhood Educator. The staff will use the whiteboard to record where the group is going so they can be located if parents or the program needs to locate them. Staff must take the back pack containing portable records and first aid supplies and the program cell phone when leaving the Centre with children. This cell phone must be charged, on vibrate and ring, and, on the primary staff person at all times when out of the Centre.

The staff must always be aware of where the children are and what they are doing. The staff must position themselves appropriately (body position facing the children, moving around as the children do) to provide the best/most effective supervision. Staff will be interacting and engaged in play/conversation with the children at their level during active supervision.

Staff will complete multiple headcounts on outings with the children including but not limited to: prior to leaving the Centre, while walking, upon arrival to the play area, during play, prior to leaving the area (including a sweep of the area completed by the last staff person to leave), while walking back, and upon arrival to the day care. The headcount checklist must be filled out when headcounts are administered prior to leaving and upon arrival to each place.

Updated August 2019



Groups must stay together at all times when on an off-site walk/field trip. No staff person shall be left with a group of children alone while off-site.

If two groups are formed during the day two separate attendance sheets are to be filled, a primary staff person needs to be with each group and all steps above apply to each group.

Note: Whispering Hills Daycare Society does not transport children in vehicles unless it is a school bus hired for a field trip with signed permission from parent/guardian(s).

Health and Safety Related Policies and Procedures

Potential Health Risks

The Whispering Hills Day Care Society strongly believes that we will all work together to stop all potential health risks and outbreaks by using the following procedures: wash hands with warm water after changing from such activities as playing in the sand or outside, wiping of noses, sneezing, toileting.

Parents/guardians are required to keep their child at home if ill in any way or he/she is displaying any of the following symptoms:

- fever over 100.4 degrees (38 degrees Celsius)
- diarrhea
- vomiting
- undiagnosed rash/skin condition or cough.
- communicable disease
- obviously infected discharge (thick and colored, e.g. greenish-yellow discharge from the nose)
- lethargy and irritability
- persistent pain
- cough (frequent bouts, especially if choking or vomiting)

The child may return to the program once they have been symptom free for at least 24 hours.

If a child is observed to have these symptoms the staff member involved will contact the parent/guardian(s) immediately to withdraw the child from the Centre. If parents are unable to pick up their child within 2 hours of receiving the phone call the emergency contacts will be called so that child is removed from the program as soon as possible. Staff will keep the ill child away from other children until they are removed. They will stay with the child in a designated area and monitor until parents/guardians arrive.

If there is a serious illness or accident/incident, a staff member with a valid First Aid Certificate will apply first aid appropriate to the situation and/or Call 911. If required, an ambulance will be called and the parent/guardian(s) will be contacted by the Executive Director or designate immediately. Then the Executive Director will contact the Director (Licensing Officer) and Regional Child Care Office to inform them about the situation immediately. The prescribed form will be filled out and sent to the director forthwith in the manner required by the director.

When a child is ill the staff will use an illness log form record the following: children who are ill including the name of the child, date the child was observed to be ill, name of staff member



who identified the child was ill, time the parent was initially contacted, name of staff person who contacted the parent, time the child was removed from the program and the date the child returned to the program.

WHDCS is not responsible for any cost incurred as a result of obtaining medical assistance for the injured child, (i.e. ambulance) the cost will be paid for by the parent/guardians. Health care will only be given to a child when the written consent of the child's parent has been obtained or the health care provided is in the nature of first aid. It is at the discretion of the Executive Director if a medical slip is required for re-admission to the Centre.

Outbreak Management

The program supervisor or Executive Director must report all suspected Outbreaks to the local Health Unit and their recommendations will be followed precisely. The program supervisor or Executive Director will give written notice to all parents/guardians within twenty-four (24) hours if a communicable disease breaks out in the program. Parent/guardian(s) shall be required to notify the Centre within twenty-four (24) hours if a communicable disease breaks out in their home. If a child is suspected of having a communicable disease in the program, the program supervisor or Executive Director will contact the parents/guardian(s) to have the child immediately removed. The parent/guardian(s) will be asked to take the child for a medical examination to confirm suspected illness. In the case of an Outbreak the child may not return to the program until all symptoms have ceased for a period of not less than 48 hours.

Administration of Medicine

If a child requires medication either short term or long term the parent/guardian(s) must complete a Medical Consent Form before staff can administer the medication. They must send all medications for their child in the original container, clearly labeled with the physician's name, child's name, date of issue, when it was last given, and instructions for administration. If the medication instructions and the instructions given by the parent do not match the medication will NOT be administered. The staff will document the time and method of administration, the amount administered and the initials of the person who administered the medication on the Medical Consent Form. Only oral medications prescribed by a doctor will be administered. Non-prescribed medications will not be administered at the program. Medications are kept in a locked cabinet (or locked container in fridge if appropriate and any emergency medication - i.e. epi-pen, insulin - is stored in a place that is inaccessible to children but easily accessible to the staff). When finished, all medication will be given back to the parent for proper disposal.

Special Situation

If a child requires special health considerations (i.e. feeding tube, epilepsy) WHDCS will ensure that staff are trained in the proper medical instruction to handle the day to day care of the individual. This training is documented in the staff's file and the child's file.



Smoke Free Environment

Whispering Hills Day Care Society programs are all located in non-smoking buildings and follow provincial laws and regulations. No staff member, parent/guardian or other persons shall smoke where child care is being provided.

Play spaces

The Whispering Hills Day Care Society will make sure that all play structures will comply with CSA guidelines for children's play spaces and equipment. Our play environments are also in compliance with standards set by Alberta Health Services and the Child Care Licensing Regulation and Act.

Accidents

Every attempt will be made to keep parents/guardians informed daily of minor cuts or bruises and their causes. Parents/guardians are requested to read and sign subsequent incident/accident reports. These reports state what happened, time of accident, what treatment, if any, was done and who assisted the child. If a staff member notices an injury that did not occur at the program, the staff member may document observations in the child's individual file. Parents/guardians have access to their child's file and may ask for a copy of incident reports at any time.

Reportable Incidents

Whispering Hills Day Care Society is required to report serious illness of, or injury to, a child that occurs while the child is attending a program that may seriously affect the health or safety of the child. Incidents that require reporting include but are not limited to: death of a child, injury, allegation of abuse, missing or lost child, a young person involved in crime, child removed from program without permission, emergency evacuation or unexpected program closure, intruder on premises, illness or injury requiring emergency medical services and hospitalization, error in administration of medication, and child left on premises after hours. All incidents will be reviewed by WHDCS to determine if any changes in future protocols are required to best address situations.

Sanitization within the Centre

The Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Support Staff will ensure that regular disinfecting of furnishings, equipment and play materials is noted on a daily/weekly/monthly checklist. All children will use one-time use paper towel to dry their hands to stop cross contamination from children using the same towels. Surfaces are disinfected with a bleach solution of 100 ppm before and after meal/snack times as well as before/after diaper changing each child.



Inspection Reports

Recent child care licensing inspection reports are posted on the bulletin board. Older reports can be made available on request. These reports are also available online at <http://www.humanservices.alberta.ca/oldfusion/ChildCareLookup.cfm>

Emergency Procedures

Safety drills (e.g. fire, indoor/outdoor evacuation) are held on a regular basis. For detailed information on these procedures see the Whispering Hills Day Care Society Emergency Preparedness Plan located at each program.

Emergency Evacuation

Multiplex Day Care Program Evacuation Site

- Muster Point: marked by an orange triangle in the parking lot or the baseball diamonds

University Day Care Program Evacuation Site

- Muster Point: tree line adjacent to the playground

Out of School Care Program Evacuation Site

- Muster Point: South Playground where the black bars are marked with white duct tape

Capacity

The program capacity will depend on the ages and specific needs of the children attending and current staffing.

The following minimum staff/child ratio is maintained:

Age of Child	Primary Staff/ Child Ratio
0-12 months	1:3
12 - 19 months	1:4
19mon - 3 years	1:6
3 - 4.5 years	1:8
5 – 12 years	1:10

Thank you for choosing the Whispering Hills Day Care Society for your child care needs!